

**PILOT MEETING** As the launch of the 3-year GAUDI Leaders' Club programme, a pilot meeting was held in London on 17th June 2002 to coincide with a major international conference entitled *The Value of Architecture Centres* organised by The Architecture Foundation at the British Museum on 18th/19th June 2002. The pilot provided an opportunity to test out the Leaders' Club meeting format by inviting just UK leaders and GAUDI representatives. ¶ To prepare for this meeting The Architecture Foundation collaborated closely with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), the government's champion for architecture in England, whose function is to promote high standards in the design of buildings and the spaces between them. As a public body, CABE actively offers help and advice to all those who create, manage and use the built environment. ¶ CABE's mission is to inject architecture into the bloodstream of the nation so that England becomes a European leader in prioritising the quality of the built environment through both public and private investment. For this reason, they were particularly interested in engaging with the GAUDI network as the Leaders' Club programme provides a timely opportunity to tap into Europe-wide thinking and debate.

**THEME** Following discussions with CABE, The Architecture Foundation proposed the theme of national architecture policies for the pilot meeting. ¶ The UK Government created CABE in 1999 as a Non-Departmental Public Body at a key moment marked by

the publication of the Urban Task Force report *'Towards an urban renaissance'*, researched and drafted by a government-convened expert panel led by architect Lord Rogers of Riverside.



This was followed in November 2000 by the publication of the Urban White Paper *'Our towns and cities: the future'*, a government policy document looking at the delivery of an urban renaissance across the country. The Government took into careful consideration the 105 recommendations made by the Urban Task Force in preparing the Urban White Paper along with other relevant policy documents. ¶ Despite such significant activity at gov-

ernment level, this has not resulted in a national architectural policy for England (in contrast, Scotland committed to a national policy in 2001 following devolution). However, with the second anniversary of the publication of the Urban White Paper being marked by a major government conference, the Urban Summit (Oct 2002), it is CABE's view that English policy-makers would benefit from exposure to the European experience of national architecture policies to inform debate and discussion. Although the conclusion may be that England does not need a policy, by demonstrating to key English policy-makers achievements made in other parts of Europe, future policy development may ultimately be influenced.

Looking at specific European examples, questions for consideration include: ● Why did they decide to have a policy? ● What format does it take – land use planning, procurement guidelines, etc.? ● What real impact has it had? ● What have they learned from their experience?

**THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT** Architecture is a complex subject, a science and an art form, addressing political, social, economic and environmental issues. Each European country addresses architecture and the built environment in different ways; responsibility is often split over several ministries or government departments with or without collaboration. ¶ To facilitate a common approach and share information and best practice the EU established the European Forum for Architecture Policies in 2000 and the first meeting was held in Paris in July

2000 (see www.architecture-forum.net). The Forum is a permanent mechanism for intergovernmental co-operation amongst political, cultural and professional institutions of the fifteen member states. It is a discussion forum for architecture practitioners and policy-makers; membership includes the European Council of Architects. ¶ One of the objectives of the Forum is to disseminate the Resolution for Architectural Quality in Europe, which was passed in 2001. The Forum has established working groups on public and private structures, architectural and urban quality, economic and professional issues, dissemination

of information and training to achieve this. The website also provides a European portal, linking to the GAUDI programme of research, projects, education and dissemination. ¶ It is acknowledged that there are common characteristics shared by European towns and cities, such as the importance of historical continuity, the quality of public areas, the social mix and the richness of urban diversity. Good quality architecture improves the living context and relationship between citizens and their environment, whether rural or urban and can contribute effectively towards social cohesion, job creation, the promotion of cultural tourism and regional economic development. ¶ Individual government policies and difference in national culture have already led to a wide range of initiatives, programmes and organisations that have been established to facilitate these objectives. The Resolution therefore aims to foster a more active role for architecture in all programmes and policies, thereby serving as a reference for European collaboration. The French Ministry of Culture and Communication has led on this initiative, and has launched its own national campaign for improving the quality of the built environment in 2002.

**MEETING ATTENDANCE** The meeting took place at 11:00am on Monday 17th June 2002 at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6DE. ¶ A total of thirty people attended the meeting, equally split between UK leaders and GAUDI members. UK attendees included representatives from ODPM (responsible for urban policy, planning, regeneration and housing), Office of Government Commerce (responsible for government procurement policy within HM Treasury), CABE, Countryside Agency, UK Architecture Centre Network, professional institutions and practitioners. The GAUDI network of partners and collaborating institutions represented Belgium, Finland, France, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom.

**MEETING FORMAT** Chaired by CABE Commissioner Dickon Robinson, the meeting opened with three presentations (by Rob Docter, Jean-Louis Cohen, and Maija Kärkkäinen) describing the experiences of The Netherlands, France and Finland respectively in developing and implementing national architecture policies. This was followed by contributions from Fabrizio

Mangoni, Christophe Pourtois and Lluís Hortet who shared their views in relation to the particular cultural, social and political circumstances in Italy, Belgium and Spain respectively. ¶ The rest of the meeting was structured as an open discussion forum.

Summary of presentations

**THE NETHERLANDS** The joint project, conceived by the Ministry of Health, Welfare & Cultural Affairs and that of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) was a concerted attempt to influence quality in the public sector and therefore encourage the private sector to follow suit in improving its standards of building design. The inter-departmental partnership underlines the government's emphasis that design quality is "more than mere beauty" and considered both supply and demand. ¶ As part of the 1992 policy, increased power was given to the role of the National Architect, the person in charge of advising the government on public buildings. The government also uses the policy to guide developers in their choice of plans and archi-



Rob Docter

tects. The policy also includes a set of incentives for local councils to develop their own architectural policies – which are primarily guidelines on how to achieve better town plans and attract top architects. ¶

In 1996 the Dutch Government updated and up-scaled their architectural policy in the publication *"The Architecture of Space"* (*De Architectuur van de Ruimte*). Two additional ministries became integrated; Agriculture, Nature Management & Fisheries (VenW) and Transport Public Works & Water Management (LNV). This re-emphasises the role played by the national government in promoting architecture through direct involvement (commissioning projects), facilitating local administration and encouraging the private sector. Importantly, four government departments emphasised their co-responsibilities towards architecture and the built environment by joining the Architectural Policy Platform, an inter-ministerial working group chaired by the National Architect.

In 1997-2000 there were two additional points of emphasis: ● a broadening of architectural policy to the

scale of urban development, planning, landscape architecture and infrastructure design, reflecting the new powers of the cross-departmental coalition ● Motivating commercial interests to invest in architectural quality and research, through efforts to improve the quality of architectural competitions and through the expansion of the government award, 'the Bronze Beaver', to include landscape architecture, nature management and infrastructure

A revised policy *"Shaping the Netherlands: Architecture Policy from 2001 to 2004"* has just been published. Because the architecture policy is now fully integrated into the Netherlands' cultural, social and economic life this new policy takes a new approach. Nine 'Major Projects' have been identified (this may increase to 12), two to be adopted by each government department, which cover the entire range of architectural and spatial design in the Netherlands. The aim is to create models of best practice. The Architectural Policy Platform will be restructured and the role of the Chief Architect adapted to the new policy objectives. The Major Projects are two per Ministry and one other: ● the Delta Metropolis – the Randstad network ● the Zuyderzee line – new rapid link between Amsterdam and Groningen ● a landscape design for an existing motorway ● the Nieuwe Hollandse Waterline – new 'landscaped' sea fortifications ● restoration of sandy soil areas – with the reduction of factory farms new uses can be made of the land and buildings ● housing – 1/3 of new housing projects to be private commissions by 2005-10 ● public space ● new Rijksmuseum ● new building in Amersfoort to accommodate the Netherlands Department for conservation and the National Archaeological Field Study Commission

**FRANCE** Two papers on architecture and urban policy were published in 1983. The key elements of which are:

1. Urban schemes: in accordance with the policy of decentralisation and devolution of financial and legislative powers, urban schemes would be developed at a local level
2. The exemplary role of public sector commissions: specific features of government policy in this area include: ● the use of a wide variety of architectural styles ●

research into sustainability ● training programmes for civil servants involved in commissioning ● supporting young architects via loans to established offices, subsidies for the first commission awarded, the government commissioning young architects to design innovative social housing ● innovative social housing of exceptional quality ● expansion of research and development



Jean-Louis Cohen

programmes, in particular through improving construction practice through investment in technology

3. Increasing debate on architecture to all citizens via: ● establishment of Ateliers Publics d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme (architecture centres) to support the Conseils d'Architecture, d'Urbanisme et d'Environment (professional committees) ● promoting public consultation and participation in planning and architecture by raising media coverage of relevant issues, increasing the activities of local societies and organisations ● the Institut Français d'Architecture (IFA) to be used as a route to exchange ideas at inter-regional and international levels

**FINLAND** The Ministry of Education appointed a committee to prepare a Finnish Architectural Policy in 1996. Following extensive consultation, this was approved by the Council of State and published in December 1998 by The National Council for Architecture, the Arts Council of Finland and The Ministry of Education.

The aim of the policy is to define the government's architectural frameworks and goals for implementation by local authorities. It establishes guidelines for the protection of architectural heritage, maintenance and enhancement of the value of the existing building stock. It also provides opportunities for improving the existing high quality architectural standards as well as creating a suitable climate to enable the construction sector to compete effectively in a wider international context. It acknowledges the great social, cultural and economic values of architecture and provides a means to create an improved built environment. These were also the central goals of the land use and building legislation reforms which were being implemented in 1998, including the revision of the 50-year-old Building Act and publication of a Government

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION** From the different European examples presented at the session, the following key points of discussion emerged:

**POLITICAL STRUCTURE** The delivery of a national policy is to a large extent characterised by the political structure of the country. For example, the situation in Belgium, with the Flemish, Wallon and Brussels regions each with its own parliament, has resulted in a "grass-roots" as opposed to a "top-down" approach. The nature of political constitution can therefore become a major factor in determining the ultimate effectiveness of an architecture policy

**ARCHITECTURE AS CULTURE** The Netherlands, Finland and France have all invested heavily in establishing national cultural institutions as part of their respective policies. This has helped to promote the importance of the architectural discipline, especially in relation to citizenship issues, as part of national cultural and educational agendas

**ARCHITECTURE AS COMMODITY** Architecture is also a significant economic commodity, as regarded by the majority of clients who are not necessarily interested in creating cultural artefacts. However, recent developments, such as the so-called "Bilbao-effect" of the Guggenheim, are indicating that good architecture could lead to good economics

**DISSEMINATING EXPERTISE** Expertise should not be limited to the professional and cultural elite, and a legislative framework of an architecture policy could be a useful device for dissemination. The key objective would be to alter people's attitudes, from investors and economists to lay and professional decision-makers, so that architecture becomes more accessible

**CONCLUSIONS** CABE and the other UK policy makers found the meeting very useful and timely to their own thinking. ¶ The main point of debate was whether a top-down government policy is the appropriate way forward, given particular circumstances within the English context. It could be argued that the UK is the most centralised democracy in the world and compared to our European partners. However the public sector

construction clients are very fragmented and as a nation that is relatively 'design-illiterate'. With the advent of PFI (Private Finance Initiative) attracting substantial private sector investment, this process of procurement reflects current policy thinking behind the prevailing fiscal system. ¶ The main lesson to take away from the European experience is that an architecture policy can only be effective if there is a system of implementation that works down to a local level. This has worked in the Netherlands with its sophisticated structure of organisations delivering the policy, but it is telling to see from the Finnish experience that in the four years since the formulation of their policy, many of the targets have not been realised. It is clear that no policy would work in England unless all the local authorities are prepared to sign up to it.

There was a general lack of enthusiasm for an English Architecture Policy as: ● it is unclear if such a policy would in itself result in a better built environment, ● policy was already being put in place, specifically Better Public Buildings and new Planning Policy ● the time and effort given to developing a policy would be a distraction from the delivery of better buildings, ● CABE's role as a body championing good quality design within this context is now firmly established, and it is working in a pro-active way already ● there is a danger that any cross-government policy would have to be diluted to the lowest common denominator.

Although the existence of a government body such as CABE is not equivalent to an official national policy, it has so far succeeded in liberating the notion of quality architecture and design from being just a preoccupation of the cultural elite. Government needs to develop a broader understanding of architecture, which links good architecture with economic prosperity, citizenship and ultimately democracy.

The aim of the GAUDI Leaders Club London pilot meeting was to generate a discussion with ministerial executives facing the complex aspects of architectural standards, quality, and output. The creation of a European Leaders Club over the next years aims to involve not only mayors and economic leaders, but also opinion leaders and an executive network that can promote and manage the implementation of high quality architecture.

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Programme to promote ecologically sustainable building. Issues addressed include: ● citizenship ● importance of the construction industry to the GDP (18%, with 15% of active workforce employed in the construction sector) ● importance of architectural heritage

The progress of the policy implementation was reviewed in 2000. Training of civil servants and others has created wider architectural debate. The appointment of a principal designer (a qualified person in charge of design in its entity and quality) is now a requirement in law. The new Land Use and Building Act demands professionalism equally from architects, builders and developers, and it also requires all municipalities with more than 6000 people to employ a physical planner, and smaller municipalities to belong to the regional architect scheme. The Finnish Association of Architecture (SAFA) has established a register to assist in the choice of architects. A Ministry of the Environment working group has drawn a proposal of short-term measures for the care and preservation of architectural heritage, including monuments, domestic and vernacular architecture.

Comments from other European countries

**ITALY** Italy has no national policy for architecture. The Italian National Board of Architects has been working against an aberrant interpretation of the European Directive Service, winning an appeal with the European Commission. Thanks to the European Resolution for Architectural Quality, the Italian Ministry of Culture is studying a national law which will be soon presented to the Parliament.

**SPAIN** No national policy for architecture exists to date in Spain. Similarly to Belgium the complex pluralistic national state does not provide the platform for a unified view on architecture. The Ministry of Public Works oversees architecture, which includes some programmes promoting good quality and best practice, but generally regional governments are independently trying to raise architectural standards.

**BELGIUM** Belgium's three communities –Flemish, Wallon, and Brussels- provide a difficult context for a unified national policy, and instead grass-roots approach to promoting quality architecture has emerged.

#### ATTENDEES:

**CHAIR**  
Dickon Robinson Director of Development, Peabody Trust, CABE Commissioner

**UK LEADERS**  
Sophie Andrae CABE Commissioner  
Robin Nicholson Edward Cullinan Architects, CABE Commissioner  
Sunand Prasad Penoyre & Prasad Architects, CABE Commissioner  
Stephen King Policy Officer, CABE  
Bruce McVean Programme Officer, CABE  
Terry Robinson Department of Planning & Sustainability, Countryside Agency  
Ian Ritchie Ian Ritchie Architects  
Barry Shaw Chief Executive, Kent Architecture Centre  
Joyce Bridges Urban Policy Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
Peter Ellis Planning Directorate, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
Simon Lait Land and Property Division, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
Peter Stanton-Ife Chairman, Project Review Group, Office of Government Commerce  
Colin James Royal Institute of British Architects  
Emily Lauder Strategy & Policy Officer, Royal Town Planning Institute

**GAUDI NETWORK:**  
Jean-Louis Cohen Director, Institut français d'architecture, Paris, France  
Pierre Bourlier GAUDI Co-ordinator, Institut Français d'Architecture, Paris, France  
Rob Docter Director, The Berlage Institute, Rotterdam, The Netherlands  
Judith Carrera Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain  
Ciro Llueca Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain  
Christophe Pourtois Director, Centre International pour la Ville, l'Architecture et le Paysage Brussels, Belgium  
Lilian Perier European Affairs Officer, Direction de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine Paris, France  
Orane Proisy Direction de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine Paris, France  
Lluís Hortet Director, Fundació Mies van der Rohe Barcelona, Spain  
Fabrizio Mangoni Istituto di Cultura Architetonica Rome, Italy  
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# GAUDI LEADERS CLUB ARCHITECTURE POLICIES

**London 17 June 2002**  
**Pilot Meeting: what can England learn from the rest of Europe?**

GAUDI (*Governance, Architecture and Urbanism as Democratic Interaction*) is an EU-funded initiative to establish a joint programme to promote a wide public understanding of architecture and the built environment and to strengthen partnership between European architecture centres and museums. ¶ The main objective of the GAUDI Leaders' Club is to hold regular meetings bringing together political and economic leaders who have decided to make architecture an integral part of their urban policy or corporate agenda. These meetings will be open to representatives from both public and private sectors, as well as professional institutions and bodies, for the enhancement of cultural and artistic projects in Europe. ¶ Topics for discussion will include both technical and procedural aspects of interest to professionals, as well as the discussion of issues allowing for a better public awareness. Each meeting will have a dedicated theme in order to be able to compare methodology and thinking between different European countries.