



Quality Audit

Principles & Application

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CAPITA SYMONDS

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1 Background

Manual for Streets 2007 - key phrases:

'Properly documented design audit and sign-off systems...'

'An integral part of the design and implementation...'

'...appropriate consideration given to all relevant aspects.'

1 Background

Manual for Streets 2007:

Quality Audit '...may include some or all of the following...'

- Visual Quality Audit
- Community Use of Streets Review
- Road Safety Audit & Risk Assessment
- Access Audit
- Walking Audit
- Cycle Audit
- Non-Motorised User Audit
- Community Street Audit
- Placecheck Audit

2 Quality Audit: What is it for?

Everyone agrees it's a good idea...

- Challenge engineering design standards?
- Make designs 'better'?

- Stop engineers changing our highways in ways we don't like?
- Encourage holistic design approach?
- Manage conflicting demands?

2 Quality Audit: What is it for?

Wider application than residential developments...

- Town centre public realm enhancements?
- Safety engineering schemes?
- Minor junction improvements / signing and lining?
- New public transport infrastructure?
- Highway maintenance schemes?
- Rural / urban schemes?



3 Challenges & Opportunities

Project complexity

- Multi-agency client teams
- Multi-stakeholder steering groups
- Schemes of all shapes, sizes, types

Delivery programme

- Budget availability
- Achieving value for money
- Meeting client and stakeholder deadlines

3 Challenges & Opportunities

Tackle increasing engineer / designer unease about impacts on public realm / traffic 'domination' / urbanisation of rural roads / etc

Structured holistic approach to design, considering all impacts and opportunities

Method which is:

- **Robust & fit for purpose**
- **Manageable**
- **Proportionate**

One size fits all?

If not, then what?

4 Towards a Method

How do you decide what to audit?

Elements to audit fall into 3 main themes:

- Road Safety
- Link / Movement
walking, cycling, mobility-impaired, public transport users,
other non-motorised users, through-traffic
- Place
visual quality, community use, placecheck, 'staying
activities', deliveries(?)

Objectives are the trigger for deciding what to audit

4 Towards a Method

Establish Objectives

Question 1 - Link / Movement

Does the project / scheme seek to change the way that movement (any type, by anyone) takes place?

Are you altering or adding to existing infrastructure?

OR

Providing new infrastructure?

If yes, project objectives include consideration of movement impacts / opportunities for all users:

Link Audit - recorded review of impacts / opportunities

4 Towards a Method

Establish Objectives

Question 2 - Place

Does the location have significance as a place?

Does it have distinctive or particular character which may be affected by proposed works?

OR

Is it a destination in its own right?

If yes, project objectives include consideration of impacts / opportunities for public realm and 'staying' activities:

Place Audit - recorded review of impacts / opportunities

5 Independent Audit v Collaborative Design

Independent Audit by Theme

- Robust & fit for purpose?
- Manageable?
- Proportionate?
- Design team passes design to audit teams at predetermined stage
- Audit teams know nothing about design context
- Audit teams make observations based on what they receive and report these back to client and design team
- Design team responds to observations
- Client authorises exceptions

Conflicting audit observations - who decides what action to take?

5 Independent Audit v Collaborative Design

Collaborative Design

- Robust & fit for purpose?
- Manageable?
- Proportionate?
- Design team includes competent people per theme
- Programme includes design review by theme
- Client invited to participate with design team
- Individuals from outside client and design organisations invited to participate with design team where appropriate
- Collaborative participation integrated into design process

Conflict is actively managed within design team (conflict is an unavoidable part of the design process!)

6 Application

Audit Stages

Stage 0 - at scheme conception / scoping to establish objectives

Stage 1 - early design stage to inform subsequent stages of design (aligns with traditional Stage 1 RSA)

Stage 2 - mid detailed design stage to inform design completion (possibly earlier than traditional Stage 2 RSA?)

Stages 3 & 4?

6 Application

Road Safety Audit

All projects / schemes

RSA well established and understood by client, designers and auditors

Value of independence often recognised by clients

Risk assessment is a very valuable addition

Also, post-audit discussion with designers

Scope for greater integration of road safety audit in future

6 Application

Link Audit

Trigger: Answer to Question 1 = yes

Audit covers walking, cycling, mobility-impaired, public transport users, non-motorised users

Checklist useful to ensure no user-group is overlooked - but beware of formulaic approach

Structured review undertaken by Design Team plus other invitees - collaborative approach

Record proceedings and findings, and distribute

6 Application

Place Audit

Trigger: Answer to Question 2 = yes

Audit covers visual quality, community use, placecheck, 'staying activities', deliveries(?)

Checklist useful but perhaps needs to be tailored to individual scheme

Structured review undertaken by Design Team plus other invitees - collaborative approach

Record proceedings and findings, and distribute

6 Application

Experience

Explain purpose of scheme and design material for review to participants before conducting review - otherwise preconceptions can dominate audit findings to detriment of audit's value

Use of checklist and pro-forma audit form to assist in structuring findings - but beware of 'box-ticking' approach

Keep focus on real risks presented by design - audit should not become a 'lobbying tool'



Quality Audit Summary

Answer Questions 1 and 2 at project conception

Establish project objectives

Road Safety Audit > all projects / schemes

- Independent, includes risk assessment and post-audit discussion with design team (further integration in future)

Question 1 = yes > Link Audit

- Collaborative and integrated, led / managed by design team with right competencies

Question 2 = yes > Place Audit

- Collaborative and integrated, led / managed by design team with right competencies