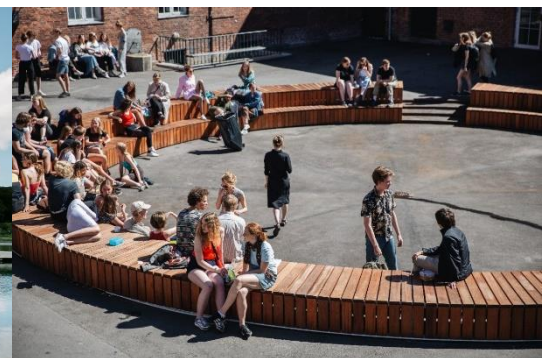




MINISTRY
OF REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT CZ



State and city architects

The role of design leadership in fostering spatial quality and place-making culture

João Bento



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Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic
Institute for Spatial Development

Praha, Brno, 2022

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João Bento
August 2022

PREFACE

The present study examines the role, the tools and the impact of state and city architect teams in processes of urban design governance in different European jurisdictions. The research focuses on two governmental levels. Firstly, it explores the role and tools of state architects in the central administration of five European states/regions where this position exists: Flanders (Belgium), Ireland, The Netherlands, Scotland (UK) and Sweden. Secondly, it explores the role of design leadership in local administration of two European cities: one where there is a city architect position (Copenhagen) and another where there is an architecture and urban design department (Vienna), to provide a comparative perspective of design leadership at local level.

There is little evidence on the potential value of governmental design leadership in enabling well-designed places and in fostering a place-making culture. Even less is known about the role of state architect or city architect teams, about the policy instruments at their disposal and the extent of its impact on the overall system of urban design governance, whose aim is to push for better development outcomes. As such, a comparative study of current practices is relevant to help inform the design of public policy as well as to identify innovative mechanisms that guarantee its effective implementation in order to enhance the role of the state in steering urban design processes and encourage a desirable societal shift.

Based on a series of in-depth interviews, this research shows that dedicated units such as state architect or city architect (or similar) teams create the institutional conditions for improved public action on spatial quality by improving coordination and interaction between different stakeholders. These positions provide leadership and strategic advice to governments cutting across the wide range of sectorial departments engaged in architecture and urban design. Depending on the context, responsibilities vary from the design and construction of public buildings to the establishment of cross-sector policy frameworks and related design advice, to supporting cultural activities on design. The latter have enabled state architect or city architect (or similar) teams to have a positive impact on urban design governance processes by providing a strong and committed design leadership for achieving better places.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Architecture and urban design are all around us and, even if not intentionally, everything is designed. This means that the design quality of our buildings and places has a direct effect on people's quality of life. However, the processes involved in the transformation of the built environment tend to somehow diminish the importance of design quality in favour of economic factors, resulting, more often than not, in unsatisfactory places. To address these concerns several European countries have adopted architecture and spatial design policies recognizing the value of good design and setting up a strategic plan to promote high quality environments.

Although the importance of design quality in achieving a more sustainable urban development has been recognized in several international policies and declarations¹, places with good spatial quality continue to be the exception rather than the norm. In fact, the design quality of places may be regarded as a 'wicked problem' as it is determined by a huge number of actors, public and private, and is the result of embedded social norms and cultural values. Considering the social and complex nature of the built environment, the public sector plays a key role in promoting better places and prioritising quality through a diversified policy agenda that covers different administrative levels and spans over a wider spectrum of areas.

In the European panorama, the state already has a powerful influence on the design of the built environment, either by planning policies or by developing control systems, and thereby imposing a wide range of laws and regulations to define almost every aspect of the built environment. Complementing these formal tools ('hard power'), the role of the government has extended to a new dimension: besides defining the regulatory framework, it also develops alternative non-regulatory ('soft power') approaches, assuming an active leading role as enabler or broker, disseminating the value of design quality and promoting the general public's appreciation of architectural, urban and landscape culture (Carmona, 2021). These informal policy approaches and practices enhance the role of the state and of cities in intervening in urban design processes through bargaining, negotiation and persuasion, thus complementing the more traditional 'command-and-control' mechanisms (Tiesdell & Adams, 2011).

¹ Documents such as: Sustainable Developments Goals (United Nations, 2016); New Urban Agenda (UN-Habitat, 2016); Davos Declaration on Baukultur (2018); EU Council Conclusions on Culture: high-quality architecture and the built environment (2021); New Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities (2020); EU Council Conclusions on Architecture (EU, 2008); EU Council Resolution on architectural Quality in Urban and Rural Environments (EU, 2001).



1.1: 'Courtyard of the Future' in Straussvej is one out of three rainwater demonstration projects that are part of the Copenhagen Climate Adaptation Plan, designed by BLOG, 2021 © Camila van Deurs

To deliver this agenda, several governments have appointed a state architect or city architect, also known by other names across Europe (e.g., bouwmeester, chief architect or design champion), whose mission is 'to provide design leadership and strategic advice to the government, in order to improve the design of public constructions, promote spatial quality and foster a place-making culture' (European Union, 2021). Depending on the context, a state or city architect is usually supported by a small team and may operate at various levels of the administration. In some cases, depending on the state's administrative organization, there may also be regional (or provincial) architects that perform similar tasks to those of state or city architects providing design leadership across public departments and stakeholders.

1.2 Aims and research questions

The present study aims to examine the role, tools and impact of state and city architect teams in processes of urban design governance in different European jurisdictions. The starting point for this research was the realisation that several states and cities had appointed a state/city architect within their administrations to provide design leadership and strategic advice to their governments. In this sense, it could be argued that a state/city architect represents an innovation on urban design governance, embodying a number of tools that improve the role of public bodies in promoting better places. Although state/city architect teams have long been established in some states and cities around the world (e.g., The Netherlands or USA), it is

a relatively recent position in public administrations. In addition, in the European landscape, it is still the exception and mostly a northern European phenomenon (Bento, 2012a).

In this framework, it is relevant to clarify the specific contribution of a state/city architect team in delivering governmental goals and to examine whether or not it can effectively improve the role of state/city authorities in enabling better design governance processes and in, the long run, well-designed environments. This constitutes the background research question that this inquiry will try to address. Having said this, the following specific questions can be raised:

- Does a state/city architect team enable the delivery of design leadership across the different sectors and levels of public administration? If yes, what are its main tools?
- To what extent have the state/city architects had an impact on design governance processes?
- What is the role of design leadership in urban design governance processes?

In this framework, more specifically, this will be done through two research endeavours focused on distinct administrative realms/levels:

- state/regional level: an analysis of the role and tools of state architects operating in central administrations of five European states: Flanders (Belgium), Ireland, The Netherlands, Scotland (United Kingdom) and Sweden. For each case study, a first part develops a review of the state's architectural policy and main institutional actors, followed by an analysis of the role and tools of the state architect office in place, as well as those of other relevant actors. Further ahead, a comparative overview is provided to analyse the different state architect models and how they provide the state with expertise on spatial quality; a last section addresses the perceived impact of design governance processes;
- local level: an analysis of the local design leadership in two European cities: one where there is a city architect (Copenhagen) and another where there is an architecture and urban design department (Vienna). In both cases, a first part puts the city in its national policy context and identifies its main institutional actors; a second part looks into the local design governance system and how design leadership is being delivered; finally, a third part identifies other relevant actors. Following this approach, it will be possible to compare a model of design leadership equipped with a city architect with another which provides design leadership through a dedicated design department. This approach is expected to show the benefits and downsides of the operational system in the two cities.

1.3 Spatial design as a holistic concept

After describing the context and setting the framework of the research, it is relevant to introduce its main conceptual frame. The term *architecture* has different acceptations and extensions and is considered a polysemic term. According to its context, architecture may be understood in a broad sense as 'built environment design' (crossing several design disciplines, involving not only design issues but also processes of governance, etc.); or it may be understood in its

narrower sense as the ‘design of individual buildings’ (usually associated with the work performed by architects for a single client). This conceptual gap is aggravated by contextual factors, in which traditions and conceptual frames tend to change from place to place (Bento, 2017).

When referring to the design of the built environment, the British prefer to use ‘urban design’ as its keyword. In fact, the broad notion of architecture as built environment design is remarkably similar to the definition of urban design, which is focused on creating better places for people (Carmona et al., 2003). In the Scottish case, for example, the scope of its architectural policy has progressively expanded as new policy versions were adopted. Although its first policy focused mainly on building design, the second policy expands its scope to a wider urban and rural design agenda, introducing the concepts of *urban design* and *placemaking*.



1.2: Renovation of a degraded boulevard that was used as open-air car park under a motorway, which now offers a high-quality public space, in Lisbon, Portugal, designed by José Adrião Arquitectos, 2017 © FG+SG

In The Netherlands, architectural policy also expanded from the scale of building and urban design to the scale of the city and of landscape, preferring to use the notion of ‘spatial design’ as a more holistic concept. Similarly, the Swedish government's recent architectural policy prefers to use ‘*designed living environment*’ (2018) as its main conceptual focus, to complement the restricted meaning of architecture and to avoid misunderstandings that would restrict grasping the broader picture and all human-made surroundings. This includes and cuts across the disciplines of interior design, landscape design, engineering and many more.



1.3: Wave urban project, designed by Henning Larsen Architects, in Vejle, Denmark, 2018 © Jacob Due

A similarly broad approach is followed by the Germanic states, where the main concept adopted is *baukultur*, broadly defined as building culture. In fact, the recent Davos Declaration (DAVOS, 2018) defines it as an aspect of cultural identity and diversity, which ‘holistically embraces every human activity that changes the built environment, including every built and designed asset that is embedded in and relates to the natural environment.’

Therefore, as discussed in the following chapter, the concept of architecture is not equivalent across nations, which causes a conceptual hardship in the selection and grouping of information from different national contexts. To overcome this dilemma, it is important to make use of a sufficiently holistic concept that embraces all the different meanings associated with the notion of architecture and with its broad view as built environment design. In this view, this research deliberately uses the term *spatial design* throughout this report, which refers to the built environment in a broad sense, crossing the boundaries of traditional design specialisms such as architecture, interior design, infrastructure, landscape design and urban design.

2. RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research approach: a cross-national comparative inquiry

As described previously, this research intends to examine the role and impact of state architect or city architect teams in delivering design leadership in urban design governance processes. To do so, different European states and cities that would provide interesting examples of state/city architect teams were selected and their roles, instruments and impact were examined. The gathering of information on existing policies, organisations and main actors and tools, would allow the development of a comparative analysis on the main differences and similarities across the case studies, allowing to extract policy lessons about the different experiences and some conclusions on the added value of having a state/city architect team.

Against this background, and methodologically speaking, this research is an exercise in cross-national comparative research. According to Hantrais (1999), cross-national comparative research is concerned with observing social phenomena across nations, to develop robust explanations of similarities and differences and to assess their consequences, whether for the purpose of testing a set of hypotheses in different settings, drawing lessons on policy experiences developed elsewhere or just gaining better insights on how social processes operate (Hantrais, 1999). In the field of policy analysis, this methodology has been used, among others, to develop better insights on how to deal with policy problems by drawing lessons from the experience of other governments (Rose, 2005). The study of policy differences between governments regarding a shared problem offers several advantages, namely the opportunity to compare the strengths and weaknesses of different policies and to draw lessons for other countries (Ibid, p. 4).

Methodology

Although at first sight cross-national comparative research appears to readily generate national findings that enable us to extract general conclusions on the role and impact of state/city architects' teams, the interpretative effort dedicated to comparative analysis is not actually as simple as it may seem. In practice, a cross-national comparative research design does not imply a predetermined way to administer cross-national research. As in other approaches, research methods are tailored to the research questions, and not least to the resources available. In this case, the research findings are the result of a research methodology that included desk-based research and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the different case studies.

Following a similar methodology used in a research endeavour on this topic previously conducted for the Estonian Government Office (See Bento & Laopoulou, 2019), the research work was divided into three phases. The first phase sought to take stock of the existing design governance landscape in each of the chosen European states and cities (identifying relevant

stakeholders, existing policies, informal design governance tools, etc.). As result, a brief review of the architecture and spatial design policies was carried out at the beginning of each section.

However, unpacking the policies' discourse and gathering information on the existing structures would not provide proper information on 'how' the state and city architects work in practice. Therefore, the second phase sought to collect different views on the main virtues and limitations of the state/city architect teams in a real-life context, or in other spatial design policy units that may exist, the range of tools available and the extent of its impact, through a series of semi-structured interviews with the key players in each of the case studies (see below). In total, the research included around twenty-five online semi-structured interviews: half was conducted in 2018 for a first version of this study, and the other half was carried out in the spring of this year.

The final stage sought to produce a report on the main research findings, namely, a brief review of the design policies and of the role and tools of the state/city architect teams in each case study. This was followed by a cross analysis of the role and tools of the state architect teams operating at national/state level, as well as by a discussion on the similarities and differences of the design governance systems and spatial design leadership across the five state case studies. Adding to this discussion, a comparative review of a local design governance system between a city council that has a city architect position (Copenhagen) and a city council that has an Architecture and Urban Design Department (Vienna) was carried out. Finally, a few conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

Selection of interviewees

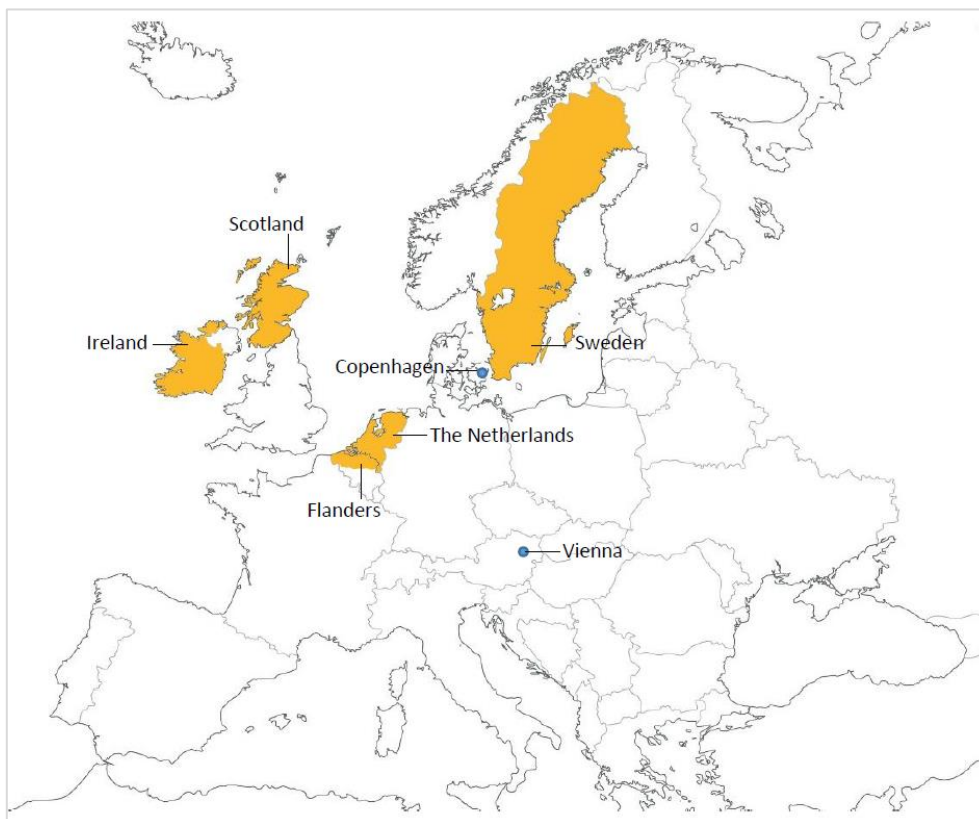
The selection of the interviewees was based on the following rationale: firstly, the state/city architects themselves in the states/cities where this position was in place (Copenhagen, Flanders, Ireland, The Netherlands, Scotland and Sweden); in the case of Vienna, it was decided to interview the head of the City Department of Architecture and Urban Design. Secondly, it was decided that key stakeholders working at senior level in other design institutions in the different states/cities should be interviewed, to have an external viewpoint on the role and impact of the state/city architects, or in the case of Vienna its urban design department, such as: architecture centres, national design champions and architects' professional bodies. Interview invitations were sent by email to the institutions in the case studies (see list of interviews in Annex).

2.2 Scope

The research covers five European state/regions where there is a state architect position in the central administration: Flanders (Belgium), Ireland, The Netherlands, Scotland (United Kingdom) and Sweden. Of the five, three have been operating for more than twenty years — Flanders, The Netherlands, and Scotland — one, Ireland, since 2009 and the last one, Sweden, only since 2018. In addition, it was agreed to investigate the local design governance

system of two capital cities, Copenhagen (Denmark), that has a city architect, and Vienna (Austria) that does not have such position but where there is a dedicated architectural department, which could provide an interesting counterpoint by showing other ways used by local authorities to deliver design leadership through the use of innovative institutional arrangements.

In terms of administrative structures, the study covers different systems of government and administrations: unitary (Ireland, Denmark, The Netherlands and Sweden) and federal (Austria and Belgium). Although referred to as 'state' in the report, Flanders is one of the regions of Belgium. In the case of Scotland, the administrative structure of the United Kingdom is quite unique as includes a union of four countries, each with its own administrative system.



2.1: European location of the case studies: five states and two cities.

2.3 Limitations

The methodology chosen for this research has limitations. Firstly, as in any cross-national comparative research design, an important issue is the equivalence of concepts across different socio-cultural contexts (Hantrais, 1999, p. 104), which provides common reference points for identifying and grouping phenomena (Rose, 1991). The problem with cross-national comparative research is that not all concepts travel well across cultural and linguistic boundaries because the same term may embody different meanings and the same set of ideas may be categorised under a different term. This is the case of the German term *baukultur*,

which will be referred to in the case of Vienna, or of the term *placemaking* referred to in the Irish and Scottish contexts. To be able to accommodate the different meanings associated with architecture and urban design, the main concept used for the present study was *spatial design* (see Section 1.3).

Secondly, due to the short period available to carry out the research, it was only possible to examine the local design governance system of two cities (Copenhagen and Vienna), which reduces the diversity of city architects (or similar) teams currently implemented in other European cities (broadly described in Section 4.2). In addition, it was only possible to interview two to four people in each case study, which diminishes the richness of viewpoints on the role and on the impact of state/city architect teams. Therefore, in future research, it would be advisable to extend the research scope to other cities across Europe as well as to carry out a higher number of interviews per case study, to increase the range of individual viewpoints, including both private and public actors as well as communities.

Thirdly, the semi-structure interviews were mainly conducted by videoconference, which decreases the openness of the replies and slightly restrains the communication flow between interviewer and interviewee. Considering that architecture and spatial design policy are shared by several levels and sectors of the state, it is difficult to perceive the extent of the real impact of the state/city architect (and similar) teams across the administrative structures, without a more in-depth examination of the current situation in each of the case studies. However, due to time and budget limitations it would have been impractical to travel to each state/city to collect the information in person. Therefore, in future research, it would be advised to conduct face-to-face interviews with the main actors and stakeholders of each case study to obtain information that is not easily collected via online interviews.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Although this chapter does not offer a literature review on the topic of spatial design leadership, it intends to make a brief incursion on the debate around the governance of design, which will be used as a framework to explore and discuss the different models of state architect teams that exist in the five case studies, as well as on the role of design leadership in local design governance in the two cities through a city architect or a similar team. To do so, the present chapter is twofold. The first part opens with a brief discussion about the governance of design and the legitimacy of the state to intervene in the design of the built environment. It also includes a typology of urban design governance tools. The second part explores the notion of design leadership in processes of urban design governance followed by a small review of the mission and skills of individual design champions to close the chapter.

3.1 Design governance as a research agenda

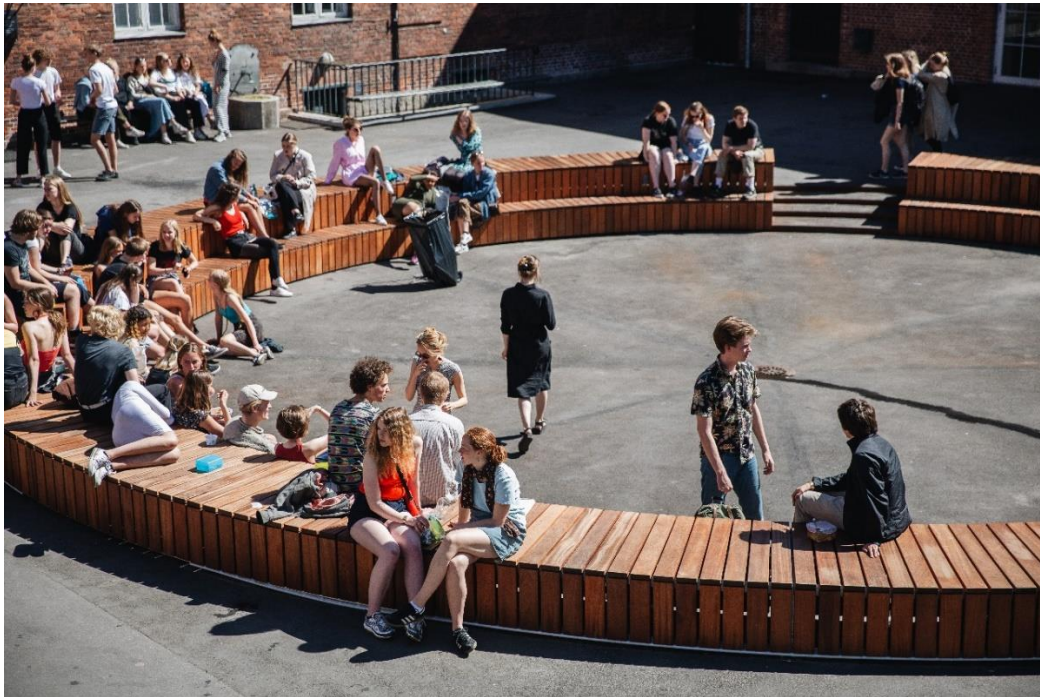
3.1.1 The governance of design

The design of the built environment is the result of the continuous intervention of a wide range of actors and decision-makers. Since each actor has its own interests, goals and motivations, the development process is marked by a constant negotiation system leading to a pluralistic decision process (Adams, 1994). This in turn leads to a complex process of negotiation over often divergent interests and over how design quality came to be interpreted by the different actors. Within these processes, design professionals are one of the key players for achieving successful built outcomes. However, external factors, such as site constraints, client's aims and regulations have a strong influence on the choices made by designers, who have to reconcile all of these and produce a coherent and appealing design (Imrie and Street, 2011).

Among the range of actors that intervene in these processes, the public sector has the responsibility to guarantee the enhancement of the public realm and to promote a sustainable development. Based on these principles, the public sector seeks to regulate the development process and promote the efficient use of resources through the planning system, building codes and other regulations, and the provision of infrastructures and services (Carmona et al., 2003, p. 227). By setting the public policy and regulatory framework it provides the context for private sector investment decision-making (Adams and Tiesdell, 2013).

Nevertheless, it is widely recognized that in the last decades there have been significant changes in the role of the state in society, in which market forces play an increasingly significant role. The rise of neo-liberal ideas, deregulation, privatization of public services and public-private partnerships have all contributed to a loss of power of the state. Despite these developments it is argued that the role of the government should be maintained and should be inspirational, leading by example (Harvey, 2008; Nelissen, 1999). Therefore, the role of the government has extended to a new dimension: in addition to defining the regulatory framework,

it also takes an active role of leadership, disseminating a message of quality and promoting the general public's appreciation of architectural, urban and landscape culture.



3.1: Renovation of a school yard area improving its functional and comfort, in Christianshavns Gymnasium, Copenhagen, Denmark, designed by BOLG landscape architects, 2017 © Dennis Lehmann

In this sense, the term governance rather than government has gained popularity because it embodies the notion that an entire range of institutions, actors, tools, and relationships are involved in the process of governing – a notion that better portrays a new way of thinking about state capabilities and state-society relationships (Pierre and Peters, 2000). In fact, the concept of governance reveals that the state actors must operate in new ways (Rhodes, 1997), which should not be ‘based on the use of authority and sanctions of government’ (Stoker, 1998). Consequently, rather than command-and-control, the public sector’s principal instruments become those of bargaining, negotiation, and persuasion (Tiesdell and Adams, 2011).

In this context, the concept of *urban design governance* fits well with this new way of governing, shifting the emphasis on policy delivery from (direct) management to (indirect) enablement. Matthew Carmona (2021) defines *urban design governance* as the ‘intervention in the means and processes of designing and managing the built environment in order to shape both processes and outcomes in a defined public interest. It achieves this by intervening in the decision-making environment of development stakeholders (whether public or private) in order that their decisions have a clear place-based quality dimension.’

This means that the role of the state is much more than just ‘controlling’ or ‘guiding’ design and development form. The public sector has the potential to influence the development process and the quality of the built environment through the employment of a wide range of statutory and non-statutory functions. As the values and practices of market actors have a major

influence on the quality of places, the public sector also has the potential to influence the quality of places through the use of non-statutory instruments, such as information, persuasion, education, and management, as well as, by the mobilization of resources to influence actor's behaviours and change mind-sets towards better built outcomes (João Bento, 2017).

3.1.2 Design quality: the need for public intervention

Before exploring the policy tools available to the state to promote high-quality environments, it is necessary to address the broader question of the public sector's legitimacy to intervene in the processes of built environment design. From an urban planning perspective, public intervention and regulation of urban development are considered necessary responses to market failure (Adams, 1994). Therefore, the public sector has the responsibility to protect the public interest as the market alone cannot ensure good-quality environments (Carmona et al., 2003). The problem with this equation is that the public interest is a complex concept and in matters of architecture and urban design most of the times there is no consensus on what constitutes good design. For this reason, public intervention in design processes, particularly in issues of design control has been the cause of much conflict and tension between public and private actors, typically with architects and planners in opposite sides (Hall, 1996, p. 1).

The most persistent critique of spatial design policy is based on the argument that design is essentially a subjective discipline. In this view, any attempt to influence design through statutory processes is inevitably value-landed and arbitrary and constrains design freedom and private property rights (Carmona et al., 2003, p. 244). However, most of the criticisms about design control focus on aesthetic and stylistic aspects of development and neglect important aspects of urban design such as functionality, integration, etc. Based on the argument that design is largely a subjective matter and generally regarded as a 'no-go' area for planners, some local authorities use this as a justification for not offering more constructive advice about what good design might be (Ibidem, p. 36). In this sense, the debate about design control which focuses only on issues of architectural design and external appearance is a narrow view. Instead, design control should focus on an overriding concern with urban design over architecture (design of buildings) and aesthetic issues (Carmona, 1996).

Nevertheless, the design quality of the built environment – buildings, streets, parks, and public spaces – has a profound effect on people's wellbeing because everyone uses buildings and their surroundings in their daily lives. Consequently, the design quality of the built environment is a matter of collective interest (AAP, 1996). As Simmons (Simmons, 2008, p. 2) points out: 'No building exists only for the people who paid for it or who use it. Everybody has to live with it. Streets and parks belong to us all.' This means that although many organisations and individuals have an interest in the design and use of places, design quality cannot be solely a matter of individual interests. Therefore, the conflict of interests existing in society about the urban form and environment needs to be mediated by the public sector in order to guarantee an effective balance between individual and public interests. As Hall (Hall, 1996, p. 2) notes: 'quality in the context of urban design is a public matter and must (...) be derived, wholly

or partially, from the public interest and must also be a legitimate concern of local government organizations.’

Furthermore, the functioning of the market alone is not able to generate qualified urban environments. In general, developers are strongly guided by commercial interests and market considerations, which do not take a longer-term view (AAP, 1996). Aiming to appropriate the development value of sites, their objectives are essentially financial and short-term (Carmona et al., 2003, p. 223). Therefore, public sector intervention and regulation of the development process is a natural response to the dysfunctions of land and property markets (Ibidem, p.238). This means that some form of public intervention and regulation of development is inevitable.

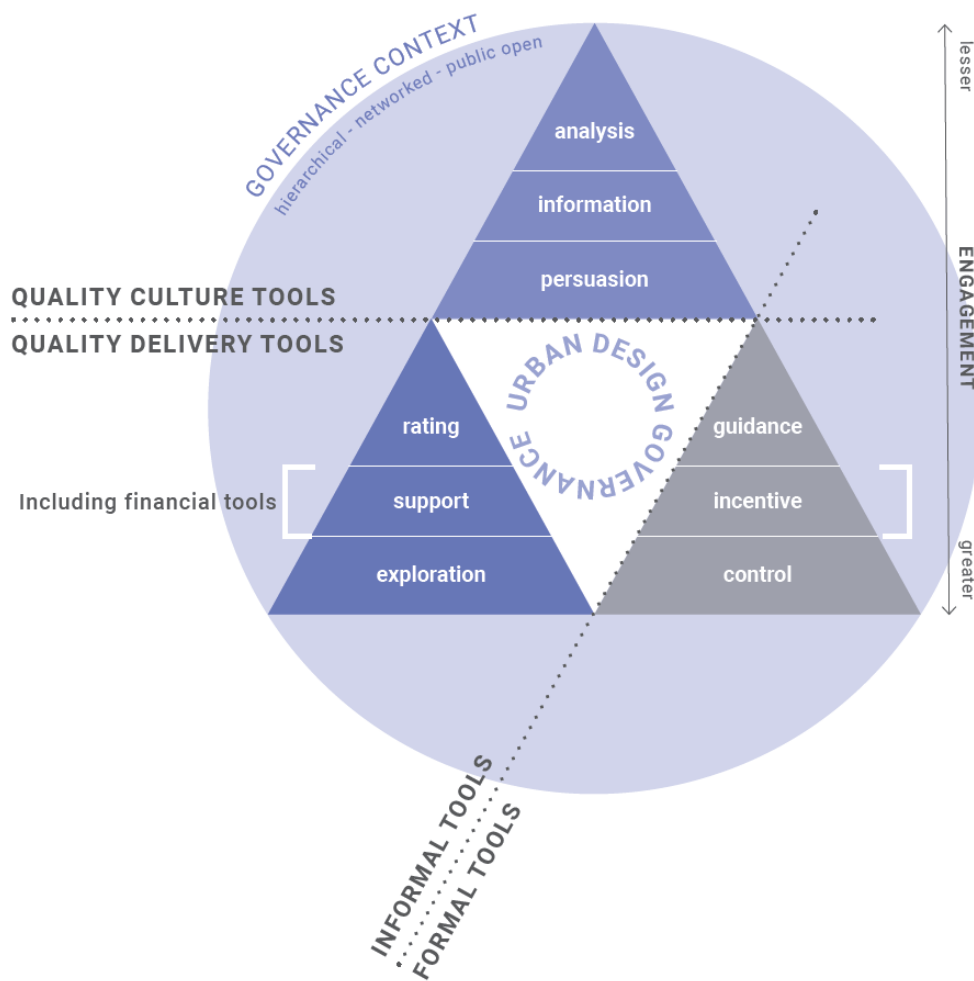
Assuming that public intervention on the design process is a condition to safeguard the public interest, the debate on design policy and control is not about the need for ‘some type of intervention but rather about the methods employed and the exact nature of design that is being controlled’ (Carmona et al., 2003; Hall, 1996, p. 2). Therefore, the basic question is not whether or not the state should intervene, but with *which* means. Hall (1996) argues that if design quality is an important aspect for the quality of life of citizens, then it is legitimate for the public sector to attempt to influence and improve the design quality of developments, mitigating inequalities and safeguarding the public interest.

3.1.3 Typology of urban design governance tools

One of the strategies to promote design quality is to adopt a range of tools and processes that can steer different development actors towards specific goals and stimulate better design outcomes. Which exactly are those tools, however, varies according to the specific governance context where they are employed thereby reflecting the diversity of administrative and political traditions across Europe. In fact, each jurisdiction, be it a nation state, a region or a municipality, has its own specific processes of urban design governance (Carmona, 2021).

Different typologies of tools have been proposed in relevant literature but there is no widely accepted consensus as of yet. Recently, the research project Urban Maestro (UM), that ran from 2019 to 2021 (<https://urbanmaestro.org/>), mapped out and identified innovative informal tools of urban design governance across Europe and beyond. Following qualitative cross-national comparative research (Mangen, 1999), the UM project used different research / learning approaches to gather and capture information about the diverse approaches to urban design governance across Europe, proposing a ‘Typology of urban design governance tools’.

The UM typology derives and evolves from previous research work developed by Carmona (2017), which is built upon two foundations: his continued examination of design policy literature over the last years and, on the one hand, and his study of the work of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), an advisory body operating in England from 1999 to 2011, on the other (Carmona, 2017; Carmona, Natarajan, & de Magalhães, 2016).



3.2: Urban Maestro' typology of urban design governance tools (Source: Carmona, 2021)

The first point is that the UM typology distinguishes the tools by whether they are '*formal*' or '*informal*' in nature. *Formal tools* are tied to the regulatory responsibilities of the state, as legally defined, using the hard powers of the state. In other words, they are designed to execute what is required of the state, formally 'directing' decision-making processes relating to the design of projects and places. *Informal tools*, on the contrary, are discretionary and therefore optional, drawing on the state's soft powers, 'to encourage and cajole development actors, but in a discretionary (non-obligatory) manner' (Carmona, 2021, p. 4).

A second point is that the UM typology differentiates *Quality Culture* tools from *Quality Delivery* tools. The former focuses primarily on influencing the broad culture in which the quality of design is prioritised whilst the latter concentrates on shaping actual projects and places. In other words, *Culture tools* seek to establish a positive decision-making environment to prioritise design quality; whereas *Delivery tools* 'steer those decision-making processes in a more focussed and directive manner, helping to ensure that from intervention to intervention, design quality is delivered' (Ibidem) (See figure).

Following this classification, the UM typology defined three categorisations of tools: i) informal quality culture tools, ii) informal quality delivery tools and iii) formal quality delivery tools. An additional fourth category could be foreseen – formal quality culture tools – including, for example, mandatory subjects about the built environment on children’s educational curriculums. Nonetheless, this was omitted from the typology as formal educational policy is not considered part of the decision-making sphere of built environment policymakers (Ibidem). Yet, as in all typologies, the categorisation of the tools should not be rigidly used as they are a simplification of complex governance tools, where most policy instruments may have a combination of formal and informal components as well as both culture and delivery effects (Ibid).

Very briefly outlined, the *formal quality delivery tools* encompass a range of more conventional instruments, such as regulations, development plans, design standards, state subsidies and investment, construction permits, development consent mechanisms, expropriation modalities, etc. They can be classified as forms of Guidance, Incentive and Control. Nonetheless, as Carmona suggests (2021), although these tools are good at ‘preventing the worst forms of development, they are often less successful at stimulating the best’.

On the informal side, the UM project identified a wide range of informal tools of urban design governance being employed across Europe that exist ‘outside the formal legislative processes, and shape the design decision-making environment through educating, encouraging and nudging stakeholders towards better design practices, sometimes indirectly through shaping the culture of quality (...) and sometimes directly with a focus on the delivery of particular projects and places.’ (Ibid., p. 7). These were classified into two meta categories of tools:

- *Informal quality culture tools* – it includes three types: *Analysis*, which refers to the research or audit capabilities of governmental or advisory bodies; *Information*, which includes the creation of best practice guides, case studies libraries or education & training initiatives; and *Persuasion*, which includes awareness raising activities, such as design awards or campaigns, and target influence through advocacy or partnerships.
- *Informal quality delivery tools* – it includes three types: *Rating*, which refers to different types of formative evaluation tools, such as indicators or informal design review, and summative evaluation tools, such as certification schemes or competitions; *Support*, which includes indirect support tools, notably financial support to key delivery organisations, and direct support tools, such as the provision of hands-on professional enabling, negotiation or advice; and finally, *Exploration*, which refers to different types of proactive engagement tools, such as design-led community participation, and professional investigation tools, such as research by design and testing and on-site experimentation (Ibidem).

For the purposes of this report, the above ‘Typology of urban design governance tools’ will be used as a useful model to examine the types of instruments, approaches and actions that might be employed by policymakers to influence the production of urban environments, namely when examining the role of the state and city architects across the case studies.

In most real-life scenarios, it is unlikely that just one of these tools would be enough to accomplish a desired outcome – a mix-and-match approach would normally be necessary. To circle back to the position of a state and city architect, it is also highly likely that the intended outcome would have much more to do with *indirect* effects (for example, influencing the behaviour of actors involved in the development process) than with direct ones (changing one particular project, for instance).

To better understand the main instruments used and the initiatives proposed, the next chapter will review the role of state/city architects from an across-the-board perspective, providing practical examples of state/city architects in Europe and beyond. Before that, the following section will discuss the notion of spatial design leadership and the role of design champions.

3.2 Spatial design leadership

3.2.1 Place leadership as a tool

The discussion on the concept of leadership and the set of attributes it entails has gradually transformed into a specialized field of research in management, business and organisational literature. Management manuals usually define leadership as a process in which one individual influence a group of individuals towards a common goal (Collinge and Gibney, 2010). In this perspective, leadership encompasses the ability of an individual or an organization to lead or guide other individuals, teams, or organizations. Nevertheless, according to Northouse (Northouse, 2010), the notion of leadership tends to have multiple dimensions and approaches depending on the context it is used. Addressing this issue, after an extensive literature review, Winston and Patterson (Winston and Patterson, 2006, p. 7) offer the following integrative definition of leadership:

“A leader is one or more people who selects, equips, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives.”

In this view, leadership is strongly associated with the idea of movement and of getting a body of followers to move in an intended direction to achieve an institutional goal. In management literature, the concept has also been associated with the idea of design leadership where the strategic value of design has become increasingly important in differentiating products that companies cannot afford to ignore (Turner, 2016). Companies such as Apple or Audi are usually credited with appreciating the value of design quality and providing design leadership.

Within the scope of planning theory, place leadership has been entangled with urban governance and collaborative planning literature (Healey, 1998), namely with its implication in place-making (Collinge and Gibney, 2010). There is a huge amount of literature in this field that examines the role of regions and local authorities as ‘place-shapers’, responsible for

developing the local economy and the built environment. Considering that local authorities and politicians have a significant role in the definition of urban areas, strong and committed place leadership has the potential to enhance place-making in the city. City mayors are often referred to as visionary place leaders with a strong interest in better urban spaces (e.g., Mayor Pasqual Maragall of the city of Barcelona) and supporting the relationship between quality of place and the ability of areas to attract population, investment, employment, and visitors (UK, 2016).

In this context, place leadership involves creating the right conditions under which better places can emerge and setting the urban agenda, enabling better built outcomes (Adams and Tiesdell, 2013). Successful local place leaders are able to coordinate and communicate a vision of a fairer, more efficient, and sustainable city. In addition, place leaders have the ability to balance the economic as well as the environment and social qualities of place. Therefore, place leadership is important in place-making as it drives action towards a certain goal in the future, reducing risks and increasing public participation (Ibidem). According to Adams & Tiesdell (2013), four specific tasks characterise good place leadership:

- *Promoting a place-making culture* – convincing politicians, stakeholders, and the general public to move beyond standardised regulations as a means to achieve place quality
- *Charting a vision for the future* – define specific goals to be achieved at the service of a wider agenda for better places
- *Influencing and motivating people* – explaining the specific value of creating better places for distinct groups and engaging them in the process
- *Mobilizing resources* – facilitating partnerships that might be able to provide the necessary resources for projects

Although this study does not intend to review the growing literature on this topic, the notion of place leadership is useful for the discussion on the role of the government in promoting better designed environments, namely the role played by the state/city architect and the impact it may have on the wider system of design governance. Considering the complex interplay of public and private stakeholders that are continuously contributing to the transformation of the built environment, the way that public authorities position themselves towards the development process — either as a more passive or a more proactive actor — will have a decisive effect on the overall quality of places. If governments wish to play a leading role in the design and place agenda, they need to take on their responsibility in placemaking and provide spatial design leadership.

3.2.2 The role of design champions

As discussed in the next chapter, in some countries there is a long-standing tradition of having a state architect (referred to as Chief Government architect in some of them), while in others this position has been created recently to champion design across public administration. In the UK, for example, a number of individuals have been appointed by several organisations to function as proactive champions of better design, entrusted with leadership, educational and

advocacy roles (Tiesdell and Adams, 2011)². To that same end, several countries have established arms-length organisations to function as express design champions. Such is the case of Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS), which will be discussed further ahead in this report.

In this sense, the idea of ‘design champion’ embraces individual positions as well as organisations. Examples of the former include individuals appointed as design champions within national or local authorities (state or city architects) and private companies, supported by advisors and administrative staff. Examples of the latter may include an entire department or advisory board in a public organisation, a non-departmental public body (NDPB) or a non-profit private association. This means that the role of design champion can be played by an individual as well as by an organisation dedicated to promoting and advocating for better places. Although this research is focused on state and city architects, which are entrusted with the championing of design in public administration and within local authorities, the concept of ‘design champion’ will be useful to this research because it helps to frame different policy instruments that governments may use to offer spatial design leadership across the case studies.

Mission of design champions

Looking at the British context (although this problem can be found in other countries too), Tiesdel & Adams (2011) notice that the lack of design skills within local planning authorities has long been a concern of the design community, developers, and policymakers. Thus, appointing a design advisor (and other design staff) was a practical way of addressing this skills deficit. Analysing the role of ‘design champions’ within local authorities in the UK, Tiesdell (2011) states that the role of design champions can be positioned in a spectrum — ranging from the more limited role of the ‘design advisor’ to the more expansive one of ‘change agent’ or ‘change leader’.

In its narrowest sense, the design advisor “operates within, and adds capacity to, the statutory planning system and is primarily development-control-oriented, supporting ‘mainstream’ planning officers during pre-application discussions on development projects and thereafter on negotiations and report writing on formal applications” (Ibidem, 2011, p. 237). Taking on a more proactive role, it is possible that the appointed design advisor may also ‘help shape design policies in development plans, development/design briefs and area strategies/frameworks and masterplans’ (Ibid.).

² According to CABE (2006), in 2006 there were design champions in England and Wales in 65 per cent of local authorities, 78 per cent of primary care trusts, 67 per cent of local education authorities, 83 per cent of police authorities, and a growing number of volume housebuilders.

	Design advisor	Change agent
Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less public, less high-profile role ▪ Limited engagement with local media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More public, more high-profile role ▪ Significant engagement with media
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More restricted ▪ Design support – to increase design capacity/skill level, and to provide design support for mainstream development management/control planners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More expansive ▪ Change agent – to provoke, enable and lead organisational culture change ▪ Provide design advice ▪ Represent the city council externally
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operational, detail ▪ Engagement with planning as a reactive development control/ management activity ▪ Architectural and urban architectural design (first-order design) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic, broad brush ▪ Engagement with planning as a proactive city-making/place-shaping activity ▪ Urban design and place-making (second-order design)
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct (hands-on) involvement with projects, planning applications, design review, pre-application negotiations, design/development briefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involvement with visions and organisation cultural change at the strategic level ▪ Provide design advice
Timespan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuous – permanent salaried position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Temporary – time-limited appointment

3.2: Spectrum of archetypal design champion roles (Adapted from: Steve Tiesdell (2011, p. 237))

Nonetheless, some local authorities may appoint a design champion as change agent with a much more ambitious role. According to the two authors, this is a “strategic and political role, in which the change agent develops a vision of positive change and leads a project to transform an organisation by getting people – politicians, local authority officers, the local design and development communities, amenity groups and the general public – to think differently about place-making; to alter everyday working practices; and ultimately to achieve better outcomes on the ground” (Ibid.). This point is discussed in Chapter 7.

Whether a design champion is an internal or an external position affects both what they are expected to do and how they are able to perform their role. Nevertheless, the set of “skills and attributes needed by a design champion is thus deeply situational, since it depends on the organisation and its corporate culture, and also the change project’s strategic relevance, acceptability, time frame, available resources etc” (Tiesdell, 2011b, p. 241).

Not all cities and municipalities require a design champion with such an enhanced role, of course. Where a place-making culture is already well rooted it might be more beneficial to have advisors operating at the more limited end of the spectrum. Other locations though, may need a larger project of change, for instance, in order to establish new and innovative regulatory / planning frameworks for real estate developments – and to trigger a wider cultural change in the way place-making and place quality are regarded, in all of which the ‘change agent’ plays a key role.

3.2.3 The skills of individual design champions

As mentioned in the previous section, the appointment of a design champion is a capacity-building instrument, which represents an ‘investment’ in “strategic capacity and typically involving organisational culture change” (Ibidem, p. 237). In 2006, the former CABI published a small booklet, directed to housebuilders, arguing for the importance of appointing a ‘design champion’ within their corporation who would be responsible for delivering design quality. In CABI’s perspective, the purpose of a design champion would be to “promote good design in every area of the organization, ensuring that design issues play a central role in corporate strategy and deliver demonstrable commercial benefits” (CABI, 2006).

In this sense, it is argued that the added value of design champions is not limited to high-profile projects and should instead help embed design quality concerns in everyday working practices of an organisation, inasmuch as dedicated and determined leadership is required to create places with consistently good design quality. According to CABI (2006), the key duties of a design champion should include:

- leading from the front and generating enthusiasm for good design by promoting its value as a catalyst for innovation and customer satisfaction;
- ensuring that all relevant staff is aware of design external advice produce by public bodies;
- providing a visible point of contact for external organisations and internal discussion.

More specifically, a design champion should be/have:

- an executive or a non-executive board member knowledgeable about design and able to persuade colleagues both within the organisation and in the wider industry of the commercial and social benefits of design quality;
- able to collaborate with all relevant teams within the organisation;
- able to see the bigger picture and help develop a corporate vision;
- committed and enthusiastic for superior design;
- significant professional experience in design or a recognised design qualification;
- technical support available within the organisation;
- an understanding of the industry context and commercial relationships across the supply chain (Ibid.).

Although most of the characteristics listed above are quite ambiguous, they are relevant for the discussion about the set of skills required from a design champion in order to bring about a change in organisational culture. As discussed earlier about the concept of leadership, a design champion must be a person who is able to convince others to change their way of doing things and move to a specific direction. To achieve this, the level of power or influence upon others as well as the type of resources available to him/her will be decisive elements. Primarily, the design champion’s place in the hierarchy will determine his/her authority within the organization, and therefore the extent to which he/she is able to connect different departments and maintain high standards, and a consistent approach – all of which require a higher-level position.

Secondly, professional experience in design or a recognised design qualification will be a relevant attribute to the design champion. Most followers, built environment professionals in this case, will only pay proper attention if they acknowledge their leader's skills and expertise in design. Personality and motivation will also be important characteristics for those key actors whose role is to champion design. A person without a sincere passion and commitment for good design will not be able to persuade colleagues both within the organization and in the wider system of production of the commercial and social benefits that design quality can offer.

As some of the case studies at national level will show, the selection process for the state architect position is very demanding and comprises a series of steps and interview procedures based on multi-criteria assessment that evaluates such aspects as personality, the ability to solve complex problems and communication skills.

4. STATE AND CITY ARCHITECTS: AN OVERVIEW

The previous chapter introduced the theoretical background on design governance and spatial design leadership that will be used as a framework to analyse the state and city architect teams on each of the case studies. Considering the aims of this research, this chapter intends to provide a snapshot of the different state and city architect teams in Europe and beyond. As was the case with design champions, the position of state or city architect is a long-standing tradition in several states and cities around the globe, while in others it has just been created. Similarly, the main duties vary across the local contexts since each position tries to address specific local issues and specific characteristics. There are, however, common elements and apparent influences across regions and borders.

4.1 State architects in Europe and beyond

At the global level, many national and state governments have a public official in its administrative organisation bearing the titles of 'State Architect', 'Chief Government Architect' or 'Bouwmeester' (hereinafter referred to as State Architect). The state architect is often supported by a small team composed of a group of officials and administrative staff, the size and structure of which varies according to its specific skills (Bento, 2012b). The state architect and its subordinates usually form an organisational unit with the same name of the state architect (e.g., the Office of the State Architect, Division of the State Architect, Chief Government Architect Team, or similar).

Although the specific skills and areas of responsibility of a state architect vary according to the national/state context, they normally involve responsibility for the design and/or construction of public buildings. With the expansion of the welfare state, governments needed to plan and build a wide range of public facilities, such as administrative buildings, schools, universities, hospitals, medical centres, justice courts, defence, and security buildings, etc. Therefore, there was a practical need for someone responsible for the design of public buildings, usually in the Office of Public Works or in a similar body in charge of the planning and development of public amenities. This means that the state architect will work closely with other technical departments composed of a wide variety of professionals (e.g., structural and safety engineers, surveyors, urban planners, etc.) and financial or law departments.

However, the need for proper facilities to perform state activities is shared by all sectors and levels of the administration, involving every public state policy, such as education, health, justice, defence, etc. In many countries, each sectoral area has its own small department of public works, responsible for the management and maintenance of their sectoral building stock, while in other countries this is centralised in major building and property agencies.

Regardless of the size and distribution of the architecture pie slices, most of these state departments do not have the capacity to prepare the designs and specifications for larger public (as in state-owned) building projects. Therefore, the office of the State architect helps with the process of selecting and overseeing the work of architectural firms contracted by the state. Following this phase, in some cases it also helps with the reviewing and approval of designs prepared by private-sector architects.

Taking into consideration the wide range of sectoral departments involved in design, the role of the state architect is to provide leadership and strategic advice to the government with the aim of improving the design of public buildings and spaces. Besides planning and designing public buildings, the state architect is also called to advise the government on building regulations or other related legislation. It also contributes to policy and design advocacy, namely in the definition and development of architecture and built environment policy.

Although the specific duties of a state architect may vary from state to state, they may include:

- Preparing designs and specifications for state-owned building or renovation projects;
- Selecting and overseeing the work of architectural firms contracted by the public sector to prepare designs and specifications for state-owned building projects;
- Reviewing and approving designs prepared by private-sector architects for buildings owned by the state such as schools, courts, hospitals, etc;
- Providing advice and participating in the development of building codes and regulations;
- Preparing and organising design competitions of ideas or for public buildings and spaces, as well as being part of jury panels in competitions or awards;
- Developing and managing public funds intended for state building construction programs;
- Coordinating and providing inspection programs for public building projects.

It should be noted that the state architect teams are normally separated from the licensing board or professional institutions responsible for regulating the profession by admission regulations (like exams) and providing architects with a licence to practise architecture in the country/state. In most countries, only people with qualifications as architects and registered at the Architects Registration Board or at a professional organization/association can practise or do business bearing the title of architect.

State Architects in Europe

This report focuses on specific case studies set in Europe, described in later sections. For a brief overview of state architects, however, it would be useful to take a quick glimpse at the European landscape. This regards specifically the role of state or government architects, where they exist, and not the formal government structures dealing with architecture & built environment policies, such as ministries or departments – although there are many cases in which, to varying extents, such departments take on some of the roles mentioned in the previous section.

The Netherlands have had a Chief Architect since the beginning of the nineteenth century, under different names (The Netherlands, 2006). Nowadays, a Board of Government Advisors and a small staff team assist the Dutch Chief Architect. Among other things, the Chief Architect promotes and monitors the urban integration and architectural quality of all government buildings, harmonising architecture with urban and rural planning, monument preservation and the use of art works. He or she also plays an active role as design champion (see section 5.3).

The Dutch Chief Architect would later on inspire Belgian regions to create their own version of the position, which they called 'Bouwmeester' (master builder), starting with Flanders at the end of the 1990s, which is one of the case studies included in this research. In 2000, Antwerp created a similar position at city level (stadsbouwmeester), to oversee urban development at a citywide scale³. In 2009, the Brussels Government chose its first Bouwmeester for a five-year term, followed by Charleroi, in 2013, and by Ghent, in 2017. Adding to this singularity, a dedicated team named 'Architecture Cell' was introduced in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and has been providing support to contractors and promoting architecture⁴. In 2019, the Walloon government announced its intention to create a bouwmeester for the region (Wallonie, 2019).



4.1: First meeting of the 'European State Architect Network', that brought together the master architect of the European Commission, four state architects (Sweden, Ireland, Flanders and The Netherlands) and two city architects (Brussels and Groningen), during the New European Bauhaus – festival that took place in Brussels, June 2022 © College van Rijksadviseurs.

In the UK, the Scottish government has had a Chief Architect at least since the end of the 1990s, in charge of supervising the architectural policy (see Scottish case). In England, this has been an intermittent position. The most recent was in office in the Ministry of Housing,

³ <https://www.antwerpenmorgen.be/nl/toekomstvisies/kwaliteitsbewaking/over>

⁴ For more info: <https://cellule.archi>

Communities and Local Government between 2019 and 2021, working on different matters, such as the National Design Guide, the National Model Design Code and other design-related initiatives across the country (e.g., the Home of 2030 competition)⁵.

In a case that will be further detailed later, the Irish policy created the position of state architect in 2009, primarily as an upgrade of the previous position of 'principal architect', to lead the Architecture Services of the Office of Public Works (see Section 5.2).

More recently, in September 2018, the Swedish government appointed its first national architect, in the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning Agency, which is responsible for the supervision of the new national architecture policy for Sweden⁶, which will be discussed further ahead (see section 5.5).

At pan-European level, there is a Commission Chief Architect (Maître Architecte/Bouwmeester) at the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics (Management of Real Estate) of the European Commission⁷.

State Architects elsewhere

In the United States of America, there is a long tradition of state architects. At federal level, there is a Chief Architect for the Public Buildings Service (PBS) of the General Services Administration (GSA). Considered one of the most influential architectural roles in the federal government, the Chief Architect is the senior advisor of all matters related to federal architecture and design for GSA's capital construction program as well as overseeing thousands of PBS owned and leased assets across the country (e.g., federal agencies). The Chief Architect also coordinates the work of the Regional Chief Architects, which oversee GSA's implementation of national Design Excellence policies while providing individualized subject-matter expertise to project managers within the agency's 11 regional offices.

At state level, the position of state architect exists in several states: Ohio, California, Colorado, and Tennessee, to mention just a few. To provide two examples, the Division of the State Architect of California oversees the design and construction of public schools, community colleges, and various other state-owned and leased facilities. The division also develops accessibility, structural safety, and historical building codes and standards used in various public and private buildings in the state of California. The Office of the State architect (OSA) of Colorado is statutorily responsible for the administration of state funded planning, construction, energy conservation and real estate transactions in state agencies and higher education institutions. Additional responsibilities include the establishment of policies and procedures, the provision of technical support and training, the recommendation of the annual controlled maintenance state-wide budget and state agency capital construction budget, among others.

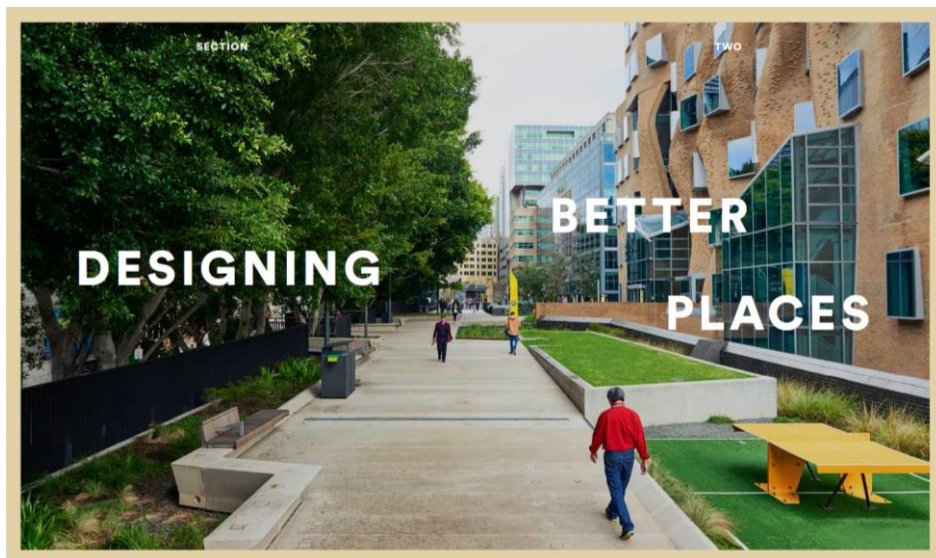
⁵ See: <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/andy-von-bradsky-quits-as-governments-chief-architect>.

⁶ Sweden's National Bill for architecture and design (Prop. 2017/18: 110).

⁷ See: https://op.europa.eu/en/web/who-is-who/person/-/person/COM_00006A3F7AC3

The position of state architect is also well established in Australia. The country employs a Government Architect for each of its territories except Tasmania, where the position was created in 2009 but went under review and finally lapsed when its holder resigned in 2012⁸. New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia have had Government Architects (under various names) since the nineteenth century, while in Northern Territory, Victoria and Capital Territory the position was created after 2000.

Each territory office is different, with slight variations in its role and responsibilities. In general, the government architect's duties involve providing advice and expert opinion/evaluation on particular projects as well as fostering collaborative relationships with external bodies (universities, cultural foundations, etc.). Advice and consultation are provided to other governmental bodies; government architects might assess private development proposals, but, as a rule, they do not engage with private developers in the design process. Also shared across territories is the responsibility to champion design quality and to promote the role of and appreciation for architecture and urban design.



4.2: Inner cover of the Australian New South Wales (NSW) government's policy "Better Placed: a strategic design policy for the built environment of New South Wales", page 21, © Government Architect of NSW.

Finally, the Australian state architects are connected through an informal network, the Government Architects Network of Australia (GANA)⁹. This is a national collaborative exchange platform, which holds annual meetings and whose aim is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information between the different offices and to enable them to benefit from each other's experience, skills, and resources.

⁸ See: <https://www.architectureanddesign.com.au/news/industry-news/tasmanian-government-architect-resigns-position-un>

⁹ See: <http://www.gana.gov.au/>

4.2 City architects in Europe

Several municipalities across Europe have appointed city architects to work as local authority design champions with the explicit task of providing design leadership and expert knowledge. As with the position of state architect, its name can vary from city architect, chief architect, 'bouwmeester' (master builder), 'stadsbouwmeester' (city master builder), design champion, urban architect, etc. (hereinafter referred to as city architect).

The mission and tasks of a city architect vary according to the specific governance context where it operates. As discussed in the previous chapter, they may range from an internal advisor responsible for promoting high standards of design to a more expansive change agent cultivating an environment that prioritises design quality. Usually, the former is supported by a team or a division that provides design capacity to the local authority and operates within the statutory planning system and management of buildings' applications, supporting planning officers during pre-application discussions on development projects and thereafter on negotiations and report writing on formal applications. The city architect may also take on a more proactive role and help shape design policies in development plans, development/design briefs and area strategies/frameworks and masterplans (Tiesdell, 2011b).

In some more ambitious cities, the city architect is appointed mostly as a change agent, cultivating the conditions under which place-making rises up the urban agenda, enabling better outcomes on the ground (Ibidem). In these cases, addressing the city as a whole, the city architect usually defines a strategic vision for the city in the medium and long term to stimulate an ongoing debate about the built environment aiming for different stakeholders and audiences, internally and externally. The city architect may work as an external adviser independently from the local department that is in charge of the planning and building of control mechanisms, according to the municipality's preferences. This corresponds later to the city architect profile in the Nordic cities where this position exists, such as in Denmark (see Section 6.2).

For example, in the Czech Republic, the role of chief architect has existed in municipalities across the country at least since the 1960s (Jaroslav Sedlecký, 2020). This was born from the practical need to set up spatial planning teams to develop studies and plans for the city's administration, where architects step in because of their qualification in spatial planning. This led to the creation of a new organisational under the name of Department of Chief Architect and the corresponding Chief Architect of the city (Ibidem). Nevertheless, this position gradually disappeared over the years, or was incorporated in other departments under different names and a new set of responsibilities. More recently, the position has been re-established in several Czech cities under the name of city architect or chief architect, with the mission of providing design capacity and developing strategic visions/plans for the city and its development (Ibid.).

In 2020, according to the Czech Chamber of Architects, there were a total of 127 city architects in Czechia, as well as seven architects of city districts in Prague and a regional architect of the Ústí nad Labem Region (Lešek, 2020, p. 31). Nonetheless, the name and nature of the position

varies across the country and its holder can either work as internal employee or as an external expert of the municipality. Although the specific tasks also vary, the Czech city architects facilitate and mediate the interests of various groups engaged in different activities, such as monitoring the city development, consulting private proposals, preparing, and developing strategic studies or plans, providing design support to the municipality and developing specific interventions to improve the built environment (Ibidem).

The position of city design advisor is also growing in other countries across Europe. In The Netherlands, for example, around 32 municipalities have appointed a city architect, referred to in Dutch as *Bouwmeesters* (master builders),¹⁰ for a certain period as advisors on spatial quality. In the past, these city architects also designed buildings for the cities for which they worked. Over time, the position has developed into an (independent) architect with a broad advisory role in the area of spatial quality for the municipality (Schipper and Jansen, 2021).

Sometimes, the Dutch city architects may also chair spatial design committees, such as Spatial Quality Teams (Q-teams), that provide design advice on enhancing the spatial quality of buildings, streets, neighbourhoods, cities, landscapes and regions (addressing complex spatial issues or policy documents, Q-teams do not design projects directly but rather use various design governance tools to stimulate and preserve spatial quality)¹¹; or Heritage subcommittees, which assess schemes that fall within the city's views on protected or municipal heritage plans.



4.3: Example of a site visit of a Spatial Quality team, that are constituted by different stakeholders as informal design advisory boards in The Netherlands © College van Rijksadviseurs.

¹⁰ For more info see: <https://bouwmeestersnederland.nl/bouwmeesters>

¹¹ For more info see: <https://urbanmaestro.org/example/q-teams/>

Since 2004, some Dutch provinces have also been appointing (independent) advisers on spatial quality, acting as design champions or increasingly as advisory teams (currently seven provinces). The provincial spatial quality advisers usually follow the structure of an advisory board, such as the one set up by the Government Architect in 2004 with the Board of Government Advisers (CRa) (see section 5.3) (Ibidem).

Although with a different nature, the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has recently appointed 50 Mayor's Design Advocates — independent experts — to work on the Good Growth by Design programme, an architecture and spatial design strategy of the Great London Authority. According to the Mayor's webpage, the aim is for London's public organisations to create quality buildings and public spaces that will enrich London communities now and in the future. They will support London authority in several areas by integrating the London Design Review Panel and providing independent expert advice on the design quality of Mayor funded projects or projects with particular significance for Londoners¹².

Considering the great diversity of the roles and missions of city architects' teams across Europe, four city capitals of European countries — Budapest, Brussels, Riga and Warsaw — where this position exists will be briefly reviewed below, based on the findings of the Urban Maestro project, already referred to in the previous chapter.

Budapest (Hungary)

The city of Budapest is a 'double-layered' municipality with one overarching office and twenty-three districts, all with their own district government comprised of an elected mayor and representative body, separate administrations, and their respective chief architects. In this context, the primary role of the Chief Architect of Budapest is to coordinate and oversee the city's urban planning policy across the twenty-three districts, promoting the conceptual development of the principles and expectations of the city planning and architecture policy. The Chief Architect uses a range of design governance tools to promote design quality, namely proactive inter-governmental advocacy and working partnerships to encourage a greater concern for design quality in the built environment amongst other city departments (Urban Maestro, 2021).

The Budapest Chief Architect's main tasks are to provide professional advice about capital and district planning tools, assisting, and coordinating the professional activities of the district chief architects; to coordinate nationally prioritized investments; to chair the Budapest Council of Architectural and Urban Planning; and to perform statutory, professional and other duties as defined by law¹³. Among other initiatives, the Chief Architect coordinated the TÉR_KÖZ funding programme/competition for interventions in public spaces, which aimed to improve the cityscape and urban environment, preserve cultural heritage and enhance local identity. This initiative was repeated four times, with the last edition being held in 2018.

¹² <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/advice-and-guidance/about-good-growth-design>

¹³ <https://www.kormanyhivatal.hu/hu/budapest/szervezeti-egyseg/allami-foepitesz>

Brussels (Belgium)

Following the appointment of the Flemish ‘bouwmeester’ and the ‘stadsbouwmeester’ for the city of Antwerp, the Brussels Government decided to create its own version of the post in 2009, naming it the Bouwmeester Maître Architecte – BMA (Chief Architect). Appointed for a five-year term, BMA’s mission and his team is to ensure the quality of urban space, both architecturally and in terms of urban planning and public space design in the Brussels-Capital Region, thus driving forward Brussels’ ambitions in urban development.



4.4: BMA team operating within the government of Brussels-Capital Region © Jonathan Ortegat

According to its webpage, the Chief Architect is an independent position, whereas its team is employed by the region planning authorities, and is responsible for assisting, advising and encouraging public and private clients, using a variety of tools¹⁴. This means that although it is financed by the Brussels government, the BMA remains an independent body and is not tied to any particular political party. This allows it to work across the board, breaking silos and working both in and outside the system (Urban Maestro, 2021). There are currently 15 people working in the BMA team using four main soft power tools:

- *Design competitions* – Over half of the organisation’s time is spent organising and conducting competition processes: a transparent and qualitative manner of selecting projects and project designers. Well organised thanks to the triple combination of an efficient programme, procedure and jury, these competitions are one of the best ways to achieve architectural quality. The competition’s selection procedures are organised in two phases with a focus on transparency, as all of the jury’s reports are published, including those on the non-winning projects. These competitions are also used for projects shaped by private developers as a means of convincing them to opt for better quality projects.

¹⁴ <https://bma.brussels>

- ‘*Quality chambers*’ (design review boards) – A formal design review aims to increase the quality of the projects being prepared for permit applications. According to the latest version of the Brussels Regional Planning Code (CoBAT/BWRO), the BMA delivers a design review on all projects submitted for a permit application exceeding a surface area of five thousand square meters. However, the BMA favours support upstream of this application, in particular via professional and transparent dialogue during a project meeting or a ‘quality chamber,’ a form of design review where expert panels review major projects.
- *Research by design* – As some projects require a preliminary design study, the research employed by design approach supports the definition of the project during the preliminary phases and highlights future possibilities for each particular site, programme, or theme. As such, it is a valuable tool for introducing proactive and creative expertise into the political decision-making on urban policy.
- *Communication* – BMA also uses diverse communication channels to promote and raise awareness about the importance of architecture and urban design quality.

Riga (Latvia)

The City Architect’s Office is a municipal agency of the City Council of Riga responsible for the design quality of architecture and urban development in the city. The office intends to facilitate and improve the work of the municipality in the supervision of design quality — upgrading the set of administrative instruments and maintaining a regular, open, timely, comprehensive, and professional discussion about the ideas and projects that are significant to the community alongside popularising the best achievements in Latvian architecture¹⁵.

In this context, the mission of the city architect’s office is to promote balanced and sustainable urban development by improving the work of the municipality in monitoring the quality of architecture and maintaining a continuous, open, and professional discussion of projects of public interest. Managed by the city architect, the office ensures supervision over and control of the quality of architecture and the urban environment of Riga, namely by i) providing advice on the design quality of new projects and urban development proposals; ii) providing opinions on detailed and local plans; and iii) consulting on the preparation of studies on the quality of the urban environment (Urban Maestro, 2021, p. 54).

The city architect’s office also develops three types of research activities: theoretical studies on urban planning and architecture, in order to explain and elaborate on urban terms and methodologies; empirical research, in order to construct datasets and draw conclusions; and research by design, in order to study urban development proposals and possible variants. The Office also organizes public debates on major new projects for the city and promotes an annual conference on issues relevant to the city’s development. Finally, the office also promotes the annual Architecture Award of Riga. Therefore, the city architect of Riga plays the role of a local authority championing design and being explicitly tasked with providing design

¹⁵ <https://arhitekts.riga.lv/rpab-11/rigas-pilsetas-arhitekts>

leadership, cross-stakeholder advocacy and cultivating the conditions under which place-making rises up the urban agenda, enabling better outcomes on the ground.

Warsaw (Poland)

With a broad mission, the city architect of Warsaw is the director of the Architecture and Spatial Planning Office, which is responsible for the spatial development policy of the city of Warsaw. The office performs a wide range of tasks such as the preparation and assessment of local municipal plans, the supervision of the design quality of building proposals, and the organization of architectural awards and related initiatives (Urban Maestro, 2021).

The scope of the office includes a wide range of skills and uses a range of governance tools for urban design, namely preparing and implementing spatial development policy; assessing the progress of local plans under development; coordinating the implementation and monitoring of key projects under the City Revitalization Programme; conducting projects related to comprehensive transformations of public spaces; operating the Urban and Architectural Commission; preparing and implementing architectural and urban design competitions and prizes, including those for public facilities and public spaces; and handling matters related to the promotion of architecture within the city itself¹⁶.

The city architect of Warsaw is tasked with providing urban design leadership, cross-stakeholder advocacy, and cultivating the conditions under which place-making can be prioritised in the city. This office has a direct impact on the quality of urban areas, inasmuch as it possesses tools encompassing both the formal and informal sides of the urban design governance toolbox (See previous section).

¹⁶ <https://architektura.um.warszawa.pl/baippp>

5. DESIGN LEADERSHIP AT STATE LEVEL: FIVE CASE STUDIES

As discussed in the previous chapter, the position of state architect and of its supporting teams has long been established in several countries and states around the world (e.g., USA or Australia). In others, the position of state architect in national or state public administration is relatively recent. Furthermore, it is still the exception in the European context and is mostly seen as a northern European phenomenon. As such, some questions about the role and importance of such a position can be raised: which are the practical advantages of having a state architect? Does the government need a state architect position to deliver good spatial design leadership? If yes, what are its main attributions and instruments? Last but not least, what has been the impact of state architects on processes of design governance? In this context, this chapter will describe the five selected case studies. For each of them, there will be a brief description of the national architecture policy and main institutional actors as well as an analysis of the role of State architect and of the tools in place, and, lastly, a section on other relevant actors.

5.1 The Flemish case

Flanders is the Dutch-speaking northern part of the Kingdom of Belgium¹⁷, a federal constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of governance. Belgium is divided into three highly autonomous regions – the Flemish Region, the Brussels Capital Region, and the Walloon Region – and three communities – the Dutch-speaking region of Flanders in the north, the French-speaking Wallonia region in the south, and the German-speaking cantons in the east¹⁸. Despite this division, the Federal Government's authority includes foreign affairs, national defence, justice, finance, social security, etc.¹⁹

Below the Federal state level, Regional and Community governments have a wide range of specific competencies: the regional government is responsible for material issues (housing, environment, space planning, economy, employment, mobility, infrastructure, etc.) and the Community government is responsible for personal issues (education, culture, sport, health, etc.). In the case of Flanders, the executive and legislative powers of the Flemish Community and the Flemish Region are exercised by one Parliament and one Government²⁰.

5.1.1 The architectural policy of Flanders

Although Flanders does not have an architectural policy formalised into a single document approved by the Parliament or the Council of Ministers, the Flemish architectural policy has been formalised through the adoption of several specific policy documents and architectural

¹⁷ Belgium has three official languages: Dutch, French and German.

¹⁸ Adding to this, Flanders and Wallonia regions are subdivided into ten provinces, which in turn are subdivided into communes and cities (municipalities).

¹⁹ See: www.belgium.be/

²⁰ Ibidem.

initiatives and by the establishment of two institutions, namely, the Flemish Government Architect, in 1998, and the Flanders Architecture Institute (VAI), in 2001.

Since the beginning of the 1990s the Flemish government has been developing initiatives to promote and raise awareness on the value of architecture. One of the first was the publication of the “Architecture in Flanders Yearbook” in 1993 (Ibelings, 2009, p. 16). Since then, the Cultural Department supports this biennial publication that provides an overview of recent architectural designs and public spaces together with essays on relevant issues and developments in the field of architecture and urbanism in Flanders²¹ (Schreurs, 2000, p. 63).

In 1994, in addition to financial support to the Belgian participation in the Venice Biennale (production and commissioning of the exhibition has alternated between Flanders and Wallonia since the early 1990s), the Flemish Arts Agency started to grant subsidies to local activities and projects of individuals and organizations in the field of architecture and design (Bento, 2012b, p. 39).

According to Liefoghe (interview, 2020), architecture policy initiatives in the cultural field were a continuation of a bottom-up movement created by several organisations throughout the 1980s that focused on the public interest of architecture, particularly on the activities of the former Architecture Museum Foundation (S/AM) in Ghent²². In addition to this, the Flanders' international arts centre ‘deSingel’ started to include architecture exhibitions in its pluriannual program in 1985 (Van Den Driessche, interview: 2020). The preparations of the Antwerp European Capital of Culture in 1993 was another key event. All these initiatives, together with the architect’s association, helped campaigning for the development of a Flemish architecture policy that was ‘already in the making’ (Liefoghe: interview, 2020).

In that same year, after the constitutional reform of May 1993, Belgium became formally a federal state divided into three regions and three communities. The intention to improve spatial quality and the quality of life of citizens was a political ambition of the Flemish government, which started to include the topic of architecture and urban design in the policy discourse. According to Ibelings (2009, p. 10), the idea of raising the standards of public architecture was, in part, a way of showing ‘what the region was capable of achieving and what it had achieved’.

On the planning side, the adoption of the new ‘Spatial Structure Plan for Flanders’²³ in 1997, the preparations of which started in 1992, was another important milestone. Although Flanders had had regional plans since the 1970s, there was the need for an overarching spatial vision that would coordinate the desired future spatial planning in Flanders. One innovation was the

²¹ In preparation for the Architecture Yearbook, a group of national and international experts was appointed to make a meaningful selection of buildings and public spaces to be included in the publication.

²² According to Sterken (2016), in addition to the *Stichting Architectuur Museum - S/AM*, Ghent also hosted the *Architectuur als Buur*, the heritage association *Interbellum* (which focused on modern architecture), the monographic publications in the series *Vlees & Beton* (published by the Architecture & Urban Development research group of the University of Ghent) and the Centre for Architectural Studies (CAO) at the Saint-Lucas Institute, which organised exhibitions and issued a newsletter.

²³ In Flemish: *Ruimtelijk Structuurplan Vlaanderen*

introduction of the concept of 'spatial quality' as one of the two principles of the new 'Spatial Structure Plan for Flanders' (Schreurs, 2000, p. 63). In this context, the provincial and local administrations should pay explicit attention to issues relating to spatial quality when assessing plans and projects.

Despite the government's initiatives to promote better built environments, there was little evidence of higher standards in public buildings in the 1990s (Liefoghe and van den Driessche, 2019, p. 3). The need to raise the level of demand of public clients when commissioning public buildings was noticed in the Architecture Yearbooks, and only six public buildings were included in its first publications. According to Els Vervloesem and Sven Sterken (2004), until the end of the century, Flemish 'government commissions were regarded as infrastructural work and implemented with a logic of an engineer. Government bodies chose an architect not for his competence but for his ideological or community background'.

In this context, several authors have drawn attention to the lack of architectural awareness of public clients and to the poor quality of most public buildings in Flanders, campaigning for the launch of an architectural policy similar to that of neighbouring countries (Ibelings, 2009). According to Schreurs (2000), it was the continuous criticism of the quality of public buildings in Flanders that led the Minister of Finance, Budget and Health Policy, Wivina de Meester, to take the first steps towards the development of a Flemish architectural policy.

In 1995, partially influenced by the example of The Netherlands, which had a Chief Government Architect, the minister announced the intention of establishing a similar position in Flanders to promote a culture of best practices by demonstrating its commitment to quality through its own buildings and to place design quality as a corporate aim across public administration (Ibelings, 2009). In 1997, two years later, the position of Flemish Government Architect (FGA) was formally announced with the mission 'to stimulate and inspire Flemish architectural awareness, in order to increase the cultural responsibility among the authorities, the relevant industry, and the public' (Schreurs, 2000, p. 63).

After a period of recruitment by a professional agency²⁴, bOb Van Reeth was appointed the first FGA, in January 1999. Considered one of the most prominent Flemish architects, bOb Van Reeth would benefit from his high moral authority and powers of persuasion to be accepted throughout public administration (Ibid.).

Besides leading by example, there was also a political commitment to foster a culture of design quality and raise public awareness on the value of well-designed environments. Inspired by its Dutch neighbour, which had established the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAI) at the end of the 1980s, the government decided to establish the Flanders Architecture Institute (VAI), in 2001. This new cultural institution operates side by side with the FGA team (see last section).

²⁴ According to Wivina de Meester's (2000) open letter, the government hired the head-hunting agency Heidrick & Struggles to look for potential candidates, both at home and abroad, for the position of FGA.



5.1: The new wing of the International Arts Centre 'DeSingel', where the Flanders Architecture Institute (VAI) is based since 2001, designed by Stephane Beel Architects, Antwerp, Belgium © EI

5.1.2 The Flemish Government Architect

The Flemish Government Architect (*Vlaams Bouwmeester* - FGA) is an independent expert appointed by the government as a public official to promote the design quality of the built environment. Leading a small team and assisted by an expert group, he delivers this mission through a variety of informal design governance tools. According to a government 'concept note'²⁵, the aim of the FGA is 'to promote the architectural quality of the built environment, conceived as a synthesis of qualities in the field of urban environment, use and experience, image value, construction technology, energy and cost management, integral accessibility, etc' (Flemish Government, 2020). Departing from this holistic notion, the mission of the FGA is made tangible in 'assisting clients in public and public-private projects in the field of designing and realizing buildings, public space, landscape and infrastructure' (Ibidem).



5.2: Saint Ursula Primary School - FGA Open Call 04 project 08, awarded in 2004 and completed in 2009, designed by Architects Tom Thys and Adinda Van Geystelen, in Laken, Belgium © Jan Kempnaers

²⁵ In January 2020, the statutes and mission of the FGA 'concept note' (in Flemish *VISIENOTA*) were revised by the Flemish Government in order to launch the new nomination procedure of the FGA for the mandate 2020-2024. Available at: <https://vlaamsbouwmeester.be/sites/default/files/uploads/Visienota%20Vlaams%20Bouwmeesterschap.pdf>

To carry out the mission assigned to him or her, the FGA should focus on two main tasks:

1. Provide support and guidance to public developers (in the broadest possible sense) with a view to improving the quality of building projects and plans. This support should aim to increase the competence of the building owners and designers involved, in order to improve the quality of building projects and plans within their budgetary margins, and to search for an optimal price-quality ratio for public design assignments. This means that the FGA should guide, inspire, and initiate but never act as a substitute of the public client (Ibid).
2. Vision development and reflection on architectural quality, high-quality design and construction in today's society. Within this second task, the FGA should define an agenda of activities and research studies that may contribute to develop a vision and knowledge on the design of the built environment. The research should be application-oriented in accordance with vision formation in the expertise domain of the partnerships, project formulation and project implementation (Ibid).

From the government's perspective, both tasks reinforce each other: 'concrete projects feed the vision formation, while insights / visions can in turn be tested or demonstrated through concrete projects in the field' (Ibid.). In order to perform these tasks efficiently, the FGA should expand its operation, reach, and impact through a 'network approach' (e.g., local quality rooms, organising training and coaching, offering guidelines).

To maximise its impact, FGA employs several communication tools to raise awareness and call attention to the specific value of creating better places for different clients and try to engage them in the process. In addition, the FGA should provide advice on bottlenecks and gaps in the regulations, regarding design quality; as well as provide opportunities to young designers (Ibid). In this context, FGA assumes a proactive role as design champion placing design quality in the agenda and campaigning for excellent public commissioning, high-quality building culture, sustainable urban development, etc. as a means to deliver on the aspirations set by its mission statement.

With regard to the Flemish administrative structure, the FGA is placed within the Chancellery, Public Governance and Foreign Affairs Department, under the political responsibility of the Minister-President of Flanders. The reason for being so near the cabinet in a department with a transversal policy domain and not in a sectoral policy department, such as environment or culture, is due to the cross-cutting nature of architecture and the built environment, where the FGA office 'has to be a transversal taskforce' (Leo Van Broeck, interview: 2018).



5.3: Theatre square Antwerp - FGA Open Call 06 Project 11, awarded in 2004 and completed in 2009, designed by Studio Associato Secchi-Viganò, in Antwerp, Belgium © Stijn Bollaert

Considering the great diversity of projects and types of public developments (e.g., health, economy, housing, education, culture, heritage, etc.), the FGA can offer support to all public departments, regardless of who takes the initiative (Flemish Government, 2020). To do so, the FGA is required to provide an accessible platform to all sectors and agencies that develop activities in the field of design and construction of buildings and infrastructure. In addition, the Government and each minister can ask the FGA to address specific *ad hoc* assignments.

Regarded as the cornerstone of the Flemish architectural policy (Ibelings, 2009, p. 8), the FGA plays a leading role both as a person and as an institution, the latter being composed of three elements: the FGA (the person), an expert group and the FGA team.

Flemish Government Architect (the person)

The FGA is appointed as a contractual staff member for the duration of its mandate as an advisor to the entire Flemish government. Although it is administratively located within the Chancellery, the FGA is expected to work as an independent expert and advisor to the entire Flemish administration, namely, to provide solicited and unsolicited design advice, both as an institution and as a person, to the different departments and agencies of the public sector (Flemish Government, 2020).

In this framework, he or she bears full final responsibility for the substantive operation, the realization of his / her 'multi-year program' and the various activities and action programs in particular. In this context, the question of independence from public administration is considered a crucial element for the role of FGA. As Leo Van Broeck (interview: 2018) argues:

“The position of a Government Architect should by definition be independent (...) with the right to speak freely and give opinions on what is better, without having the power to decide; and second, the duty to give advice if one of the Ministers asks for advice.”

As seen in the previous section, the tasks of the FGA are fundamentally informal in nature, and include providing support and advice to public clients, developing policy visions, and reflecting on architectural quality, etc. This means that the FGA does not have any formal powers, such as managing public building projects or deciding on planning permits. To influence others without formal authority is a challenge, but at the same time it gives the FGA more freedom to contact different stakeholders, express opinions and select themes for public debate, etc. As Leo Van Broeck (2018) explains about its role as former FGA:

“I have no decision power. (...) I’m allowed to speak about everything because I have nothing to say. So, it’s the right to contradict the government, because my job is to speak from the professional competence.”

This independent status gives him the ‘*freedom of saying the truth, even if the truth is annoying, or inconvenient*’ (Ibid.). Despite the legitimacy to express his or her viewpoint to different public bodies and communicate it to the press, in practical terms, the FGA tends to assume a hybrid position: one of an independent voice but with a neutral stance. In another words, the FGA expresses his or her opinion free from any political interference but address the issues from a technical and professional point of view. This is very important in relation to larger projects as he or she may offend political sensitivities when strongly criticising a project without proper grounds. This combination of attributes is important so that the FGA can keep its professional status and be able to influence public clients and raise the quality of their commissions.



5.4: Waalse Krook Media Library - FGA Open Call 18 Project 01, awarded in 2010 and completed in 2016, designed by Cousse & Goris architecten, RCR Aranda Pigem Vilalta arquitectes, in Ghent, Belgium © Tim Van De Velde

As a contractual staff member of the Flemish government, with the exception of the substantive responsibility outlined above, the FGA falls under the administrative authority of the leading official of the Chancellery Department. This means that FGA’s activities are organised in line with the administrative, financial-legal and deontological framework and the organisational culture of the government. In view of its special position, the government grants a delegation to the FGA for the duration of his or her mandate and within the annual operating credit for the FGA, which in turn he/her may delegate to the FGA team coordinator (see below).

Expert Group

Considering the diversity of issues covered by his or her work mandate, the FGA may ask advice to a multidisciplinary expert group to justify certain strategic choices, decisions, and important projects. This expert group is composed of a maximum of four experts from different fields that may provide input and substantive support to the work of the FGA (the expert group meets around 6 times a year). Furthermore, it can be asked to lead a strategic task (Ibidem).

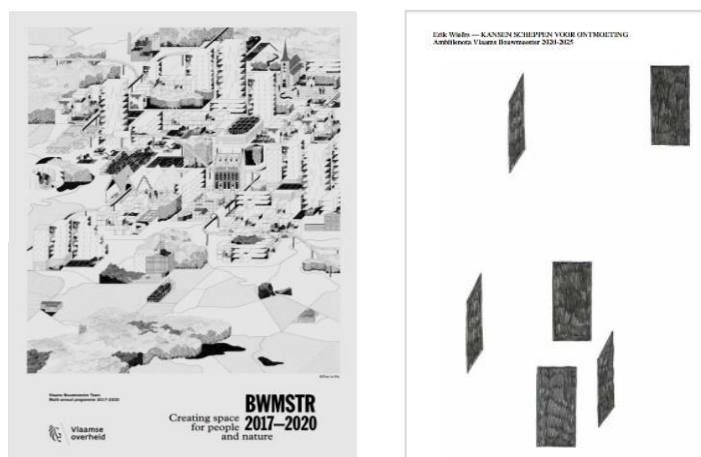
At the beginning of his/her mandate, the FGA defines a job profile for the members of the expert group and an open call is launched by the government. After the completion of the selection process and with the advice of the FGA, the government appoints the group of experts. Its members do not have the status of staff members and are remunerated on the operating resources of the FGA.

The FGA team

To accomplish his/her mission, the FGA has a team of fifteen people to assist him/her with the implementation of various tools. Most of the team members has been part of the FGA office since its creation, securing the preservation of knowledge across different Government Architects mandates (Van Broeck, interview: 2018). The team is composed of a group of public officials specialized in good public commissioning with a broad experience in architecture and urban development. They are responsible for 'substantive advice and administrative-technical support for both policy and project-related subjects'. Although the team works under the leadership of the FGA, it has a management coordinator for administrative and organisational tasks and for representing the FGA autonomously in meetings and projects.

Multiannual program and formal reporting obligation

At the beginning of his/her mandate, the FGA must develop and define a multi-year program, entitled *Ambition Note*, which should take into consideration other related governmental policies (e.g., Schools of Tomorrow, Policy Plan Space, Energy and Climate Plan, etc.). This policy document defines the FGA's multi-year program and should be elaborated in consultation with all relevant administrations and departments, as well as with professionals in the field. The policy is then submitted to the Government for approval (Ibidem).



5.5: The latest two policy and multi-year program of the FGA: 2017-20 / 2020-2025 (Source: FGA website)

The policy multi-year program also forms the basis for determining the necessary expertise for selecting the members of the abovementioned expert group. The FGA should use the multi-year program to define an annual action plan every year, which, in addition to the specific content of the multi-year program, also includes a link between predicted actions and resources. The annual action plans are submitted and ratified by the expert group and then communicated to the Government. The FGA reports periodically to the Flemish Government and to the expert group. Each FGA produces an evaluation report at the end of his/her mandate (Ibidem).

Instruments

To deliver his/her mission and assignments, the FGA employs several instruments to achieve the strategic objectives defined in his multi-year program and annual action plans, which are periodically evaluated by professionals in the field and by the expert group mentioned above. Of all the different tools, the most important is Open Call (in Flemish, *Open Oproep*), which is used by the FGA to support public clients in raising the quality of public developments (Kroese et al., 2009). Considered as an alternative selection process that puts less pressure on designers, as will be detailed below, the Open Call is a procedure that enables public principals to select designers for commissions in the fields of architecture, urban design and landscape architecture²⁶. According to Schreurs (2000, p. 63), the Open Call procedure is the most visible activity of the FGA and the one that gives legitimacy to his/her existence (Ibelings, 2009, p. 64).

In addition to supporting public clients, the FGA also contributes to vision formation and reflection on architecture and spatial design. Within this area of work, 'Pilot projects' are the main instrument used by the FGA to connect design research to a policy-preparing approach for the implementation of reference projects and for addressing urgent issues. Both areas of work are associated with a broad communication agenda through symposia and publications aimed at raising awareness among politicians, stakeholders, and the general public to move beyond standardised regulations as a means to achieve place quality.

²⁶ <https://www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be/en/instruments/open-call/more-info>, viewed in 23/04/2020



5.6: Master plan and image quality plan for the centre of Retie - FGA Open Call 16 Project 20, awarded in 2009 and completed in 2012, designed by BRUT, in Retie, Belgium © BRUT, LAND, Mint, O2 consult

To help describe his/her different areas of work and the range of tools at his/her disposal, this section will resort to the FGA presentation booklet (Flanders, 2019), published on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary, that structures the FGA activity around three lines of action: 1. Support and guidance; 2. Contributing to vision formation and reflection; 3. Communication. This threefold structure will be used to describe the FGA's diverse range of tools and initiatives.

1. Support and guidance to public builders

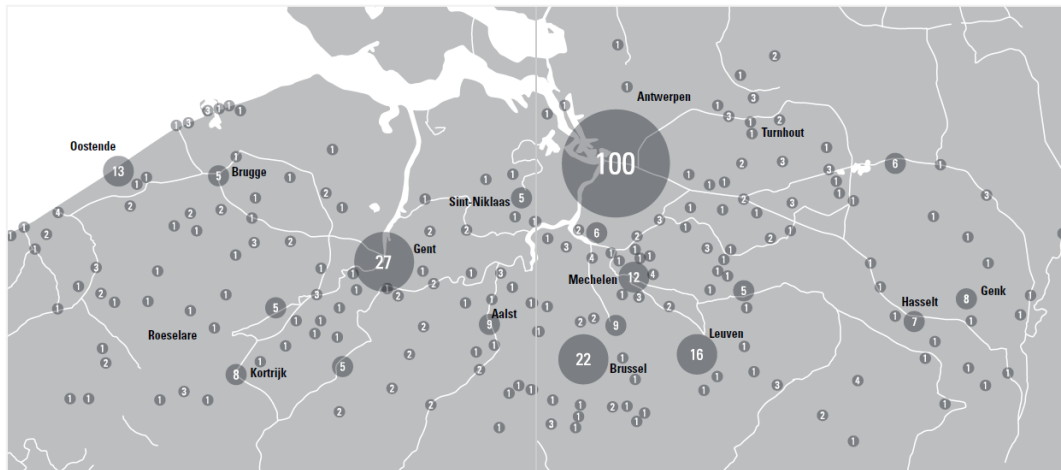
As pointed out above, one of main assignments of the FGA is to provide support to public developers with a view to improving the quality of building projects and plans. According to the Flemish Government's 'Concept note' (2020), when supporting public clients, the FGA should essentially guide, support and inspire public developers, which means that the commissioning and the final decision remain emphatically with the client and, under no circumstances, should the FGA take over the role of client in design assignments.

Open Call

As referred above, the Open Call is the most important tool and activity of the FGA and his/her team. The Open Call is an innovative way of selecting designers for public commissions based on a two-phase design competition principle that complies with public procurement law and with the European competition rules. The Open Call is divided into 10 phases, where the FGA's team starts by assisting public clients with the drawing up of a project definition before bringing them into contact with a range of designers via a six-month call for public commissions.

Since it was first established in 1999, almost 700 Open Call projects have been launched in Flanders and Brussels (Liefoghe and van den Driessche, 2019). In its different editions, the Open Call commissions covered a wide range of building projects and urban development plans in various fields (education, culture, housing, etc) with different scales, from subsidised housing and public buildings to infrastructural work, such as bridges and roads (Ibelings, 2009)²⁷.

²⁷ For a full list of projects see: <https://www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be/en/instruments/open-call>



5.6: Distribution of the Open Call projects between 2000–2013 (Source: Flanders, 2013, p. 15)

The Open Call is free of charge for all public and semi-public organisations in Flanders, including regional public services, city and municipal authorities, as well as housing agencies, non-profit organisations in the care sector, etc. (Liefoghe & Van Den Driessche, 2019). According to the former FGA (*Van Broeck*, interview: 2018), half of the commissions originate generally from small local authorities, usually medium-size and large districts, and the other half from the Flemish government (Liefoghe and van den Driessche, 2019, p. 16).

Despite the 20 years of experience preparing the commissions and organising the procedure that leads to the selection of the designers, the Open Call represents a heavy load of work for the FGA and its team (Ibelings, 2009, p. 64). To optimise the process and its main phases, the Open call procedure has been restructured a couple of times, but its main structure has remained the same. Currently, the procedure comprises the following 10 phases:

1. The contracting authority consults the FGA
2. The FGA and the contracting authority sign a cooperation protocol
3. The FGA team assists with the contracting authority developing a well-structured project definition
4. The FGA launches a call for tenders
5. Design teams apply with a portfolio and a short motivation text
6. The contracting authority selects the design teams together with the FGA
7. The contracting authority informs the designers
8. The design teams submit a proposal
9. The designers present their vision to the jury
10. The jury selects a winner, and the contracting authority awards the assignment (Ibidem).

After the Open Call is concluded and the contract between the designer and the public client is signed, the draft design of the winning proposal is fully developed according to the specified terms on the contract. To guarantee the design quality follow-up of the project, the public client can ask for further advice and expertise from the FGA or the external jury members.



5.7: Residential care centre Sint-Truiden - FGA Open Call 18 Project 14, awarded in 2010 and completed in 2016, designed by Van Belle & Medina architects, in Sint-Truiden, Belgium © Tim Van De Velde

Design advice

Besides the Open Call, the FGA also provides design advice to public developers, which includes the entire Government, public or semi-public clients, provincial and local authorities, or other public authorities. The FGA does not provide advice to private companies or individuals. For projects of strategic importance, the FGA often takes the initiative himself and addresses public clients to assist them in their assignment (Flemish Government, 2020).

Bouwmeester scan

The *Bouwmeester Scan* is an analysis tool available for local authorities who want to work towards a more sustainable and better use of space. The scan maps out the spatial and policy strengths and weaknesses of the municipality and provides an agenda of projects and interventions. The scan assists municipalities with the transition to a high-quality living environment, linked to a more caring and sustainable approach to the environment and natural resources.

Prize Wivina Demeester

Launched in 2003, the 'Wivina Demeester Prize for Excellent Commissioning' is a biennial award intended to inspire commissioning in the realization of urban, landscape and architectural projects in Flanders, which is not only focused on overall design quality but also on the exemplary commission process developed by the client²⁸.

Master's Test

To promote opportunities to young designers, the 'Master's Test' challenges public clients to provide young designers and artists with the opportunity to carry out their first public contract. Under the guidance of a project director appointed by the FGA, the most innovative solutions can be implemented after the approval of a jury (Ibidem).

²⁸ In its eighth edition (2014), the FGA prize was restructured and given the name of the former Flemish Minister of Finance Wivina Demeester. This prize was previously known as the 'Bouwheer Prize' and the 'Bouwmeester Prize'.



5.8: Master project Ghent art project 'Gravel bins' (Source: FGA, 2019 © Johnny Umans)

2. Contributing to vision formation and reflection

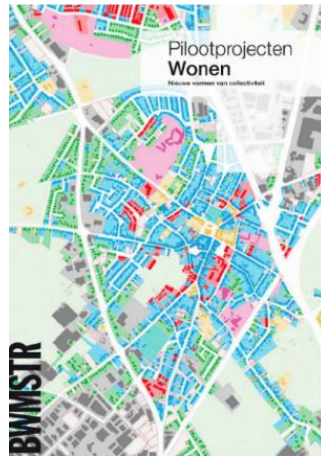
The second main assignment of the FGA is to contribute to the development of the architectural policy, vision formation and reflection on relevant themes that may inform stakeholders and provide knowledge about the built environment. The most important tool in this area is the 'Pilot Projects' that link research by design to a view of policy-preparation to the implementation of concrete pilot projects, developed in collaboration with different stakeholders.

Pilot projects

Initiated in 2011, the 'Pilot projects' connect design research with a policy-preparing approach where alliances are established with different stakeholders to enhance reflection and extend its impact. They are intended to produce new insights into spatial and social challenges that are considered 'urgent' and may need 'out of the box' thinking with the focus on the implementation of high-quality exemplary projects (Ibidem). According to Ahmed Kahn (interview, 2020), the introduction of 'Pilot Projects' was a practical way of promoting cross-sectoral and network collaboration to counterbalance the FGA's activity that was mostly focused on the Open Call.

The proposals or suggestions for initiating 'Pilot Projects' can be formulated by the FGA himself/herself as well as by potential partners, both of a public and of a private nature with a social purpose. To name but a few examples, the 'Collective Living' Pilot Projects (2013) developed scenarios and methodologies to re-think the current trend in housing production, in the light of an increasing need for housing within a limited available space; as in the 'Back in Circulation' Pilot Project (2014) it was investigated how underutilised, polluted industrial estates can acquire a new meaning within spatial, urban, and social development in Flanders (Ibid.).

Although the 'Pilot Projects' are based on the collaboration among several partners, the management of each edition is assured by a steering group composed by key stakeholders on the topic, external experts and the FGA²⁹. 'Pilot Projects' usually includes the development of five exemplary projects, which are decided between the different partners through an open call. Each edition of the 'Pilot projects' is documented and broadly communicated (Ibid.).



5.9: Publication of the Pilot Projects 'Collective Living - Phase 1', 2013 (Source: FGA website)

Lab space

The 'Lab space — a laboratory for complex spatial issues' is an open partnership between the FGA and the Flemish administration competent for spatial planning. Depending on the theme, the partnership may be expanded to other administrations, experts, relevant organisations, and actors. In this context, 'Lab space' is a spatial-strategic framework for design research and critical analysis within which specific study paths are set up on urgent social issues, together with various partners and actors. Several studies have been developed within this framework. To cite just one example, the 'Metropolitan Coastal Landscape 2100' investigated the development possibilities of the coast up to 2100 in the context of climate and socioeconomic changes³⁰.

The WMSTR Label

Every year, the FGA team seeks strong spatial concepts and integrated research questions that can make a positive social difference in Flanders. In this context, the *Bouwmeester Label* (*WMSTR Label*) seeks innovative and policy-relevant ideas from research and design practice, supporting unsolicited research in its early phase. The laureates receive a small budget to further develop their project into a file that can be accessed by policymakers and administrations³¹.

²⁹ For more information see: <https://www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be/nl/instrumenten/pilotprojecten>

³⁰ <https://www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be/nl/ontwerpend-onderzoek/labo-ruimte/metropolitaan-kustlandschap-2100>

³¹ For more information see: <https://www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be/nl/instrumenten/bwmstr-label>

Strategic Projects

The FGA team also provides guidance in a number of strategic projects, on its own initiative or at the request of partners. For example, in collaboration with several partners in the Brussels Region, an intensive process concerning the development of the Reyers site was under way. In collaboration with several departments, a design study was carried out for the renovation operation of the Ferrari site (Brussels North). The FGA also took the initiative of conducting a study to develop future scenarios for the Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (Ibid.).

3. Communication strategy

Transversally to all the above-mentioned activities and tools, the FGA takes advantage of a communication strategy to achieve its goals, namely, to promote a culture of best practices and raise design aspirations across governments. Besides the communication activities developed by its own team, the FGA usually collaborates and works with other partners (e.g., Flanders Architecture Institute) to communicate specific themes. The FGA also actively contribute to the wider debates on topical issues through the participation in national and international conferences, publications and other initiatives.



5.10: Workshop 'Metropolitan Coastal Landscape 2100'. Source: FGA, 2019 © Nik Naudts

The FGA office (Atelier Bouwmeester) is where the Team FGA operates and where all *Open Call* juries take place. In this space, workshops and public receptions are regularly organised. The Atelier also includes a gallery for small exhibitions for a limited period of time.

The FGA team regularly issues publications aimed at specific audiences and writes articles about current themes which are posted online or published in specialised magazines. As Lisa De Visscher (2019) refers: “a master builder or a quality chamber are powerful means of stimulating a critical climate. They contribute directly to the debate and their first task is to have a continuous discussion about architectural quality with clients and government administrations.”



5.11: Loods Spoor Noord Antwerpen (event, neighbourhood and sports hall) - Open Call 12 Project 02, awarded in 2007 and completed in 2011, designed by Verdickt & Verdickt architecten © Stijn Bollaert

This means that besides supporting public clients, the FGA is entrusted with the mission of stimulating the architecture climate, which gives him/her the legitimacy to promote debates and to be a strong voice within public administration, the professional media, and the industry. The FGA also participates in several international conferences abroad.

Selection procedure

The FGA serves a five-year mandate, and his/her appointment is the result of a demanding procedure (Leo Van Broeck, interview: 2018)³². After a public announcement, candidates are required to describe their vision for their mandate. The first shortlist is determined by a jury representing different parts of the built environment disciplines, both practitioners and academics. The shortlisted candidates move on to the next stage, where they are presented with a fictional problem akin to one that a Bouwmeester might face and are given a short period of time to present their solution in different formats including presentations and in writing. A final stage includes interviews with Ministers who make the final choice. The whole process is anonymised – which means that, at no stage do the candidates know who their competitors are (Ibidem).

5.1.3 Other relevant actors

Flanders Architecture Institute (VAI)

As in the other case studies, in addition to the FGA, the Flemish Government established a new cultural institution dedicated to championing architecture and urban design across the Flemish stakeholders and society in general. Since 2002, VAI is responsible for the publication of the aforementioned Architectural Yearbooks, which intend to highlight architecture and to provide information about it to a broader public. Besides the yearbooks, the VAI also organizes exhibitions and other activities aimed at making the general public aware of architecture and urban design.

³² The first FGA was Bob Van Reeth (1999-2005), who was followed by Marcel Smets (2005-2010), Peter Swinnen (2010-2015), Stefan Devoldere (acting position; 2015-2016) and Leo Van Broeck (2016-2020). In August 2020, the Flemish Government appointed Erik Wieërs as the new FGA for a period of five years (2020-2024).

More recently, the Flemish government entrusted VAI with the responsibility of the Flanders Architecture Archives, which were previously in the hands of regional and provincial authorities. Thus, the VAI manages a constantly growing collection of architectural archives, which is subsequently maintained, interpreted, and made accessible to anyone interested³³.

Although the VAI is a private yet government-subsidised body – like others in similar positions, it has to navigate the balance of retaining its independence and of maintaining a functional link to the administration. The current FGA sits on its executive board; but the VAI's financing comes from a different department – the Ministry of Culture. At the same time, the VAI takes on a lot of the outreach work relating to the Bouwmeester's vision, bringing it to the public via exhibitions, events and so on. Sometimes it also collaborates in the delivery of policy statements, as the '*Flemish Architecture Memorandum 2009-2014*', published in 2009.



5.12: Joint policy memorandum of the FGA and the VAI (2009) (Source: FGA website)

5.2 The Irish case

5.2.1 The architectural policy of Ireland

The development of the first Irish architectural policy goes back to the early 1990s, when a working group of experts was set up within the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) to prepare a policy draft and deliver it to the government. These efforts led to the establishment of a governmental interdepartmental working group that developed a public consultation document, which was approved by the Council of Ministers in 1996. This first step represented a major milestone for the Irish policy development as, for the first time, Ireland had a national-level official document recognising the social and cultural importance of architecture.

Despite these initial steps, it would take seven years until the first formal Irish architectural policy was adopted. In 1997, four months after the consultation process, a first architecture policy statement setting the basis for an action programme was approved. However, due to

³³ The Flanders Architecture Archives are managed by the VAI. For more info see <https://www.vai.be/en/>

several political changes, only in 2000 a new interdepartmental working group was established to define concrete policy actions and initiatives. Finally, in 2002, Ireland's first policy on architecture was adopted under the title: *Action on Architecture 2002-2005*.



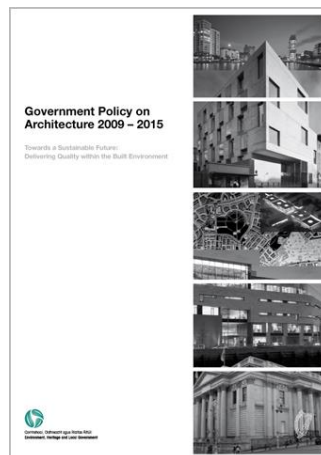
5.13: First Irish architectural policy (2002)

As its name suggests, the first formal Irish architectural policy defined a programme embracing action. The policy's main aim was '*to place architecture higher on the political and cultural agenda and in so doing to remove impediments to the achievement of a built environment of good quality*' (Ireland, 2002, p. 5). However, at the end of its implementation period in 2005, the policy's lack of practical results began to come to light. One of the reasons for this was a strong restructuring of the Irish government in 2002. Consequently, only some of the actions envisaged would come to fruition (Mee and Wakely, 2008, p. 24).³⁴

Nevertheless, the architectural policy action 11, which provided for the creation of a new Virtual Architecture Centre, would facilitate the establishment of the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF), in 2005. As such, in an indirect way, the first Irish architectural policy facilitated the creation of the IAF, enabling an institutional partnership between public and private actors in which everyone contributed with a certain amount to support the new Irish Architecture Foundation financially, and agreement that is still maintained today.

After the implementation period of the first architectural policy, which ran from 2002 to 2005, work on the development of a revised policy on architecture commenced. In October 2007, the government appointed a steering committee with representatives from a broad spectrum of the public and private sectors and three focus groups. A series of public consultation meetings coordinated by the IAF were held throughout the country, and a website was created as part of the public consultation process. Finally, in June 2009, the government adopted a second policy entitled *Towards a sustainable future: Delivering quality within the built environment*.

³⁴ One of the few policy actions delivered was the creation of a biennial award aimed at young practitioners.



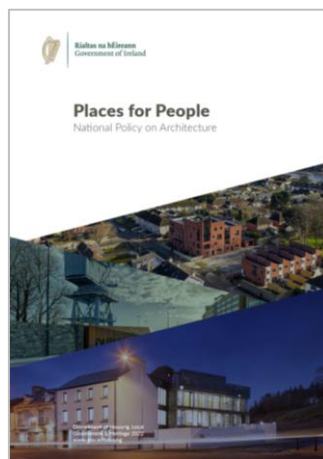
5.14: Second Irish architectural policy (2009)

Building on the previous policy, the 2009 policy document introduced 15 new key policy statements, placing more emphasis on sustainable development and urban design. As such, the concept of *place-making* was more central than in the previous version. Nevertheless, it continues to 'encourage and support high quality modern architecture, incorporating architectural heritage in a holistic, integrated manner' (Ireland, 2009, p. 2). In addition, the new policy continues to promote 'awareness and understanding of the contribution of good design to the daily life and well-being of society as a whole' (Ibidem, p. 6). The revised policy contained 45 actions divided into six parts, covering a number of recurring themes. Its implementation programme extends for seven years, and the execution of its actions is distributed among several public and private stakeholders.

Unlike the first period, there was a strong commitment from the government to implement the policy action plan. One of the factors that contributed to the good levels of success was the ability to work across different departments. Considering the transversal aims of the GPA, one of the main difficulties in policy implementation is to get enough political support to be able to persuade the different departments and state agencies to follow and execute the assigned policy actions. As will be seen, this problem cuts across all the case studies.

One of the first actions put in place was the change of title from Principal Architect in the Office of Public Works (OPW) to State architect of Ireland (GPA Action 6). Besides the change in the title, the State architect also held a higher position in the OPW hierarchy. To improve the co-ordination of the policy implementation, two structures were also established: 1) an Advisory Committee, a high-level advisory group of stakeholders/partners; and 2) the Implementation Group, an inter-sectoral platform to manage aspects concerning the delivery of the actions. The higher number of actors involved in the delivery of the actions was noteworthy, which may be a problem if the partners do not collaborate. This will be examined in the next chapter.

In 2019, a public engagement and consultation process for revising the policy started, involving a wide range of stakeholders and public departments. At the end of 2019, a discussion document was published setting out five themes covering best practice approaches (knowledge and innovation; leadership) and three priority subject areas (designing for climate resilience and sustainability; designing quality places for public benefit; respecting past, shaping future)³⁵. There were also several multi-disciplinary workshops and an online survey. These inputs were analysed and examined by a policy advisory group. Finally, the new and third national policy on architecture was adopted in 2022, entitled, *Places for People*.



5.15: The third Irish architectural policy (2022)

The new Irish policy establishes the following vision: “the power of architecture and design to support a more sustainable and resilient society based on knowledge and creativity and driven by leadership and inclusive participation” (Ireland, 2022). One of its priorities is the development of national design quality criteria, which will allow assessing the quality of all phases of built-environment projects: design, procurement, construction, management, use, conservation, re-purposing, and disassembly (Ibidem, p. 22). To coordinate the policy implementation and actions delivery, an interdepartmental policy group will be set up, entitled the *Delivery Board*, which is to be chaired by the State architect of Ireland.

5.2.2 The State Architect of Ireland

As mentioned above, one of the first measures put in place by the second Irish architectural policy was the change of title from Principal Architect in the Office of Public Works (OPW) to State / Principal Architect of Ireland. According to the Irish policy (Ireland, 2009), the State Architect is responsible for ‘leading and managing the OPW architectural team, with oversight of the architectural input to construction projects, maintenance of the quality of the fabric of the state’s property portfolio and the conservation of heritage properties in state care, as well as being the main advisor to the Government in relation to architectural matters’.

³⁵ <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/89796/b96a3896-3d1f-4fa6-961b-e53d99a9686f.pdf#page=null>



5.16: Galway Regional Garda (Police) Headquarters, designed by OPW Architects, in Galway, Ireland, 2018 © Kelvin Gilmore

The Office of State/Principal Architect is in charge of the architectural design, construction, and support services for most public facilities except schools and hospitals, and develops a wide range of projects, including major restoration and refurbishment projects for historic properties and cultural institutions, office accommodation for government departments and other agencies, police stations, prisons, social welfare offices, etc³⁶. Besides managing the OPW's architectural services, the state architect role also includes the following duties:

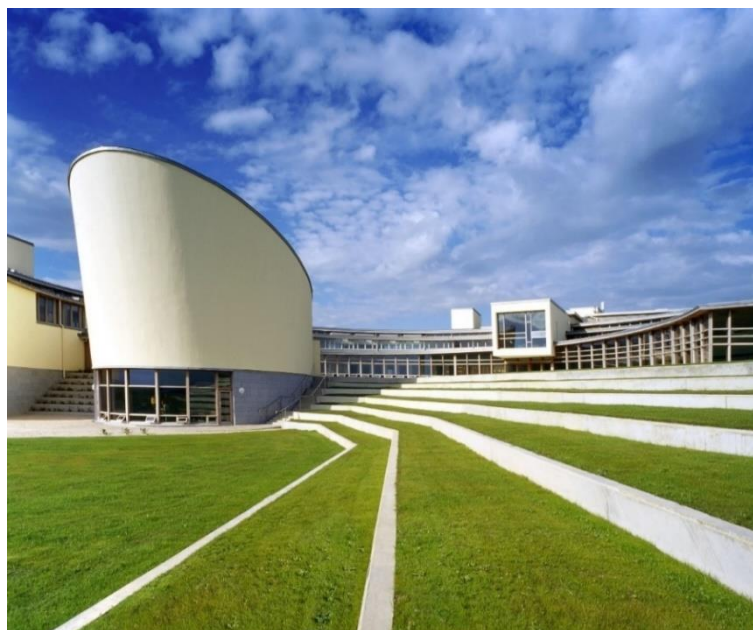
- advising on the implementation of the Architecture Policy Actions;
- contributing to the Government Construction Contracts Committee (GCCC) to developing procurement and contracting policies in support of design quality in State funded projects;
- advising on legislation and regulations affecting architecture and the built environment;
- providing unrequested advice regarding the design quality of all infrastructural programmes.



5.17: Drogheda Courthouse, designed by OPW Architects, in Drogheda, Ireland, 2017

³⁶ <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy/87cc99-government-owned-buildings/#office-of-stateprincipal-architect>

The most recent architectural policy (2022, p. 41) refers that the Office of the State Architect should ‘act as a champion and advocate for high architectural, conservation and landscape standards in the public sector, with a focus on information exchange and consistency in respect of standards and quality criteria within architecture and the built environment.’ In this sense, the State Architect assumes a multi-faceted role leading the Architectural Services of the OPW, promoting a culture of best practice inside the state, and advising the government on architectural policy. In short, his role is to champion design quality in public buildings, similarly to other State Architects elsewhere (see chapter 4).



5.18: The Marine Institute Headquarters, designed by OPW Architects, in Oranmore, Ireland, 2006

At first glance, the change of the title in itself does not seem to have had much impact on how the other state departments manage the design quality of their own construction works. However, the current State Architect mentioned (2018: interview) that the new title has given him a stronger position inside the government as well as the ability to persuade other departments to raise the design quality of their projects. In fact, the State Architect sits at the board of the OPW administration at the same level as the other first-line directors, reporting directly to the general manager. Therefore, his power of influence across OPW was reinforced in terms of hierarchy, which also gives him more status inside the wider public administration (Ibidem).

The State Architect of Ireland also mentioned that the new title has brought on a reinforced authority to demand better buildings from other departments, which otherwise would not feel obliged to receive advice from someone outside their organisation (2018: interview). In this framework, he mentioned that the status of State Architect has helped him in several situations, for example in meetings with different groups or in making an argument for the need to pay greater attention to design quality (Ibidem). Regarding public agencies responsible for public-private partnerships for example, which generally say that they do not have to follow his advice

because they are a different organisation, the State Architect explained that “if they do not [agree to] raise the design standards he would go to the office of the Prime Minister and complain that they are not cooperating (ibid.)”



5.19: The Office of the State Architect has participated in an advisory role on a number of significant public infrastructural projects including: The Central Bank Headquarters Building and The National Children's Hospital

An additional perspective on the significance of the title was offered by Kathryn Meghen, the director of the RIAI, who pointed out that it also carried a symbolic importance, both within the country and as a senior representative abroad (2018: interview). In her words, “it shows an acknowledgement by the government that they value what architects have to contribute” (Ibid).

In terms of his position within the official government structure (as opposed to an independent role found in other case studies), the Irish State Architect (2018: interview) believes that it is vital for his work, mainly because it means he gets to be part of policymaking early on in the process. In his view, having his office be part of the formal government structure means that the State Architect is not a political appointment, affiliated with a particular party, and can therefore ensure consistency and maintain his influence as an expert across government changes.

Following the discussion on chapter 3 about design leadership, it is possible to conclude that the position of state architect, attributed to someone with a recognized 'professional status', plays an important role in championing design quality throughout the governmental structure. To achieve this, it is necessary to have a continuous action that is not awarded legal status and cannot be measured in terms of specific outputs. Most of these soft actions include informal talks with key actors to convince them of the need to raise standards and adopt a long-term approach towards more socially and environmentally sustainable built outcomes.



5.20: Masterplan and Landscaping for Backweston Laboratory Campus, designed by OPW Architects, in Celbridge, Co.Kildare, Ireland, 2005

Selection procedure

The position of State Architect in Ireland is a seven-year mandate. According to the State Architect, the selection and appointment procedure is very demanding, including several stages and interviews (2018: interview). Applicants are required to take an aptitude test and, in the final stage, to present their vision for what they want to achieve during their tenure and answer questions on that. The application is publicly advertised and open to anyone, including international applicants.

5.2.3 Other relevant actors

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

The Built Heritage Policy Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage shares responsibility for the development and cross-sectoral coordination of the Government Policy on Architecture implementation together with other partners, namely the state architect. Related with architecture and heritage, it also assumes the following duties and services:

- Providing an administrative, policy and legislative framework to protect architectural heritage as a national resource;

- Promoting increased public awareness and appreciation of architecture and national built heritage;
- Ensuring that built heritage is conserved, managed, and planned, for an effective, sustainable management of heritage resources;
- Promoting best practice in contemporary architecture and urban design.

Arts Council / Architecture division

Since 2010, the Irish Arts Council promotes a funding programme entitled ‘*Engagement with Architecture Scheme*’. The objective of the scheme is to support innovative and high-quality initiatives that specifically aim to enhance and extend the public’s experience of and engagement with architecture. The scheme finances cultural projects and initiatives, and is open to individuals, local authorities, and organisations³⁷. It also grants travel & training awards as well as an open call for experimental projects. These schemes can be awarded to architecture-related projects, but they are open to a range of artistic fields and practices – and, as such, it is not the built environment per se that is their focus, but rather the cultural dimension of architecture.

Recently, after a two-stage consultation process, the Arts Council adopted an architecture policy, entitled *Championing Architecture*, in 2021. The policy lays out a vision for Ireland and sets a strategic action plan to champion architecture culture and promote the benefits of high-quality architecture. Despite the existence of a National Policy on Architecture (see previous section), under the responsibility of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Arts Council decided to adopt its own architectural policy.



5.21: The Architectural Policy of the Arts Council of Ireland (2021-25)

³⁷ For more info: <https://www.artscouncil.ie/Funds/engaging-with-architecture-scheme/>

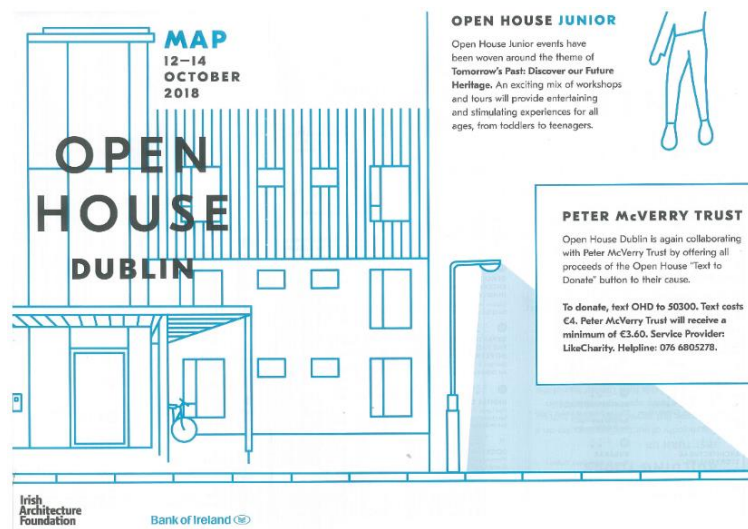
Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF)

As mentioned, in an indirect way, the first Irish architectural policy facilitated the creation of the IAF, enabling an institutional partnership between public and private actors in which everyone contributed with a certain amount to support the new IAF financially.

Source	Amount €
Arts Council	58,000
DOEHLG	60,000
Dublin City Council	30,000
Office of Public Works	30,000
RIAI	50,000
TOTAL	228,000

5.22: Principal Core Funding Contributions to IAF in 2008
(based on the Report of the Arts Council *Public Engagement & Architecture*, 2008)

Following the discussion on chapter 3, the IAF is a national design centre that promotes the cultural value of architecture and advocates for better design in the built environment. Among several initiatives aimed at broader audiences, it organizes exhibitions, educational programmes, etc. According to its website, the IAF is a “focal point for the many people and organisations that wish to champion the power of architecture to transform lives and improve the places where we live and work. Through a programme of self-initiated events, it inspires people to become thoughtful and engaged stewards of the visual landscape.”³⁸



5.23: Open House Event, organised by Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) is an architectural festival where buildings are opened to the public over a 3day period in October every year. The OPW participates, assists in the organisation and part funds the event. OPW grant aids the IAF €30,000 annually

³⁸ For more info: <https://architecturefoundation.ie/>

As such, the IAF has become an important player in the Irish context. Recalling its mission, its strategic focus is to promote the value of architecture and engage the public in design. Soon after its establishment, the IAF directed the Loving Architecture festival (2005) and manages the Open House since 2006, providing the general public with the opportunity to visit buildings of architectural interest. In 2008, the IAF was responsible for managing the public consultation process on behalf of the government, aimed at informing the development of a new national architecture policy, while also co-curating Ireland's entry to the Venice Biennale of Architecture.

Considering that the IAF is a small organisation, with only two full-time staff members (situation in 2018), its importance seems to exceed its current capabilities. The Foundation is linked to the state architect's office, by means of financial as well as operational support and board membership. As in other case studies, this relationship between the state architect office and an external cultural body seems to be beneficial for both parties.

Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI)

The RIAI is the professional body responsible for the regulation of the profession, ensuring that standards are enforced and upheld. They are also active in two other areas: supporting and promoting. Supporting refers to the representation of the views of Ireland's architects on a wide range of industry bodies and international organisations, while promoting includes events and awards, producing guidelines for architectural practice and supporting its members.



5.24: Architectural Design Competition for a Commemorative Bridge at Irish National War Memorial Garden, organized by RIAI and commissioned by the Office of Public Works (OPW), with the winning design by Ian Ritchie Architects, Dublin, Ireland, 2019 © iRAL

5.3 The Dutch case

In terms of administrative structure, the Dutch public administration is composed of four tiers: central government, provinces, municipalities, and water authorities³⁹. The central government is formed by 12 ministries which are responsible for policymaking and for drafting and adopting legislation, subject to parliamentary enquiry. At sub-national level, the Netherlands is divided in 12 provinces, 21 water authorities and 355 municipalities⁴⁰. According to Meer (2018), despite this clear structure, the Dutch administration is a “compound system of multi-level governance as many task areas are shared by various governments with different responsibilities according to scale of service delivery”⁴¹. This is the case of spatial planning and urban design, which public policy competences are shared both by local and national administration (Tosics et al., 2010, p. 199) and by the provinces, which are also responsible for spatial development, including areas like water management, environment, energy, and climate, among others.

5.3.1 The architectural policy of The Netherlands

With a long tradition in land-use planning and urban design⁴², The Netherlands was one of the first countries in the world to adopt a national policy on architecture, entitled '*Space for Architecture*' (*Ruimte voor Architectuur*), in 1991 (Cousins, 2009, p. 9). Signed by two ministries, the Dutch initiative was a pioneer policy by adopting a comprehensive approach on architecture and urban design aiming to raise the design quality of public buildings and of the built environment bridging culture and building policy (The Netherlands, 1991).

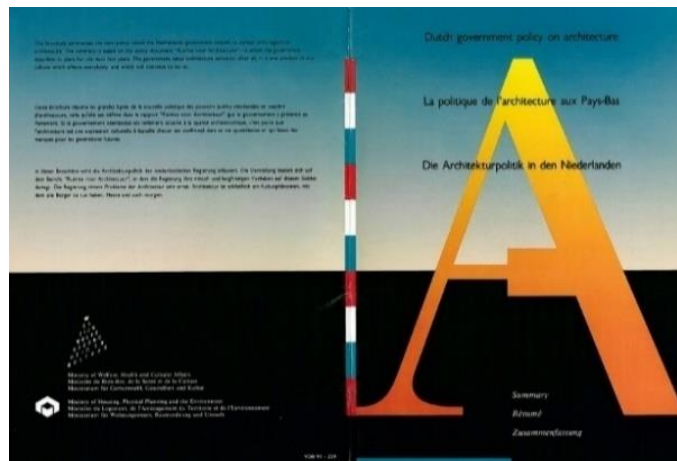
Following a strategic policy approach, the Dutch architecture policy set out two main objectives: to promote good practice among public authorities and to create a favourable climate for architecture and urban design (Dings, 2009, p. 133). The former was to set an example for society at large and for development actors in particular by developing high-quality public buildings and urban projects (The Netherlands, 1991, p. 13), whereas the latter was intended to improve the architectural climate and promote a culture of design, for which a set of dedicated design institutions and a wide range of measures were put in place, supported by an inter-ministerial financial envelope of several million Euros for a four-year period (João Bento, 2017).

³⁹ The Netherlands is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy with a decentralized unitary state since the middle of the nineteenth century. For more info: <https://www.government.nl/topics/constitution>

⁴⁰ For more info: <https://www.government.nl/topics/public-administration>

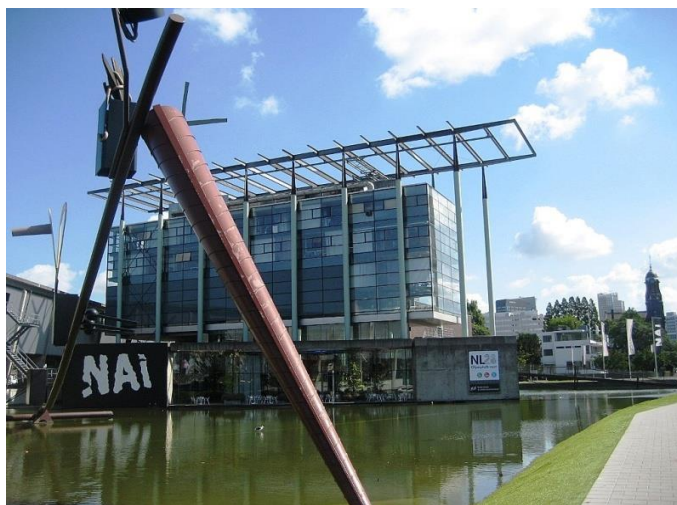
⁴¹ Some of the exceptions are defence, foreign affairs, the court support, public prosecuting, and prison system, which are part of central government (Ibidem).

⁴² For an historical overview see: Dings (2009), 'Historic perspective 1900-2010', in 'Design and politics', O10 publishers. Rotterdam.



5.25: First Dutch architecture policy, Government of The Netherlands (1991)

As with most innovations, this Dutch policy did not start from scratch. Ten years before, a bottom-up movement of local initiatives started to give impetus to an overall improvement of the architectural climate in The Netherlands (Ibidem). At the same time, debates were being held about the location of the new Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi)⁴³ (Ulzen, 2007, p. 171). Officially created in 1988, the NAi was the result of a merger between three existing architectural bodies which used to work in parallel promoting architectural initiatives to different audiences and decided to merge to share resources and infrastructures⁴⁴.



5.26: The new building of the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAI), opened in 1993

This architectural grassroots movement that emerged in the 1980s was also a reflection of the dissatisfaction with the quality of the buildings and urban spaces created in the preceding decades. A huge amount of low-quality housing had been developed during the 1970s, influenced by post-war housing models in which design was not valued by the market (Figueiredo, 2010). This discontentment reinforced the idea that quality needed to be

⁴³ After a design competition and construction, the new building of the NAI would open its doors in 1993.

⁴⁴ Architecture Museum Foundation, Netherlands Centre for Architecture Documentation and Foundation "Housing/Living" (Stichting Wonen) (Figueiredo, 2010a).

promoted, both socially and in market terms. Another important factor was the restructuring of the national cultural policy in the late 1980s, which led the then Minister of Culture and the Minister of Housing, Planning and Environment to work together on a joint architectural policy⁴⁵.

Since then, the Dutch government has been renewing its architectural policy once every four years to approve its multi-year policy budget, introducing new themes and updating its action plan. The second policy, entitled '*Architecture of Space*', was adopted in 1996, and widely expanded its policy scope by introducing the broader concept of 'spatial quality' and involving a wide range of actors and other disciplinary fields, such as urban development, physical planning, landscape architecture and infrastructural design⁴⁶. Despite the new themes and scope, the policy tools remained largely the same, with cultural institutions having to pay more attention to urban and regional planning in terms of research and activities (Stegmeijer et al., 2012).

Several partners have come on board with the different versions. The third architectural policy (2000-2004) was signed by five ministers and the fourth policy (2005-2008) by seven ministries, the highest number of partners. Since then, although maintaining the same broad scope on spatial design, the architectural policy has been reducing the number of partners, and the most recent involves only two ministers⁴⁷.

The fifth architectural policy (2009-2012), entitled "The Culture of Design", assumed that the State could not control the development of the territory and the quality of architecture, and the built environment was considered to be the main responsibility of designers, developers, and clients. Nonetheless, it aimed to reconcile market and cultural objectives by motivating commercial interests to invest in design quality and by stimulating the demand side of development (clients, residents) through the dissemination of knowledge.

In the beginning of 2013, in a period of severe economic recession, the centre-right government announced an austerity program in which, for the first time in fifty years, the Dutch budget for culture was reduced by 25%. Considering the difficult economic situation, the new policy marked a shift in the way architectural policy had been implemented in the last 20 years. Adopted since then as an action agenda, the sixth policy version (2013-2016) defined a 'compact basic cultural infrastructure' consisting of a single stimulation fund and a single cultural institute.

⁴⁵ In 1989, Hedy d'Ancona (Minister for Culture) and J.G.M. Alders (Minister for Housing, Planning and Environment) followed up the idea of their predecessors of developing a joint Architectural policy that could politically frame 'The Netherlands Architecture Institute' (NAi) and bring building and culture policy closer by establishing a policy platform between the two ministries.

⁴⁶ The Dutch Fourth Memorandum on Spatial Planning (1988) included for the first time the broader concept of 'spatial quality', which was widely used in the development of residential areas and industrial estates (Dings, 2009).

⁴⁷ The most recent entitled 'Spatial Design Action Program 2021-2024 - Design Connects' For more info see: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/12/18/aanbieding-actieprogramma-ruimtelijk-ontwerp-2021-2024>

In practical terms, the new action programme withdrew most of the financial support to several architectural cultural institutions – such as Architectuur Lokaal, Berlage Institute, ArchiPrix and European – and forced the merger between the NAI, as well as the Architecture Fund, with other organisations in the “creative industries” (Figueiredo, 2013).

Although the conceptual basis of the previous policies was not refuted, the economic value of the architecture and design sector was reinforced (at the expense of the cultural value) and presented as the main justification for maintaining a policy for this area. Considering that Dutch design was an export product, it was argued that the economic and potential value of the architecture and spatial design sector could contribute to the country’s recovery (The Netherlands 2012, p. 15). The new policy also mentioned the existence of externalities and market failure, strategic economic considerations, and the growth potential of the creative industries. In this context, the central government positioned itself outside the design processes, delegating such responsibility to private actors and municipalities (Figueiredo, 2013, p. 30).

Nevertheless, the goal of excellence in commissioning remained, and it was stated that the central government remained committed to the early inclusion of design and designers in the policy processes of national programs and projects. Following this, the role and mission of Chief Government Architect and of its Board of Government Advisors, which will be reviewed in the next sections, were also kept. The following action agenda (2017-2020) also maintained its broad scope focused on spatial design, involving the design disciplines intervening in the built environment, and arguing that ‘design thinking’ is crucial for providing an innovative response to complex spatial challenges with a yearly budget of four million Euros (The Netherlands, 2017).

More recently, the concept of ‘environmental quality’ was introduced in the new Environmental and Planning Act, which is expected to take effect on January 2023 and intends to achieve and maintain good spatial and environment quality, comprising aspects such as ‘cultural heritage, architectonic quality, urban quality, landscape quality and nature quality’ (Assen and Campen, 2020)⁴⁸. In this framework, the government launched the National Strategy on Spatial Planning and the Environment (abbreviated in Dutch to NOVI), in the end of 2020⁴⁹. The current *Action Programme for Spatial Design (2021-2024)* is one of the policies that will contribute to the NOVI priorities, namely through the investment of ‘design capacity’ on the spatial-design sector and by raising awareness among public clients and among other initiatives (The Netherlands, 2021).

⁴⁸ Although its interpretation is left to the sub-national levels, the notion of good spatial and environmental quality is placed as one of the three social objectives of the new Environmental and Planning Act.

⁴⁹ For more info see: <https://www.novistukken.nl/>

5.3.2 The Chief Government Architect and the Board of Government Advisors

The Netherlands has a Chief Government Architect since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its name and responsibilities have varied over time⁵⁰ (The Netherlands, 2006). After 1957, however, the duties of the Government Architect shifted from producing design of public buildings to advising the Government Buildings Agency and central government in general on specific construction projects and offering guidance in broad public discussions concerning the subject. In the late 1980s, the role of Chief Government Architect was extended and its holder became also an advisor to the entire government in the field of urban planning, monuments, architecture, infrastructure, landscape, spatial issues, architectural policy and visual arts (The Netherlands, 2015).

Nowadays, the Chief Government Architect (CGA) operates under the Central Government Real Estate Agency (RVB), that is part of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (see 5.4.3). Since 2004, the CGA chairs a governmental advisory board (CRa) that provides design advice to the central government in different spatial design issues and projects (see below). The CGA holds a special position as far as the performance of his duties is concerned. On the one hand, he/she is the first advisor to the RVB management board in relation to RVB buildings, works and sites; on the other, he/she is the advisor to the Minister when it comes to general (policy) issues concerning the quality of architecture and spatial planning in the broad sense of the term (Ibidem).

The CGA is supported by a dedicated office and staff and is expected to provide independent and integral advice (solicited and unsolicited) on (national) spatial planning issues, area-oriented and/or thematic fields (e.g., design disciplines of architecture, urban planning, and landscape architecture). This advice may concern all the phases of the policy, planning and implementation process (Ibid.). In addition, the CGA may provide to the different ministries 'solicited and unsolicited advice on matters of policy and strategic developments on architecture, urban and rural planning, infrastructure, landscape and ensuring that spatial design is properly covered in legislation and in education' (Ibid.).

The CGA also promotes and monitors the urban integration and design quality of central government buildings (e.g., courts, prisons, government offices and ministries), harmonising design with urban planning, monument preservation and the use of art works in public facilities. This means he/she may provide advice, even if not asked to do so, on how architectural quality in government buildings in new market relationships should be shaped.

In addition, the CGA, in coordination with the CRa, is also responsible for directing and stimulating research and design, promoting spatial quality, and improving the role of the national government as a client. Supported by its office and CRa, the CGA promotes several activities and initiatives to push forward and stimulate a culture of design quality across

⁵⁰ According to the government website, the position of Government Architect exists since 1807, being known at the time as Architect of the King. The first Government Architect, Jean Thomas Thibault, was soon assigned a far-reaching advisory role in construction-related matters in Dutch society, in addition to his work on the palaces and government buildings. That role has since been expanded and reinforced. See: <https://english.rijksvastgoedbedrijf.nl/about-us/government-architect>

The Netherlands. This is mostly done with the help of a range of informal design governance tools (see below).

In this framework, the CGA plays a stimulating part in the transfer of knowledge from central government to other authorities, design professionals and related actors and vice versa, and ensures that these stakeholders are involved in the implementation of the central government's architectural policy (Ibid.). Together with the Ministry for Education, Culture and Science and with the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, the CGA plays an important role in the development of the architecture and spatial design policy in The Netherlands, by actively contributing to policymaking and policy monitoring, for example by commissioning assessment studies on the policy outcomes and impacts, promoting debates on specific themes, etc.



5.27: New entrance of Rotterdam Central station, promoted by the Municipality of Rotterdam and designed by Sjoerd Soeters Office, completed in 2014 © João Bento.

According to the RVB's webpage, the CGA also develops the following specific tasks:

- Select the architects who will design or renovate state-owned properties, namely being closely involved in the tendering procedure in the selection of architects/parties in RVB projects and advising on spatial-architectural and artistic quality in RVB projects;
- Investigate the functional use and potential redesignation of buildings and lands that the State no longer requires;
- Select artists to produce works for new buildings or major renovations, based on the Art Percentage Scheme;
- Encourage the training and professional competences of architects within the context of the Architects Title Act;
- Safeguard the design quality of government buildings and how they fit into their urban context.

Last, but not least, the CGA fulfils a “figurehead” and symbolic function within the spatial design field, maintaining contacts with all relevant stakeholders, such as design professional organizations (architects, urban planners and landscape architects), schools of architecture, the national register of architects, and supporting the network of master builders (*bouwmeesters*), which includes the railway master builder, the police master builder, provincial master builders and city architects (see section 4.3).

Board of Government Advisors

Since 2004, due to the high number of advice requests on policies and projects with wider scales of spatial intervention, the CGA is assisted by two governmental advisors for the physical living environment, one focused on landscape policy and another on urban planning issues⁵¹. Supported by an office of around forty people in total – including the office and staff of the CGA — and chaired by the CGA, the Board of Government Advisors (*College van Rijksadviseurs* - CRa) is composed of three advisors⁵².

Describing itself as an independent advisory board, the CRa provides multidisciplinary design support service to the different governmental departments, in which the various spatial design disciplines are represented by the CGA (architecture) and by the two government advisers for the physical environment (an urban designer and a landscape architect). The CRa stimulates ‘design thinking’ in different spatial assignments and promotes an integral and innovative approach to current and future challenges. Within the scope of the CGA’s mission, the CRa also provides solicited and unsolicited advice to the entire government (The Netherlands, 2020). Although there are no fixed rules, the division of the tasks (e.g., request for design advice) among the three members of the CRa is based on the area of expertise of each advisor (Naafs, 2022: interview).



5.27: The Dutch Board of Government Architects, mandate of 2016-2020, from left to right Daan Zandbelt, Floris Alkemade and Berno Strootman © *College van Rijksadviseurs*

⁵¹ The CRa was initially composed of four policy advisors: the CGA, Advisor on Landscape, the Advisor on Infrastructure and the Advisor on Cultural Heritage. In 2012, the mission and composition of the CRa was revised and the number of advisors was reduced to three.

⁵² Its members are appointed by three governmental departments: Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Ministry for Infrastructure and the Environment and the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Agriculture Environment For more info: <https://www.collegevanrijksadviseurs.nl/actueel/nieuws/2017/05/17/cra-presenteert-werkagenda-2017-2020>

Although the CRa does not develop designs or plans directly, it promotes design quality by negotiating and facilitating design governance processes among interested parties relating to spatial projects in which the government may be involved. Therefore, CRa contributes to 'the structural use of spatial design as an instrument in government projects and national programmes. It is also an incentive to improve the role of the central government as a client for design services' (The Netherlands, 2020). A specific example is the role of chairman of a Spatial Quality Team (see section 'Design governance tools').

In accordance with its governmental assignment, the CRa develops a four-year agenda in consultation with relevant departments and in coordination with the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The most recent agenda, for the period 2021-2024, entitled 'The 22nd century starts now', proposes a reflection on the future of The Netherlands by looking a century ahead, using 'long-term design studios to develop a shared picture of the strategic choices required for a future-proof Netherlands' (College van Rijksadviseurs, 2021). Adding to this, a selective and flexible work program is drawn up. Both the agenda and work program include specific (inter)departmental assignments and projects (Netherlands, 2020).

Design governance tools

Besides providing advice to governmental departments, the CRa promotes design quality and fosters a placemaking culture through a range of informal design governance tools, such as research studies, awareness raising campaigns, design competitions, research by design, design awards and design expertise (quality-teams), among other initiatives and events.

Concerning the first, the CRa develops in-house research for its own projects, but more often than not it commissions research studies to external partners to investigate specific topics or subjects. For example, the CRa recently commissioned an investigation into Dutch densification history comprising two parts: data analysis, summarised in a map of The Netherlands with all the neighbourhoods and villages that were substantially densified between 2005-2020; and three stories based on fieldwork and interviews about the developments conducted in three locations⁵³.

⁵³ For more info see: <https://www.collegevanrijksadviseurs.nl/projecten/verdichtingsverhalen>



5.28: One of 'Panorama Nederland' public events © College van Rijksadviseurs

As an example of an awareness raising campaign, in 2018, the CRa launched the national campaign “Panorama Nederland’ that aimed to promote a debate about the future of spatial planning in The Netherlands by addressing ‘how the major social issues of today can be the key to welcome structural improvements in the future” (Rijksadviseurs, 2019, p. 19)⁵⁴. A hypothetical future landscape was developed in the form of a circular panorama intended to promote a debate on how the main social and spatial challenges for The Netherlands could be envisaged across the Dutch landscape. This visual panorama included new spatial interventions in different built and unbuilt spaces across the Dutch territory (e.g., seacoast, urban centres, residential neighbourhoods, agriculture, and rural spaces, etc.).

The underlying goal of ‘Panorama Nederland’ was to raise awareness about the importance of design and interdisciplinary collaboration to tackle new spatial transformations resulting from social and economic challenges (energy transition, urbanisation, climate change, etc) in a coherent and integrated manner (Ibidem). ‘Panorama Nederland’ travelled throughout the country as an itinerant exhibition, and people could step into the panorama to take a look into the vision for the future of the Dutch landscape, animated by a series of debates on future spatial visions for the village, city or province that was hosting the exhibition⁵⁵.

Over the years, the CRa has also promoted several design competitions of ideas addressing different issues, such as housing for refugees (2015), new forms of care and support for the elderly (2017) and deals between farmers and citizens (2018). To cite an example, in 2019, the CRa launched the competition ‘Panorama Lokaal’, which aimed to reimagine the urban-rural fringes in The Netherlands. This initiative consisted of a two-phase design competition of ideas focused on residential neighbourhoods in the outskirts of Dutch cities to enable their renovation and adaption of current challenges in better places⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ For more info see: <https://www.collegevanrijksadviseurs.nl/projecten/panorama-nederland>

⁵⁵ The exhibition ‘Panorama Nederland’ was shown in 25 different locations across The Netherlands and the CRa promoted around 100 presentations and debates about topics concerning future transformations in the Dutch landscape.

⁵⁶ For more info: <https://www.collegevanrijksadviseurs.nl/projecten/panorama-lokaal>



5.29: One of the 'Panorama Lokaal' sessions with local coalitions © College van Rijksadviseurs

In the first phase, local stakeholders were invited to form a coalition and propose a location, where a jury selected seven competition sites. For each site, the seven coalitions formulated a design assignment aimed at innovating and framing local constraints, community needs, etc. In the second phase, an open call was launched for multidisciplinary teams, with a portfolio and a motivation letter for one or more locations. For each site, three teams were selected to develop a design proposal in a collaborative process. Finally, a jury selected a winner for each site and the visionary proposals were presented and discussed in a symposium.

The organisation and delivery of Panorama Lokaal involved multiple ways of design leadership, namely governmental promotion to raise awareness about the importance of design thinking and collaborative and integral approaches to solve complex problems. In fact, design competitions are a very valuable tool to generate debate and innovative ideas and can be used for more than just high-profile prestige projects. Using competitions to focus on ordinary places and on common design problems can be very valuable, providing broad lessons for sites other than those that are subject to the competition.

Recently, as an example of a research by design activity, the CRa launched a 3-year program entitled *Future Atelier NL2100*, which uses long-term design thinking as a method to stimulate a movement around thinking about the future of The Netherlands⁵⁷. In the first year, the CRa commissioned three design offices to develop research by design on various spatial challenges, with a focus on the network layer. In a series of working sessions, with the help of a wide selection of scientific experts, possible and probable futures in the long term were mapped out for each stream (water, energy, data, flora & fauna, people, goods & raw materials) together with its influencing factors. This was followed by a three-day Future Atelier, where small teams of designers, experts and artists who worked on various subjects applied future thinking to real-life issues. The design offices applied their insights from the network layer

⁵⁷ See: <https://nl2100.nl/>

to the energy main structure and mapped out the relationship with other spatial assignments. All this came together in a public event and the most important topics were discussed with prominent guests in a series of talks.



5.30: On of the CRa 'Future Atelier' workshops © College van Rijksadviseurs

To give an example of a persuasion tool: the CRa coordinates the Golden Pyramid Award, a biennial national prize designed to inspire commissioning⁵⁸. This can be a single building, a public space or a wider city district or nature reserve. All clients can qualify for the prize, including institutions, companies, governments, developers, individuals, etc. Only the national government is excluded from participation. The CGA chairs the jury panel and the organisation of the award.



5.31: The Dutch Auschwitz Committee Foundation was one of the finalists of the Golden Pyramid Award 2022, with its 'National Holocaust Memorial of Names', designed by Daniel Libeskind, in Amsterdam, 2021 © Kees Hummel

⁵⁸ For more info see: <https://www.goudenpiramide.nl/wat-is-de-gouden-piramide>

The CRa also chairs design advisory teams, known in The Netherlands as Quality-teams (Q-teams), which are multidisciplinary teams of experts that provide independent advice on spatial developments and spatial policy. The Q-Teams provide knowledge and design capacity to the local, provincial, or regional authorities through formal and informal advisory practices, intervening in the early stages of planning and design processes.

In most of its activities, the CRa promotes coalitions with a number of key partners - governmental departments, local authorities, non-governmental bodies and other organisations - to gather support and resources for project development, sometimes sharing costs and responsibilities. This is a practical way for the CRa to engage different partners and extend the impact of the initiative. For example, the ongoing program “A New Building Culture” (Een Nieuwe Bouwcultuur), that aims to stimulate biobased and nature-inclusive construction, is an initiative of the CRa supported by several ministries and the Central Government Real Estate Agency (RVB) and State Forestry Agency (Staatsbosbeheer)⁵⁹.

Selection procedure

The CGA is appointed by Royal Decree for periods of at least 3 years and a maximum of 5 years (an extension is possible in exceptional cases). When accepting the part-time position, the CGA must take into account agreements to prevent conflicts of interest. The job profile for the CGA is publicly announced, with a description of its tasks and responsibilities. The same is true for the two Government advisers for the physical living environment, who are appointed to serve a four-year mandate, also in part-time mode and maintaining their professional activity (Joosten & Naafs, 2022: interview). The CGA should have the following profile: "a leading architect with a heart for the public good. Someone with extensive experience at home and abroad with complex real estate projects. An inspiring designer with an integral view that knows how to shape and monitor the cohesion between the physical and social domain." (The Netherlands, 2015)

5.3.3 Other relevant actors

The Central Government Real Estate Agency

Formed in 2014, the Central Government Real Estate Agency (RVB) operates under the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) and is the result of a merger of four governmental real estate agencies: the Defence Real Estate Agency, the Government Buildings Agency, the State Property and Development Agency, and the Government Real Estate Directorate. The RVB is responsible for the management and maintenance of a wide range of buildings and sites in order to meet the property needs of central government (e.g., purchase, sale, construction, remodelling, renovation, and development and redevelopment

⁵⁹ Supported by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Ministry for Education, Culture and Science, the Central Government Real Estate Agency: <https://www.collegevanrijksadviseurs.nl/projecten/nieuwe-bouwcultuur>

of properties)⁶⁰. The RVB includes, among other departments, the Chief Government Architect Office, and its advisory board, which promotes and monitors the design quality of government buildings and sites.

Ministry for Education, Culture and Science

The Ministry for Education, Culture and Science (OCW)⁶¹ is one of the ministries responsible for Dutch architecture and spatial design policy since its first version in 1991. Within the ministry, the Department for Media and Creative Industries defines and monitors policy developments in the field of media and creative industries, including architecture and spatial design policy. Among other tasks, it oversees the enforcement of OCW's funding programmes, which can be delivered by other organisations, such as the Creative Industries Fund (see below).

Creative Industries Fund NL (former *Architecture Fund*)

The Creative Industries Fund NL is one of the four Dutch cultural funds that provide funding for design, architecture, and digital culture initiatives. The new *architecture policy* includes an incentive programme aimed at strengthening the engagement of spatial design in tackling spatial challenges and stimulating an integral approach. Within the policy period, the Fund will deliver the programme through the organisation of thematic open calls and other specific initiatives. The programme will focus on stimulating initiatives involving designers to work on design assignments and research by design, which can lead to the improvement of spatial quality⁶². In order to stimulate the design community and exchange of knowledge, the Fund also initiates cooperative ventures and organises in-depth lectures, masterclasses, and work meetings, independently or in collaboration with partners.

The New Institute

The New Institute (*Het Nieuwe Instituut*) is a cultural centre that focuses on architecture, design, and digital culture. It resulted from the merger of the former Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi) — one of the key organizations of the Dutch architectural policy between 1993-2013 — with two other cultural institutes, the Netherlands Institute for Design and Fashion (Premsela) and the Knowledge Institute for e-Culture (Virtual Platform). NAi delivered an architecture cultural agenda providing access to a range of services, including an architectural archive, museum, library, and cultural centre. As referred above, as a result of a strong financial crisis, the Dutch government decided to re-structure its cultural policy in 2013 and the NAi was merged with the other two organisations⁶³. Nevertheless, the New Institute still harbours the national architectural archive and museum, and continues promoting architectural cultural initiatives delivered through seminars, exhibitions, teaching, research and development projects.

⁶⁰ The RVB develops and manages a wide range of real estate portfolio, including prisons, court buildings, barracks, airports, defence, offices, listed buildings and monuments, museums, and palaces. For more info see: <https://english.rijksvastgoedbedrijf.nl/about-us>

⁶¹ For more info see: <https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-education-culture-and-science>

⁶² For more info see: <https://www.stimuleringsfonds.nl/en/dossiers/spatial-design-action-programme>

⁶³ For more information: <https://nai.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/en>

The Royal Institute of Dutch Architects (BNA)

BNA is the professional association for architects in The Netherlands. The goal of the BNA is to stimulate the development of architecture and to support the practice of its members⁶⁴. Among other activities, BNA provides specialist training programmes on aspects relating to the design of the built environment and its importance to design professionals. Nonetheless, BNA membership is not a mandatory requirement to work as an architect in The Netherlands. The professional title of Architect is protected by Dutch law and only qualified individuals listed in the Architects' Register can use the title⁶⁵.

Architectuur Lokaal

The Architectuur Lokaal (AL) is an independent centre of expertise and information devoted to the building of culture and to the commissioning of building developments in The Netherlands. This lightweight structure (6 people) acts as a link between national policies and local practices, to help local agents enforce national policies. AL provides assistance with the organisation of design competitions to both public and private clients, including the CRa and local authorities, as well as real estate developers and private companies involved in building operations. Among other tools, AL developed the *Kompas light*, a digital step by step guide for commissioning architectural services, resulting in a clear ready-to-use guideline for invitations to tender, including standard forms for applying⁶⁶. AL also developed information web portals, such as the one dedicated to municipal environmental visions, aimed at providing guidance and examples of environmental visions developed by Dutch local authorities⁶⁷.

Local architectural centres

In The Netherlands there are around 25 local architecture centres that promote and deliver a diverse range of quality cultural tools, such as information and persuasion, including debates, exhibitions, architecture tours, events, festivals, and other activities intended to raise awareness. Most of these centres are funded by local governments, as is the case for example in cities like Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Utrecht or Groningen⁶⁸.

5.4 The Scottish case

With regard to administrative structure, Scotland has had its own devolved Parliament and Government since 1998, with the power to legislate in all areas of policy except overarching ones reserved to the UK government (such as immigration, foreign policy, and defence). The Scottish government runs the country in all other matters, including responsibilities in such areas as health, education, justice, rural affairs, housing, and the environment⁶⁹.

⁶⁴ For more info, see: <https://bna.nl/>

⁶⁵ For more info, see: <https://www.architectenregister.nl/en/>

⁶⁶ For more information: <https://www.architectuuropdrachten.nl/>

⁶⁷ For more information: <https://mijnomgevingsvisie.nl/>

⁶⁸ For more info: Rotterdam (<https://www.airrotterdam.eu/>); Amsterdam (<https://www.arcam.nl/>); Utrecht (<http://www.aorta.nu/>) or Groningen (<https://www.platformgras.nl/>)

⁶⁹ See: <https://www.gov.scot/About>

The government is structured into a number of directorates which, with their internal divisions as well as via related public bodies, are responsible for developing and implementing different areas of public policy⁷⁰. Planning and architecture are a responsibility of the Local Government and Communities Directorate, as a specific policy area and, organisationally, as a separate division operating under a Chief Planner. Within the latter operates the internal division of Architecture & Place, headed by the Chief Architect, whose duties run the gamut of built environment aspects, from housing and heritage to community engagement, promotion and advocacy or development delivery⁷¹.

5.4.1 The architectural policy of Scotland

The development of the Scottish architectural policy started with the Scottish devolution process in 1997. Within this process, the Government Programme, drafted by a coalition agreement between the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats, included the following initiative: “*We will develop the first ever national policy on architecture*’ (Scotland, 1999)⁷². Four months after the Scottish elections, the new Executive published a framework document for public consultation entitled ‘*The development of a Policy on Architecture for Scotland*’, setting out the issues, the range of policy objectives and the actions (Scotland, 1999).

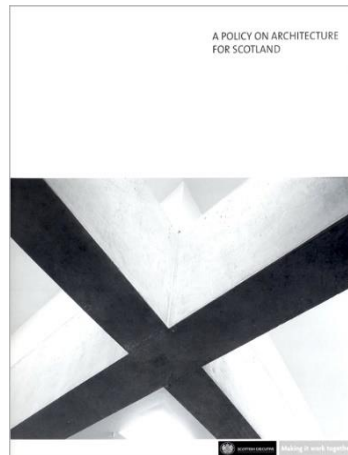
Under the coordination of the Chief Architect's Office, a series of public meetings were held across Scotland to collect views and comments on the policy document (LGC, 2000). Following the consultation period, the first architectural Policy in Scotland was formally adopted by the Parliament, in 2001.

The primary objective of the Scottish policy was ‘to seek improvements in the quality of Scotland’s buildings, both public and private, and in the quality of the built environment’ (Scotland, 2001, p. 4). To achieve this broad goal, the policy advocated for a wider recognition of the importance and value of good design identified five key objectives. To achieve these objectives, the Scottish policy established 40 government actions intended to help raise awareness about the value of good building design and to promote recognition of the importance of architecture (Scotland, 2005).

⁷⁰ See: <https://www.gov.scot/about/how-government-is-run/>

⁷¹ See: <https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/Roles/Scottish-Government/SG-contacts/TeamStructures>
<https://www.gov.scot/policies/planning-architecture/>

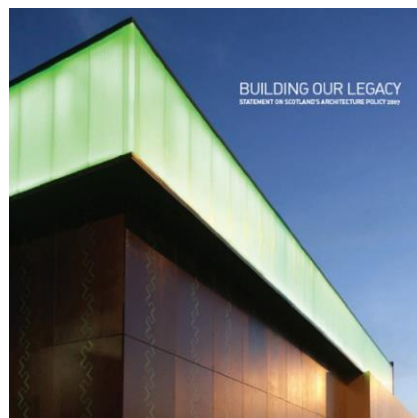
⁷² The idea of developing a formal architectural policy was in part influenced by several architectural major events in the late 1990s: the national debate on the design of the new Parliament building, which was animated by the results of an international competition and exhibition; the Glasgow year of architecture and the recent establishment of a national centre for architecture and design, The Lighthouse (João Bento, 2017).



5.32: First Scottish architectural policy (2001)

One of the first policy outputs was the establishment of funding to deliver a wide range of activities, events, and initiatives in support of architecture. In 2005, the Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS) was established as an independent national champion for good architecture, design, and planning in the built environment. Considered a major policy achievement, A&DS took over and expanded the activities of the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland (RFACS). The role of A&DS will be described further ahead.

In 2006, the Scottish Executive published a strategy on the future of cultural policy. There was a commitment to 'develop and launch a new architectural policy statement, with a strengthened role to influence the quality of the built environment' (Scotland, 2006, p. 53). In 2007, a new architectural policy document was adopted. Although the new Scottish policy was only signed by the Minister for Culture, it stated that there was a need to expand the policy scope to a wider urban design agenda placing an emphasis on the broad concept of place-making (Scotland, 2007, p. 10). As such, the scope of the revised Scottish policy was expanded to the whole built environment advocating an urban design approach.



5.33: Second Scottish architectural policy (2007)

The main purpose of the second Scottish policy remained virtually unchanged but with a stronger emphasis on place quality and sustainability. The policy argued that poor design still remained evident in many parts of Scotland, mainly in the periphery of cities (Scotland,

2007). Hence, there was a need for a reinforced architectural policy that could stimulate a virtuous circle of production, promoting more awareness about the added value of design.

In 2008, the Scottish Government created a new Directorate for the Built Environment, bringing together interests on planning, building standards and architecture. As part of this reform, the *Architectural Policy Unit* merged with the *Design Division of Planning* to form the new *Architecture and Place Division (APD)*. In May 2012, the APD published a paper to underpin a public consultation process discussing how architecture and place could help provide a better quality of life. After several public meetings, the Scottish Government adopted a new Architecture and Place Policy, in June 2013.



5.34: Third Scottish architectural policy (2013)

The revised policy was signed by the Culture Secretary and the Minister for Local Government and Planning. Thus, Scotland had, for the first time, a national inter-ministerial policy for the built environment. Despite the new scope and strategy, the third Scottish policy builds upon the solid foundation of the previous policies, maintaining more or less the same conceptual framework, objectives, and tools. Nevertheless, the Chief Architect (2018: interview) referred that: *'this closer connection between planning and design policy was made possible due to teamwork resultant from the new Architecture and Place Division.'*

About the cultural connections and engagement objectives, the revised policy continues to encourage debate on the role of architecture and to enhance the understanding of building design through several cultural programs, mostly delivered by A&DS. As such, A&DS continue to have a pivotal role with regard to the implementation of architectural policy through its enabling activities and services of design review, both at the national and local level.

In terms of implementation mechanisms, the Policy on Architecture Progress Group (PAPG) was established to provide a permanent platform to assist in the co-ordination of initiatives across departments, to monitor the success of the policy actions and to provide a forum. Due to the transversal nature of architectural policy, the position of Chief Architect and the existence of an interdepartmental platform appear to be a critical strategy to turn design quality into a corporate aim across government.

5.4.2 The Chief Architect of Scotland: role and instruments

The position of Chief Architect already existed within Scotland's public administration before the Scottish devolution process in 1997. Nevertheless, in May 1999, after the regional elections to elect its deputies and constitute a Government, the Scottish Executive took office and started working on a draft for the first national Scottish architecture policy, under the coordination of the Chief Architect's Office. In 2001, with the formal approval of the first Scottish architectural policy, the Chief Architects Office became the Architecture Policy Unit (APU), with the Chief Architect of Scotland as head of the unit.

In this context, APU had the co-ordinating role of architecture and building design quality issues, across Executive Departments and beyond, developing stronger links with external bodies. Adding to this, in 2004, the Minister for Culture established the *Policy on Architecture Progress Group* to inform Executive decisions on initiatives to take forward the implementation of policy commitments and to provide a platform to assist in the co-ordination of initiatives between built environment bodies in Scotland and representatives from across Executive Departments. The Group also had the task of monitoring the success of actions taken and providing a forum.

In 2008, the Scottish Government created a new Directorate for the Built Environment, bringing together interests on planning, building standards and architecture. As part of this reform, the *Architectural Policy Unit (APU)* merged with the *Design Division of Planning* to form the new *Architecture and Place Division (APD)*, which means that the same governmental unit was now in charge of both the Architecture and Place policies.



5.35: The Scottish Government worked with house-builder Mactaggart and Mickel to demonstrate how 'Designing Streets' policy could be applied on an exemplar residential development in East Renfrewshire, Eaglesham, Scotland, design by Proctor & Matthews Architects, 2011 ©Kristen Anderson

APD is led by the Chief Architect and its main role is to promote quality in design and the built environment, namely, by advising Ministers on design aspects of planning and for the development and implementation of policies on design in the built environment. A key focus of the Chief Architect team is the promotion of the importance of design considerations in reaching planning decisions. The Chief Architect also takes forward programmes which link good design in the built environment to the goals and objectives of the Directorate for the Built Environment. In sum, the role of the Chief Architect and of its supporting division is to help turn policy intentions into action, with a view to:

- create successful, thriving, and sustainable communities;
- deliver better public buildings which contribute to improved service delivery and represent good value for money; and
- tackle the barriers to good quality development, through education, skills, and advocacy.

To do so, APD promotes best practice in planning, architecture, and design by assessing authorities' performance, namely through the planning performance framework, and also by funding external organisations and supporting a number of events, awards, and competitions:

- Performance

APD publishes quarterly and annual statistics on timescales and approval rates for planning applications. These statistics also provide information on local reviews and enforcement activity. All planning authorities, and seven of the key agencies, prepare an annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report which provides a measurement of quality of the planning service and how it can be improved. The APD also assesses the reports against a set of 15 key performance markers. In this framework, the APD prepares an annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report; the Directorate for Planning produces an annual review of the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division.

- Funding: Architecture and Design Scotland

In 2017-18, APD provided a funding of £1,670,000 to Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS) to promote the value of good architecture and sustainable places in support of current policy. A&DS is an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB) which provides exhibitions, events, and an education programme for the public as well as advice, resources, and support to practitioners in the built environment sector.



5.36: Westbank Street Design Workshop supported by Scottish Government grant to develop community led design proposal for a key site in Portobello, Edinburgh © Ian Gilzean

- Awards & Events

The APD supports, in various ways, awards for: Quality in Planning, Best Building in Scotland (annually), Client of the Year (recognising the other side of architectural projects), a number of thematic awards (for housing design, positive impact on local communities, photography) and an award for best student design work. The APD was actively involved in Scotland's contribution to the 2016 Venice Biennale, while on the same period they helped facilitate a year-long celebration of Scottish innovation and talent (Year of Architecture and Design 2016), and a specific Festival of Architecture as part of that. All these were delivered in collaboration with other cultural or industry bodies.



5.37: Self and Custom Build Challenge Fund - The Scottish Government supported seven pilots to encourage more user-involvement in the design of housing sites across the country. As an example, the image is one of the pilots focused on custom-build prototypes for the redevelopment of Dundashill, in North Glasgow © Scottish Canals

- Scottish Scenic Routes Pilots

The Scottish Scenic Routes pilot programme, launched in June 2013, has resulted in the design and construction of eight innovatively designed viewpoints at popular visitor spots. The proposals for each pilot site were selected through design competitions aimed at supporting emerging design talent. The initiative was supported by a number of partners.

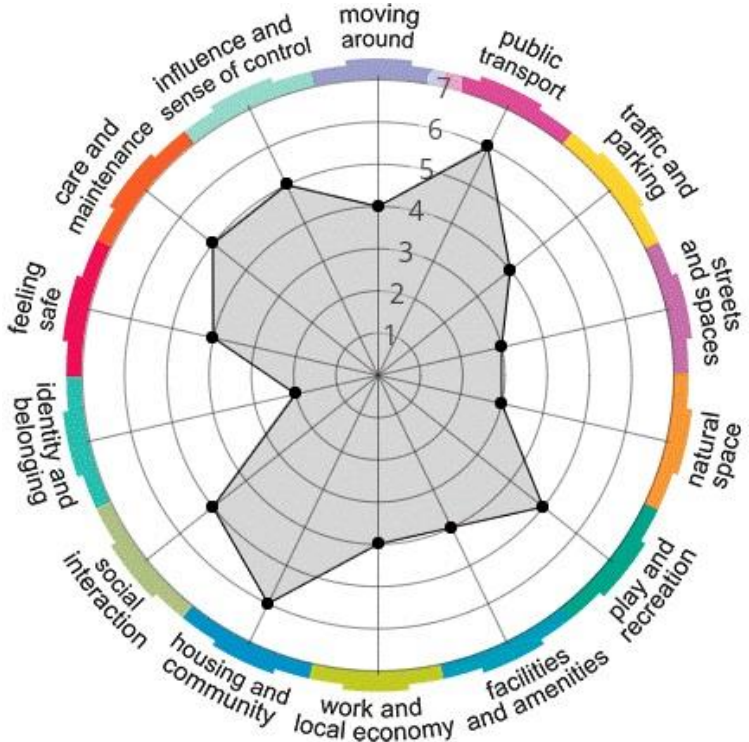
According to the Chief Architect (2018: interview), his position is important to get different state actors involved in policy formulation, to monitor policy progress and to improve inter-departmental co-ordination promoting design quality as a corporate aim. The Chief Architect also mentioned that he is able to work across departments, partly due to the relatively small, manageable size of the Scottish Government, and partly due to the current administration's attitude towards inter-departmental cooperation – the desired goal, as he described it, is a model where “the departments won't really matter as much as what the outcomes are, and some of these outcomes are shared” (2018: interview). Per his descriptions, he works in close proximity to other departments, both operationally (towards common aims, such as improving education) as well as physically (“I can walk down the corridor and in a few seconds talk to colleagues in Education” – Ibid.), the latter being no less important.



5.38: Scotland's Housing Expo 2010 - Supported by Scottish Government and Highland Council, it showcased innovative sustainable housing in the 50 house site to engage the public about the future of housing and provide a well-designed alternative to the standard housing developments around the growing city of Inverness. A mixture of housing for sale and social rent were selected after a design competition in 2007 and were opened up to the public in 2010 attracting over 30,000 visitors. In 2018 the housing was fully occupied; the landscape had matured and the Expo continues to act as a reference point for innovation in housing design.

Masterplan by Cadell2. © Ian Gilzean

The Chief Architect also coordinates the development of specific tools and initiatives, such as the *Place Standard*, a formative evaluation tool designed to facilitate and structure conversations around the quality of places⁷³. Nevertheless, other interviewees mentioned that the Chief Architect could be placed higher in the governmental structure, to increase his or her capacity to demand higher design standards in other public agencies outside his/her department. This means that, despite the title and the small team that supports his/her activities, inter-departmental barriers may continue to be a difficult challenge if the Chief Architect does not have enough political support (Bento, 2017).

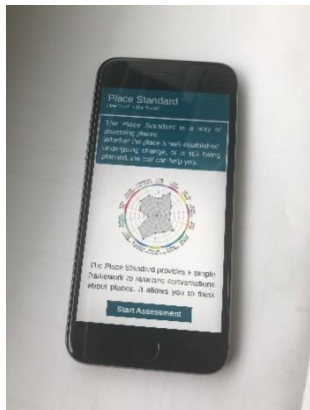


5.39: Example of Place Standard final spider diagram (source: www.placestandard.scot)

⁷³ Initiated in 2015, the development of the Place Standard tool was coordinated by the Chief Architect division in partnership with NHS Health Scotland and A&DS.



(a)



(b)



(c)

5.40: Place Standard Tool in different situations: a) Place Standard in use on site in Sydhaven, Copenhagen during CityLink Festival workshop; b) Place Standard app accessible on AppleStore; c) Place Standard masterclass – Edinburgh City Council, 2017 © Ian Gilzean

5.4.3 Other relevant actors

Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS)

As explained, the Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS) was established in 2005 as an independent national champion for good architecture, design, and planning of the built environment⁷⁴. Providing leadership on spatial design, A&DS aims to promote the design of buildings and places that meet the needs of Scottish citizens (Scotland, 2021). A&DS is an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB) which delivers exhibitions, events, and an education programme for the public and provides advice, resources, and support to practitioners in the built environment sector. A&DS took over and expanded the activities of the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland (RFACS). Inspired by the former English CABE, one of the A&DS roles is to develop *design review* at national level, which is a distinctive characteristic of the UK (White and Chapple, 2019).

In 2009, due to financial difficulties, most of the activities of The Lighthouse were transferred to A&DS. A&DS continued to develop several projects over the years. One of them was working with the Scottish Government Health & Social Care Directorate (SGHSCD) and Health Facilities Scotland (HFS) to support Health Boards and create better health buildings and places, by 'assisting those commissioning new, or substantially redeveloped facilities, to set

⁷⁴ For more info: <https://www.ads.org.uk/>

strategic design standards for the project' (A&DS website, consulted July 2015). In 2017-18, the Scottish executive provided funding of £1,670,000 to A&DS to promote the value of good architecture and sustainable places in support of current architecture and place policy.

Interestingly, in all the case studies, state governments have set up a specific institution to champion the cause of good design, promoting the importance of architecture amongst wider audiences, working with planning authorities and the development industry. In the Scottish case, the Chief Architect commented specifically on the role of the A&DS, starting with the recognition that, as an external organisation, it has more freedom than his own office – to work with a wider range of clients, or directly with communities, for example (2018: interview).

Maintaining autonomy is therefore crucial for the role played by these institutions, but only as part of a balance where the other end is a close working relationship with 'insiders', in this case the Chief Architect. The CEO of A&DS describes the position as "a voice that has an independence, but not an entirely separate view from the government. We are charged with delivering government policy and to advise on how to do that best, so that sits slightly different from the absolutely independent voice who might question government policy" (2018: interview).

Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS)

Like the other UK countries, the RIAS is the professional body for all chartered architects in Scotland⁷⁵. Assuming itself as a champion of architecture and of the built environment, the RIAS has charitable status and offers a wide range of services and products for architects, students of architecture, construction professionals and everyone with an interest in the built environment and the design process.

⁷⁵ <https://www.rias.org.uk/>

5.5 The Swedish case

The Kingdom of Sweden is the largest and most populous country in Northern Europe. In terms of administrative structure, Sweden is a decentralized unitary state with three governmental levels: the national state, 21 county councils and 290 municipalities (Lidström, 2020). Like most European countries, the national government is responsible for the legislation that establishes the land-use planning system as well as for providing the guidelines that municipalities must follow in their local planning process. The central government also defines the national building code, the areas with special protected status (e.g., environmental or heritage) and sectoral policies that have land-use impact at local level (e.g., transport) (OECD, 2017a, p. 199).

Below the national state, the central government is represented by the county councils, which represent the government's interests in the planning process and may develop regional plans. Nevertheless, municipalities are the most important actor in the Swedish planning framework through the definition of municipal plans. These include *Comprehensive Plans*, which contain strategic objectives and strategies for the development of municipalities but are not legally binding; and *Detailed Plans* that are regulatory zoning plans binding for private landowners and used as a base for issuing the building permits. In addition, municipalities are responsible for the provision of technical infrastructure (e.g., roads, water, sewage) and some have substantial land holdings, which provides them with an important tool to shape their territory (Ibidem).

5.5.1 The architectural policy of Sweden

Sweden was one of the first European countries to adopt a national architectural policy, with the parliamentary approval of the bill on architecture and design (1997/98: 117), entitled '*Forms for the Future - An Action Programme for Architecture and Design*', in 1998⁷⁶. The Swedish policy emphasised the long-term impacts of architecture and design on the quality of life of citizens. Bringing together two complementary fields, the policy puts forward six broad objectives to improve the quality of architecture and design. Its first objective, for example, states: "quality and aesthetic values must not be subordinate to short-sighted financial considerations" (Sweden, 1998). The policy also introduced new 'aesthetic provisions' in the Planning and Building Act (1987: 10), the Roads Act (1971: 948) and the Act on the construction of railways (1995: 1649) on the value of an aesthetically pleasing design, which are binding to all governmental departments.

⁷⁶ The Swedish bill was based on a proposal developed by an interdepartmental Working Group for Architecture and Design, which was constituted by representatives of eight ministries and was presented to the government in 1997.



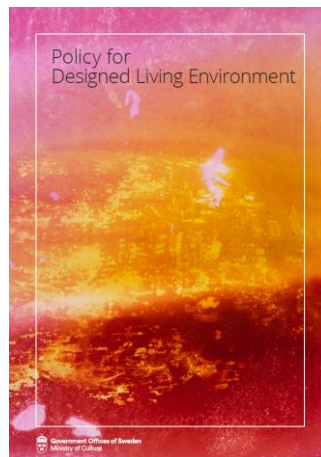
5.41: First Swedish architectural policy (1998)

Among other measures, specific assignments were given to a number of state agencies involved in construction and maintenance works in Sweden, to set a good example and establish quality programs on how design qualities could be promoted, and to report their own measures to improve the quality of the built environment in their respective areas of responsibility (Sweden, 1998). In this context, the architecture and design policy was important as a political landmark setting high-level aspirations on design quality and as a governance tool promoting positive change across public administration and beyond (Larsson et al., 2015).

In 2014, fifteen years later, the Swedish government decided to review the state's policy for architecture and design. A research report (SOU 2015:88) was commissioned to a committee, with the aim of proposing a new policy, and to analyse and propose initiatives⁷⁷. In 2015, based on the outputs of three working groups, a final report was published. Among other things, the report specifically suggested that the government should appoint a national State architect (Larsson et al., 2015). In 2017, the Council of Ministers approved a new bill for architecture and design (Bill 2017/18:110). The legislative proposal was sent to the national parliament and approved in 2018 with the title “Policy for Designed Living Environment”.

Although adopted in the form of legislation, the Swedish policy is similar to a comprehensive architectural policy of a strategic nature setting high aspirations for a long-term sustainable and well-designed living environment (Sweden, 2018). With a broad remit, the new architecture policy (2018) starts by stating that ‘architecture and design shall contribute to a sustainable, equitable and less segregated society with carefully designed living environments, where everyone is given the opportunity to influence the development of the common environment.’

⁷⁷ The research committee was led by Christer Larsson, previously the City Planning Director of Malmö, Sweden.



5.42: Cover of the revised Swedish policy on architecture and design (2017)

With an integrated approach, unlike the previous version, the new policy is based on the concept of 'designed living environment' (in Swedish, *gestaltad livsmiljö*), which includes not only architecture and design but also urban design, art, and cultural heritage. Therefore, according to the policy (2018), the concept refers to the whole living environment and associated processes, which concern both new and existing buildings, public spaces, landscapes, as well as the entire process from general planning to implementation and management.

Nevertheless, the new architecture policy maintains most of the principles of the first version, such as the importance for the state to be a role model, the need for prioritizing quality in public procurement, the importance of raising awareness, education and spreading knowledge widely in society, etc. Based on the goals of its predecessor, the new policy established the following six redefined goals for architecture and design:

- sustainability and quality are not made subservient to short-term financial considerations;
- knowledge in the fields of architecture and design is developed and disseminated;
- the public sector acts as a role model;
- aesthetic, artistic, and cultural assets are preserved and developed;
- environments are designed to be accessible for all; and
- cooperation and collaboration are developed both nationally and internationally (Ibid.).

As the built environment is affected by many sectoral areas, the policy argues that collaboration between relevant authorities in the field should be strengthened in order to stimulate the development of sustainable living environments (e.g., dissemination of good examples), proposing a number of collaborations at national, regional, and local level. Furthermore, the policy also refers to the need for collaboration between the different public actors with private companies, universities and civil society (Ibidem).

Key stakeholders

In order to achieve the policy goals, the government commissioned four state agencies, with different competences, to work on the policy implementation: the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, the National Heritage Board, the National Architecture Centre and Design (ArkDes) and the Swedish Arts Council (see below). From the government perspective, the areas of activity of the four state agencies cover the main dimensions of designed living environment (architecture, design, urban design, art and cultural heritage). In addition to their own sectoral commissions, the four agencies should work together on the policy implementation (see below).

Recognizing that there is a need for a clearer overall responsibility for the coordination, competence support and promotion of efforts (Sweden, 2018, p. 28), the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) was given overall responsibility for the policy coordination and monitoring, as well as for providing competence support and promoting initiatives with public actors at national, regional, and local levels. In this context, following one of the policy research report recommendations (Larsson, 2022: interview), Boverket established within its structure the position of National State Architect to help implementing and supervising the policy, to provide leadership and promote design excellence within the public sector⁷⁸.

Operating under the Ministry of Finance, Boverket is the central government agency with the task of guiding and analysing issues concerning urban planning, building, and housing in Sweden, including a support role to municipalities and regional authorities. Boverket is responsible for the follow-up of the application of the Planning and Building Act and may also issue regulations in the cases delegated by the government and has the right to decide on general design guidelines regarding legislation on planning and building. Boverket's Building Regulations (BBR) is an example of such regulations and general guidelines⁷⁹.

The second key player is the National Heritage Board, which is responsible for issues concerning cultural heritage, which include questions about cultural landscapes, cultural environments, cultural objects and museums. The task includes, among other things, working to ensure that the cultural values in the buildings and the landscape are taken care of and to monitor the cultural environment's interest in community planning and construction. In collaboration with other authorities, the National Heritage Board has also the responsibility to promote and foster the cultural-historical values of the built environment.

The third key player is the National Architecture Centre and Design (ArkDes)⁸⁰, which is financed by the Ministry for Culture, with the mission of promoting the value of architecture

⁷⁸ According to Jensfelt (2018), soon after the policy approval, Boverket published a job advertisement for a new National State Architect, and 35 people applied for the job. Nonetheless, in September 2018, Boverket announced that Christer Larsson, co-author of the policy research study, would be employed as the first National State Architect of Sweden. See: <https://arkitekten.se/nyheter/christer-larsson-bliir-tillfallig-riksarkitekt/>

⁷⁹ For more info, see: <https://www.boverket.se/en/start/>

⁸⁰ The approval of the Swedish architecture policy in 1998 coincided with the opening of the new building of the Swedish Museum of Architecture, which was founded in the 1950s. In 2009, the government decided to broaden its scope to include other fields of

and design to improve the quality of life of citizens in order to positively raise design quality in Sweden. This is done through exhibitions, events and debates, educational programmes, collections and library, etc. To cite an example, every year, thousands of pupils and teachers take part in ArkDes activities for schools designed to prepare school programmes covering a range of subjects and allowing pupils to participate in topics, from housing to colour and form in architecture, through discussions, guided tours and practical tasks, etc. In 2018, ArkDes created a research programme called the ArkDes Fellowship, an annual call offering opportunities to conduct interdisciplinary research in the fields of architecture and design.⁸¹ More recently, it launched the ArkDes Think Tank, a creative hub for research, collaboration, and strategic analysis, which is mainly focused on research questions addressing the government's architecture and design policy (Long, 2022: interview).

The fourth and last key player is the Swedish Arts Council whose principal task is to implement national cultural policy determined by the Parliament, mostly done by supporting artistic activities. Within the Designed Living Environments Policy, the Arts Council supports the role of art in the work with sustainable environments, both physically in relation to the place's architecture, landscape, and cultural history, and socially by utilizing the intangible cultural heritage, existing social values, and processes in one place.

Below the national level, the County Administrative Boards are the government's representative in the 21 counties, and their task is to ensure that the architectural policy goals are pursued with regard to the county's conditions, through advice and strategic work. At local level, the 290 municipalities play a decisive role in the design and management of the local living environments, both in the role of local authority in developing and managing public land, and as developer, property owner, landowner, manager, and landlord. Therefore, to achieve the national policy goals, the municipality's active role is central to secure the long-term sustainable development at local level (Sweden, 2018).

5.5.2 The State Architect of Sweden

As referred above, the government commissioned Boverket for the overall coordination of the architecture and design policy. Swedish ministries are relatively small compared with those of other countries and are mainly policymaking bodies that develop policy initiatives and monitor state agencies. In turn, the Swedish state agencies are large public organisations, with a high level of autonomy, which are in charge of monitoring and implementing governmental policies. In 2018, soon after the architectural policy approval, Boverket decided to appoint a National State Architect within its structure to coordinate the revised policy.

Operating under Boverket's Director General, the mission of the National State Architect is to lead and coordinate the architectural policy implementation at national level, both within

spatial design, such as urbanism, landscape design, product design and digital media. In 2013, the government changed its name to 'Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design' (ArkDes).

⁸¹ The inaugural ArkDes Call for Fellows was held in 2018, attracted over 200 applications, and three Fellows were selected by an international jury. The last edition was held in 2020 and was dedicated to the theme, Our Living Environment.

Boverket and across different state agencies. According to Larsson (2022: interview), the National State Architect's mission is also to strengthen the field of architecture and design in its broadest sense, steering a design quality agenda at national level but also providing political support to regional and local stakeholders in fostering spatial quality and contributing to the long-term development of sustainable cities in Sweden.



5.43: Conference of Helena Bjarnegård, current Swedish State Architect, about her role and the importance of architecture for society, 2019 © Stockholms Byggnadsförening

Within this framework, the National State architect chairs the steering board of the architectural policy coordination committee, which is composed of the four key state agencies assigned by the government to implement the policy: Boverket, the National Heritage Board, ArkDes and the Swedish Arts Council. The four agencies have a shared responsibility to increase knowledge on design quality and promote well designed living environments. The steering board meets regularly to report on what the different agencies are developing / planning to develop in the field of architecture and design, as well as to plan and discuss common projects, such as the annual conference on the designed living environment policy, co-organized by the four partners.

According to the National State Architect (Bjarnegård, 2022: interview), having the possibility to meet regularly with the General-Directors of the four agencies, provides her opportunity space to influence and promote the inclusion of the designed living environments as a topic in their program of activities. Within the four, there is a close working relationship among the State Architect and ArkDes in developing awareness raising initiatives or in defining lines

of action and inquiry. ArkDes has recently created a research unit dedicated to the designed living environment – ArkDes Think Tank – which encompasses a small multidisciplinary research team, financed by the government’s policy, to investigate and develop new knowledge on the design governance processes of the living environment in Sweden (Long, 2022: interview).



5.44: Debate about "Visions of the Sustainable city in 2050" in Bütent festival, where the Swedish National Architect give her vision on holistic approach to SDGs and citizen involvement, 2019 © Maria C Lundqvist

With a four-year mandate, the National State Architect also chairs the Council for Sustainable Cities, which works to implement the government’s policy for sustainable urban development. Established in 2017, the Council gathers 11 state agencies and representatives of the county’s administrative boards and the municipalities association⁸². According to its website, the Council’s target audience is the Swedish municipalities, providing information and facilitating access to the tools of the different agencies (e.g., applications for the innovation fund).

⁸² The following authorities are members of the Council: Boverket, Forms, The Authority for Participation, The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, ArkDes, The Swedish Energy Agency, Tillväxtverket, The Swedish Transport Administration, Vinnova, The National Heritage Board and The Swedish Arts Council. The municipalities are represented by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR). See: <https://www.hallbarstad.se/>



5.45: Malmö Live – the new cultural centre in Malmö, with high quality building and public space designed by Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects, in Universitetsholmen in Malmö, 2015 © Adam Mörk

On behalf of the Government, Boverket has set up a secretariat to support the work of the Council for Sustainable Cities and to manage the Council dedicated website (Hållbarstad.se), an online platform for information, support, and opportunities for financing the development of sustainable cities and communities. Every year, the Council presents a comprehensive list of the measures implemented and of the measures planned to promote sustainable urban development, and which are intended to be carried out or have been carried out in collaboration.

According to the State Architect (2022: interview), the fact that she is chairing the Council meetings, allows her to push for architecture and design to be included in some of the funding programs of the Council's partners (e.g., financial support to research, enterprise and business innovation, culture heritage, etc) and organise common projects with some of the partners. For example, one recent initiative was the project 'Visions in the North' (or "Imagining: the north") and involved five Council's partners and 6 municipalities in northern Sweden⁸³ (see below).

In terms of target audience, the National State Architect must provide support to the public sector in matters of design and sustainability, within its different levels, including national state agencies, county administrative boards and municipalities across Sweden (Ibidem).

Although the National State Architect does not have an office with dedicated staff as the other state architects in neighbouring countries, besides secretarial support, she works with different internal project leaders that have their own teams and that support her in developing projects and initiatives and *vice versa*. According to Bjarnegård (2022: interview), she is leading the architectural and design policy commission within Boverket, which currently involves around

⁸³ For more information see: <https://www.hallbarstad.se/ideer-for-framtidens-kiruna-gallivare-boden-lulea-skelleftea-och-umea-ideskisserna-klara-i-projektet-visioner-i-norr/>

25 people working in different areas and meets regularly with its project leaders to discuss and review progress. For example, she works with the project leaders responsible for developing architecture and urban design guidelines for the municipalities (e.g., kindergartens or schools) or for regional authorities (e.g., hospitals or care facilities). According to the specific need (e.g., communication), she will appoint a dedicated project leader.



5.46: Good design between the interior and outdoor environment provide high quality care environments. Östra Hospital's psychiatric clinic in Gothenburg, designed by White Architects © Hans Wretling

The National State Architect also collaborates and provides support to other state agencies in pursuing different policy objectives. For example, she collaborates with the National Agency for Public Procurement in developing guidance to help public clients to ensure high-quality assignments through public procurement processes (Bjarnegård, 2022: interview). In addition, she also participates in different sectoral interdepartmental policy groups. For example, she participates in the stakeholders' network "Healthcare's built environments", that promotes and coordinates research and development work within healthcare-built environments, through collaboration and dissemination of knowledge (e.g., publication of guidance).

Within the Council for Sustainable Cities, in addition to two dedicated management staff members, the Swedish State Architect also cooperates with the project leaders that work in the different state agencies that report on its activities to the Council and develop initiatives in common projects (e.g., project *Visions in the North*). In this context, the State Architect leads partnerships working across the 11 Council's state agencies in different sectoral areas to contribute with their own projects and financial resources towards the design policy aims.

The National State Architect also promotes network activities with the county architects and with city architects in Sweden, where the exact title may change from city to city, to encourage them to promote a design quality agenda within their organisations, as well as, to discuss practical experiences of the main difficulties or challenges they are facing on their daily

practices. According to the State Architect (2022: interview), these meetings are important to monitor and obtain feedback about national policies and if there is a need for adjustments to the planning and building law or develop new design guidelines.

Adding to the public sector, the Swedish State Architect has also been making an effort to involve academia and architectural schools in cooperative network activities. In addition, she has been trying to engage private stakeholders in a societal movement involving as many participants as possible, that understands and values design quality as a fundamental element to achieve sustainable environments (Ibidem).

To push for the policy goals and to undertake its activities, and similarly to the other state architects, the Swedish State Architect does not have any formal tools or decision-making authority. Instead, she makes use of a range of informal tools to persuade, encourage and enable better design while seeking to establish a positive decision-making environment in which consensus gradually builds around the idea that better-quality built environment delivers place value (Urban Maestro, 2021). Considering the Swedish decentralized governance system, most of its visible activities are developed through network working, in collaboration and in partnership with other state actors.

As an example, the referred project 'Visions in the North' was prepared within the umbrella of the *Council for Sustainable Cities*, involving five Council's partners and 6 municipalities in northern Sweden. The project was divided into two phases. At the end of 2021, an open call was launched for multidisciplinary teams to participate in design studios and develop new ideas in collaboration with the municipalities, for critical areas within their territory. 55 applications were received from all over Sweden, and 11 teams were selected by a jury.

In a second phase, design workshops took place in the spring of 2022, where the municipalities arranged site visits as well as meetings with local stakeholders and communities. Several teams also arranged their own visits and meetings. The teams then formulated proposals and sketches considering the challenges and needs expressed by the municipalities, aiming for a sustainable urban development for the different areas in northern Sweden. There was a final event for the presentation of the visions for the different sites and reports were published.



5.47: Final presentation of the different visions for the future for northern Sweden with a focus on sustainable development, of the project 'Visions in the North', 2022 © Kristina Laurell

The underlying goal of the project was to use design thinking and visions to potentiate the debate and dialogue among local stakeholders about sustainable living environments in specific places, which in turn may be further developed by the municipalities in the future and used as an inspirational tool for other Swedish municipalities. The project was supported by a shared financial framework from Vinnova (innovation agency) and Formas (research council), and each team received SEK 300,000 for their participation.

Being a recent position in Sweden, the National State Architect recognizes that its role as design champion across the public sector has limitations. Firstly, she is working with national state agencies that do not develop public buildings or urban development plans, as this is a responsibility of the regional and local authorities. Secondly, her tools are informal in nature and do not impose any statutory framework or mandatory set of rules to local stakeholders. This means that local authorities may always choose to maintain the *status quo* and manage their urban development with low levels of ambition.

To have a positive impact on these processes, the State Architect focus on providing leadership and on promoting a design quality culture through a set of informal tools and activities, influencing, facilitating and enabling better processes, providing design capacity and knowledge (Bjarnegård, 2022: interview). Due to a complex system of norms, rules and stakeholders intervening in the built environment, the National State Architect perceives her role as a long-term commission aimed at fostering a cultural change that values quality and sustainable environments (Ibidem).

This means that appointing a state architect is a practical way for national governments to provide design leadership and strategic advice across all the different sectors and administrative levels, as well as to contribute to policy and design advocacy. The incumbent is charged with implementing the architecture policy and with maintaining all forms of national momentum focused on improving the quality of the built environment.

5.5.3 Other relevant actors

Malmö Form/Design Center

The Form/Design Center in Malmö is a culture organisation for architecture, design, and crafts in southern Sweden. According to its website, it is one of the oldest design organisations in the world, having started its activity in 1964 as part of the non-profit association Swedish Society of Crafts and Design (*Svensk Form*)⁸⁴. In the 1990s, *Form/Design Center* expanded its scope to include the field of architecture and urban design, which continues to be part of its core remit. In 2018, the centre was designated by the government as a national node for the implementation of the designed living environment policy and was awarded SEK 3 million annually from 2021. Currently, besides other revenues, the centre receives financial support from the Ministry for Culture, the City of Malmö, Region Skåne and the Swedish Arts Council.

Every year, the Form/Design Centre promotes an extensive program of activities, both based on the exhibitions and on the ongoing cultural and social debate, through screenings, workshops, lectures and talks, exhibitions, development projects and cross-sectoral collaborations, etc. Its program of activities is often set up in collaboration with various organisations, academies, businesses and the public sector. One of its major activities is the four-day design festival - *Southern Sweden Design Days* — which includes a central venue with over 6,000 m² of exhibition space, a food workshop, live studio with seminars for the general public, etc. The programme of the festival also includes around 150 activities in more than 60 different locations in Malmö.

Swedish Association of Architects

The Swedish Association of Architects (in Swedish, *Sveriges Arkitekter*) is the professional organisation for architects and designers across the country, and includes architects, interior architects, landscape architects and spatial planners⁸⁵. Like other professional bodies, the association aims to develop the architectural practice and to promote professional and architectural issues through better policymaking. The organisation gathers around 14.000 members.

The Association offers advice and support to clients in matters of procurement by means of a competition and procurement service. It also promotes skills development through a comprehensive Continuing Professional Development programme for its members. In addition, the Association also publicises good architecture and planning through several publications and initiatives, such as the awarding of a number of architectural awards.

⁸⁴ <https://www.formdesigncenter.com/en>

⁸⁵ <http://www.arkitekt.se>

Federation of Swedish Innovation Companies

The Federation of Swedish Innovation Companies (FSIC) is the employers' association for architects, building and engineering consultancies, representing around 750 architectural firms and engineering consultancies, within both the building and civil engineering segments as well as the tech/industrial engineering segment⁸⁶. Since 2009, besides other publications and activities, FSIC develops and publishes an annual sector survey and market review of the consulting, engineering, and architectural groups in Sweden and the Nordic countries.

⁸⁶ <https://www.innovationsforetagen.se/in-english/>

6. DESIGN LEADERSHIP AT LOCAL LEVEL: TWO CASE STUDIES

Following the review of the five state architects operating at central administration level, this chapter looks into the local governance of design and into how design leadership is being delivered, based on two case studies: Copenhagen and Vienna. As referred above, the former has a city architect position, and the latter has a dedicated architecture and urban design department.

6.1 Copenhagen

6.1.1 Copenhagen in its national context

Copenhagen is the largest and most populous city of Denmark, with a population of around 650 thousand inhabitants within a metropolitan area with a population of around 1,3 million inhabitants. It is the capital of Denmark and is considered one of the most liveable cities in the world in some international rankings⁸⁷.

Denmark is a unitary state with a decentralized system of government, based in three levels: national government, 5 regional governments and 98 local governments. In terms of spatial planning, the responsibilities of the three governmental levels are set up in the Danish Planning Act. Within this, the government has to prepare a national planning report after each parliamentary election and release a report on *National Interests in Municipal Planning*, every four years. More broadly, it has the power to issue national planning directives and to establish rules for the planning of certain areas. Below the national level, the five regional governments are in charge of strategic planning with a focus on regional economic development (OECD, 2017b, p. 81).

The Danish municipalities are the most important actors in spatial and land-use planning, developing strategic planning as well as municipal and local plans that steer land use, except in the cases where they may be overridden by a national planning directive. Copenhagen fits into this hierarchical spatial planning system, the Municipal Plan being the most important tool, complemented by Local Plans on varying topics and scales (Ibidem). With a more informal nature, the city council appointed a City architect to promote and push for a design quality agenda providing design leadership across the whole city administration and beyond.

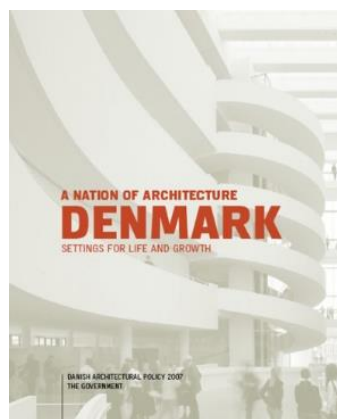
The development of Danish architectural policy goes back to early 1993, when the Conservative Party set a proposal urging the Minister for Culture to prepare a bill concerning a national architectural policy in line with the Dutch policy (Visser, 1997)⁸⁸. In 1994, a first policy proposal was presented, signed by the Ministry for Culture, the Ministry for Housing and the Ministry for Environment, entitled, *The Danish Architectural Policy*. According to Visser (1997),

⁸⁷ Copenhagen was considered one of the most liveable cities in the world by the Economist Intelligence Unit's (2022) and World's Monocle's annual Quality of Life ranking (2021).

⁸⁸ Two years before, in 1991, the Dutch had adopted their first national policy on architecture.

the draft proposal stated that ‘*architecture was of great importance to the quality of daily physical surroundings (...) and the quality of life of each individual human being.*’⁸⁹

In order to define the architectural policy, the ministers for Culture and Housing arranged a conference with the participation of the building sector and representation of other relevant ministries.⁹⁰ However, the Architectural policy ended up not being formally approved (Ibid.). In the subsequent years, several European states continued to develop efforts in this area leading to the adoption of several architectural policies in neighbouring countries. Following this trend, the Danish parliament would approve its first comprehensive architectural policy in 2007, entitled, *A Nation of Architecture Denmark. Settings for life and growth.*



6.1: Cover of the First Danish architectural policy (2007)

After introducing the benefits and values of architectural design, the first formal Danish architectural policy established a policy vision aimed at placing architecture in the agenda (Denmark, 2007). Therefore, the policy’s overall goal was to ensure the development of high-quality architecture which would improve the quality of life and economic growth in Denmark. It stated that ‘the architectural policy will advance the development of Denmark’s competitive advantage within architecture and that the policy will increase awareness and stimulate debate concerning the significance, conditions and possibilities of architecture in Denmark’ (Ibidem). It then established ten target areas, describing the challenges, goals, and initiatives within each target area to be implemented over a period of time.

More recently, in 2014, based on the previous policy, the Danish Government adopted its second architectural policy entitled *Putting people first*. The new Danish architecture policy maintained the same goals of the previous policy, where the government announced a series of initiatives aimed at supporting increased productivity and an internationalisation of the architectural industry (Denmark, 2014).

⁸⁹ The draft policy emphasized the different roles of the state in promoting better places, as legislator, administrator, planner, and builder (e.g., client); as well as on education and research. The objective was to ensure that standards were raised, and that consideration for architecture was included in all public decision processes. It also highlighted the importance of energy-conservation and ecological building and the need to increase export services (Ibid).

⁹⁰ For this conference The Federation of Danish Architects had produced and published its own proposal on Architectural Policy (Visser, 1997)



6.2: Cover of the Second Danish architectural policy (2014)

The new architectural policy focused on the early involvement of citizens when changes occur in their local area, lower resource consumption, and renovation and maintenance of rural buildings. The architectural policy was developed in cooperation with eleven ministries. The main policy goal is to create buildings, urban spaces, and cities pleasant for the Danish citizens to live in. Within this domain, the new policy focuses on the following areas:

- Children, teenagers, and adults are more able to encounter architecture with a range of new teaching and dissemination services tailored to new media and platforms, which are linked to Common Objectives and the primary school reform;
- The municipalities are offered a number of facilities and advice to develop their own local architecture policies and ways for these tools to help them address current challenges;
- Architecture and sustainability — environmentally, socially and culturally — through the development of a sustainable urban planning strategy and the launch of a large number of example projects showing how architecture can enhance sustainability across the country;
- Value creation in architectural quality and the overall economy of construction projects;
- There is also a focus on export and international marketing of Danish architecture (Ibidem).

Although there is no state architect position within the central administration, the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces – from the Ministry for Culture — is responsible for the coordination of the national architecture policy. The agency carries out the governmental cultural policies for visual and performing arts, including architecture, literature, museums, cultural heritage, and related fields⁹¹. The Agency is also responsible for managing and maintaining state-owned cultural properties as well as for disseminating information to promote cultural development⁹². Another task involves allocating funds to organisations, namely to the

⁹¹ The Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces was founded in 2016 by a fusion of the former Danish Agency for Culture and the Agency for Palaces and Cultural Properties.

⁹² See: <https://slks.dk/english/>

Danish Architecture Institute (DAC), together with other two ministries (see below), where the Agency sits as board member in the DAC's management group (Mikkelsen, 2022: interview).

Recently, the Ministry of Culture has set up a working group to start developing a new Danish architectural policy. Within this remit, the Agency for Culture and Palaces is responsible for providing advice to the working group and helping define the policy goals and initiatives (Ibidem). Nevertheless, according to the Danish policy, the main state developers are already paying attention to design quality, and in various ways they have formulated architecture policies for their own work. One of those is the Danish Building and Property Agency, which is the state's property developer, and probably the most important public player in the construction industry.

The Danish Building and Property Agency is the state's property enterprise and developer, operating under the Ministry for Transport. The agency manages the current and future needs of most of the Danish public facilities⁹³. It is responsible for creating modern, functional, and cost-effective frameworks for some of the country's most important public institutions, such as universities, police, courts, and most of the government departments. The agency develops a huge amount of design assignments for public buildings. Within this, the agency often organises design competitions, usually two-stage competitions.

The Academy Council (Advisory body on architecture)

In addition to the two public agencies referred above, there is an independent advisory body for the arts and architecture — The Academy Council of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts — that works towards promoting the arts and acts as the adviser of the state for artistic issues in the fields of architecture and visual arts. In this framework, when requested, the Academy Council provides expert advice to municipal and state authorities on architecture and spatial development projects. Nevertheless, the Academy Council may, on its own initiative, gather information on specific design interventions or projects and make its own statements to state authorities and public institutions, as well as for the general public.

The Academy's activities are conducted through the different departments of the Academy Council, which include a Landscape Committee, a Church Art Committee, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, a Jury panel, and the artistic community. Part of the Academy's work and advisory role is performed by the many persons from different backgrounds that are appointed to the Council's boards of directors and committees, namely representatives of public and private institutions, representatives of committees, etc⁹⁴.

⁹³ The Danish Building and Property Agency has a property portfolio of about 4 million m², more than 1,800 leases and 300 current and planned construction projects. See: <https://en.bygst.dk/>

⁹⁴ The formal basis of the Academy Council was laid down by the Ministry for Culture's Order No. 306 of 18 May 1999 for the Royal Academy of Fine Arts.

Municipal architecture policies

Showing a remarkable growth, 38 municipalities in Denmark, one third of the country, have recently adopted an architectural policy and two are developing their first policy⁹⁵. As spatial design cuts across different sectoral departments, the municipal architectural policy works as a policy tool to build connections between the many tasks assigned to the municipality, helping to promote growth, coherence, and identity, whether on building quality, or on the building of urban spaces, climate adaptation, heritage conservation or road design. In this context, architecture policies are seen as an important tool at local level as they set high aspirations for the built environment and foster collaboration between different stakeholders (Arkitektforeningen, 2020).

To make sure that the policies are effective and to push for its goals, nine Danish municipalities have appointed city architects to take on design leadership and provide strategic advice to local governments, in order to improve the design of public constructions, promote spatial quality and foster a place-making culture. Although the specific tasks of the Danish city architects may vary from city to city, one of the main tasks of the city architect in Denmark is, among others, to provide advice on design matters to politicians and city administrations. Besides pushing forward policy implementation, they are expected, just like the state architect, to enable, facilitate and provide design advice and to champion design quality across the local administration.

As will be discussed below, the role of the city architect is mostly a strategic one, and he/she works with the different municipal services that are likely to have an impact on the built environment. In most cases, city architects provide design advice and sit in the jury panels of design competitions, when major investments are under way as in, for example, new infrastructures, major facilities (e.g., a hospital) or renovations of larger residential areas. Therefore, the city architect takes on a multitasking role of spatial design leadership, providing expert design advice and inspiration for better places. The next section will look into the role of the city architect of Copenhagen.

6.1.2 Copenhagen's governance of design

Following a hierarchical planning system (see above), Copenhagen *Municipal Plan* sets out the planning framework for a 12-year period, setting the overall goals and guidelines for the municipality's planning development. Adding to this, the city council presents a *Strategy for Municipal Planning* every four years (OECD, 2017b, p. 81). Below the Municipal Plan, the city council develops several *Local Plans*, which lay down rules on buildings, use of areas and other conditions of the plan's area, which may be a larger urban development or a single property. It is through the *Local Plans* that the municipal's political strategy and goals are

⁹⁵ <https://arkitektforeningen.dk/vi-arbejder-for/arkitekturpolitik/kommuner-med-arkitekturpolitik/>

implemented and become binding for the owners of the properties located in the local plan area⁹⁶ (Ibidem).

Taking a broad approach, the city council adopted a strategy called 'Co-Create Copenhagen', that sets up a vision for the future city development and established three main goals – a Liveable City, a City with an Edge and a Responsible City – and 17 indicators of progress with measurable targets for 2025 (Copenhagen, 2015). Based on this vision, the city council developed a municipal architectural policy (2017-2025) entitled 'Architecture for People'.



6.3: Cover of the architecture policy for the city of Copenhagen (2017)

Adopted in 2017, Copenhagen's architecture policy lays down the general principles on how the city council intends to achieve better quality environments together with different stakeholders and a number of actions to guide the policy implementation (e.g., promoting the organization of design competitions for all major projects). Nevertheless, like the national architectural policy, this is a local strategic document that is not binding and has no 'hard tools' attached.

Within the city council's organisational structure, the Technical and Environmental Administration (TEA), with around 2100 employees, is responsible for the management and development of urban planning and for environmental and mobility policies, as well as for processing all building applications to ensure that they comply with the planning and environmental protection rules⁹⁷.

Whitin TEA, the city council created the position of City Architect of Copenhagen, under the Department of Planning, Analysis, Resources and CO₂ reduction, which is responsible for the development of local plans, for public housing, and for climate and environmental policies. However, despite its formal location, the City Architect has a special mandate to provide advice and work with the entire local administration of Copenhagen (see below).

⁹⁶ <https://www.kk.dk/politik/politikker-og-indsatser/bolig-byggeri-og-byliv/byplanlaegning>

⁹⁷ Amongst other services, the TEA customer centre provides assistance with construction cases, drawings and information about approved construction in Copenhagen. For more information: <https://www.kk.dk/om-kommunen/forvaltninger/teknik-og-miljoeforvaltningen>



6.4: 'Courtyard of the Future' in Straussvej is one out of three rainwater management demonstration projects that are part of the Copenhagen Climate Adaptation Plan, developed through a co-creative innovation process with residents of three different housing organizations. Designed by BLOG landscape architects, 2021 © Mikkel Eye

The City Architect of Copenhagen

The position of City Architect of Copenhagen dates back to the late nineteenth century. Traditionally, the City Architect was the head of the buildings department, responsible for the design of public buildings (e.g., schools, nursing homes, public spaces etc), supported by an architectural office of around 150 employees (Deurs, 2022: interview). In 1999, however, after the outsourcing and commissioning of all design services to private consultancies, the City Architect's Office was dismantled. It was reinstated in 2002, with a new and strategic mission of providing design leadership through the city council.

Today, the overall mission of the City Architect is to advise all the municipality's administrations and political committees at an overall strategic level on urban development and architectural issues (Copenhagen, 2019). Besides providing advice on the quality of local plans and projects, the City Architect can exert influence in various ways, for example, by taking part in different departmental meetings and sitting in design review panels, or planning inspection trips to local areas, serving as jury member, etc.



6.5: Coordination meeting with urban renewal team, 2021 © Camilla van Deurs

Assuming its role as design champion, the City Architect takes the lead in architectural matters and helps develop the city's visions and achieve its goals for the built environment, in addition to monitoring and push forward the enforcement of municipal architectural policies. Being allowed to work across the entire city administration, the City Architect operates as an agent for change championing spatial quality across the city council departments and agencies, fostering an organisational culture that values and prioritises design quality as a corporative aim.

Like with the state architects discussed above, the question of independence is a crucial element of this position at local level. According to Camilla van Deurs (2022: interview), the current City Architect of Copenhagen, she is expected to take on an independent and nonpartisan position on the quality of projects and urban plans; in other words, she should look at them from a professional perspective grounded in design principles and in its added value for the city. This allows her to view them critically and ask for a design review or simply give a negative opinion about a project.

The City Architect may also disagree with the final decisions of politicians and the administration, but her views are usually communicated internally and not made public as this would not be beneficial for the intended collaborative processes (Ibidem). Externally, the City Architect assumes a 'loyal position' to the city council and its political decisions. This 'hybrid position' allows her to develop bonds of mutual trust with politicians and heads of departments (Ibid.). The former City Architect of Copenhagen describes the role as:

'The role of the City Architect is a professional management role, which requires an ability to navigate in stormy weather, requires one to be clear in one's argumentation, and requires an ability to quickly create overview and prioritise what is important. Furthermore, it is a position that requires one to be able to work with everyone; both with players on the political level, with one's employees and manager colleagues, with the many players working within the building sector as well as, and not least, with the citizens.' (Saaby, 2019)

Following the initial discussion on leadership, the City Architect needs to convince politicians, stakeholders, and the public to move beyond standardized regulations as a means to achieve place quality. In terms of strategy, the City Architect tries to raise the level of ambition through persuasion, constructive critique, and dialogue with the different stakeholders in order to influence and motivate people, explaining the specific value of creating better places for different groups and engaging them in the process (Tiesdell, 2011b).

Main target areas

The City Architect of Copenhagen operates and delivers its role in three main target areas: politicians, city administration and the general public (Deurs, 2022: interview).

In the first area, the City Architect provides advice to the mayor and the political committees on the impact of their decisions on the design of the built environment. The first priority is the obligation to provide advice to the mayor and support the decision-making process in urban planning and environmental policy.

In addition to the above, the City Architect also provides advice to the TEA's Political Committee, which meets once every three weeks to discuss and decide on a range of plans, projects, and policies. To do so, the City Architect analyses and provides comments on plans and projects before they are presented to the Mayor and the Political Committee (Ibidem). Nevertheless, both the Mayor and the Political Committee can request advice to the City Architect on specific projects.

In the second area, the City Architect provides advice to the local administration working across a wide range of departments and participating in different working groups with an urban design dimension, such as, urban strategies, local district plans, mobility, parking projects, climate adaption projects, etc. Within the building permits department, the City Architect selects key projects to get involved in and participates in pre-application meetings with developer teams and sometimes provides informal advice on design review meetings⁹⁸.



6.6: Copenhagen's advisory design city panel, 2021 © Camila van Deurs

⁹⁸ In Copenhagen, around 50,000 applications for building permits are submitted every year.

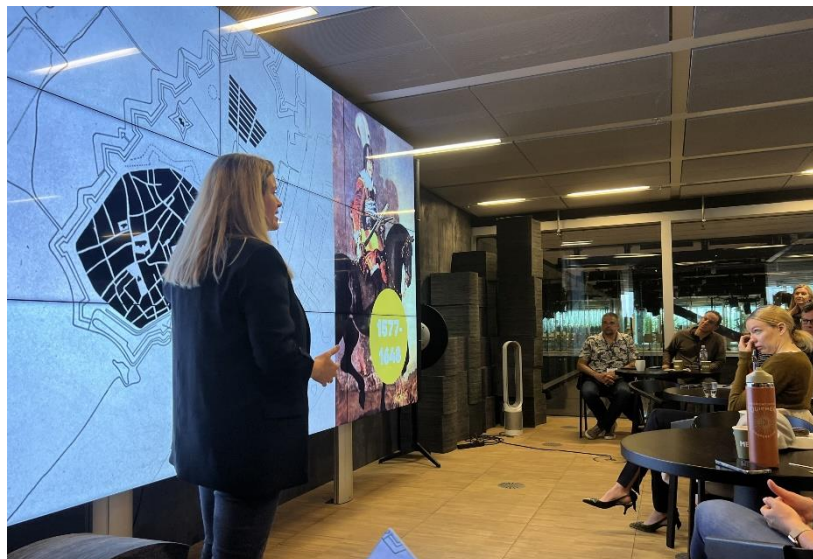
In the third and last area, the City Architect focus on external stakeholders and the general public, laying out to them the political ambitions and strategic guidelines for Copenhagen. Among other tasks, the City Architect promotes the involvement of citizens in debates about local plans and policies, participates in meetings with local associations and committees, as well as in local urban design workshops, visit tours, etc. He/she also represents the mayor in a wide range of events as 'City Council ambassador', giving lectures, replying to media requests, etc.



(a)



(b)



(c)

6.7: Some of the external roles played by the city architect of Copenhagen: a) citizen's engagement meeting at Copenhagen City Hall; b) Lecture at BLOX; c) press and external communication is a big part of the position, 2022 © Camila van Deurs

Main work assignments

The main working tasks of the City Architect focus on providing design leadership through direct advocacy, communication and partnership across key actor groups as well as providing design advice to politicians and local administration. Working across the city council, as mentioned above, the City Architect meets with various city directors, such as urban development, climate adaptation or mobility, on a weekly or monthly basis, to discuss and provide input on ongoing projects that may have an impact on the built environment. The City Architect also gets involved in strategic local development plans and projects, participating in intersectoral committees, or working with internal teams of architects and urban designers in major development projects.



6.8: Planning meeting of the urban renewal masterplan of Bispebjerg Bakke, 2022 © Camila van Deurs

For local area plans and public space projects, the City Architect takes part in regular meetings with the heads of divisions and may choose to get involved in ongoing key projects. Sometimes, project managers ask the City Architect to participate in design review meetings to offer an independent opinion about the quality of specific projects, since the project managers' design assessment is restricted to the project's compliance with planning rules, building codes, etc.

According to van Deurs (2022: interview), she also has a good working collaboration with other municipal agencies, such as By & Havn (City and Port), a developing municipal company that delivers long-term urban development across Copenhagen (see below). In this framework she meets regularly with By & Havn's planning director to discuss ongoing projects, as she needs to give her approval to architectural projects, together with the planning director, before By & Havn can sell its plots to private developers (Ibidem). Only after this first approval can the developer buy the plot and apply for a formal building permit.



6.9: Jury work for the open design competition of the new parking garage, commissioned by By & Havn (City and Port) development municipal company 2022 © Camila van Deurs

The City Architect also chairs the funding board for public housing, which reviews projects from the Public Housing Agency, since the municipality contributes with 10% of the construction costs. She also sits in jury panels for municipal funding programs designed to support local projects aimed at improving public spaces and city life in Copenhagen. To give an example: the 'Sharing Copenhagen' initiative aims at involving citizens in the improvement of the city by inviting innovative ideas to create new ways of using streets and open spaces, new green urban areas, or temporary use of urban space, etc. that may be proposed directly by citizens, by non-governmental organisations or by private companies.



6.10: Traffic experiments in city centre and new public space plan, 2022 © Camila van Deurs

In addition to the above, the City Architect also sits in jury panels of design competitions promoted by any of the city council's department or agency (e.g., public school or library). If it is a design competition for a project located in the city but promoted by a governmental agency or a private developer, the City Architect may participate but only on an advisory capacity with no right to vote, since at a later stage the winning project will have to be formally submitted to apply for the building permit, and she will have to provide advice to politicians on its quality.

The City Architect also plays a coordination role in the City Council Building Award. Since 1903, the city council delivers an award to the architects and builders behind particularly remarkable architecture projects in Copenhagen. Through this award, the municipality acknowledges projects that add special quality to the city's physical framework, while emphasising the municipality's appreciation for good design.⁹⁹ The City Architect approves the list of entries submitted to the building award, chairs the interdepartmental meeting that assesses the projects and draws a pre-selection list and sits in the final jury panel with experts and the Culture and Leisure Committee to decide and choose the winners.



6.11: Meeting of the jury of the City Council Building Award, 2022 © Camila van Deurs

An additional task of the City Architect is to make sure that there is a holistic approach to design quality across the city administration and to assess the need for optimising procedures or planning regulations so that the different departments adopt the same approach to design and follow the same interpretation of the planning rules (*Ibidem*). For example, if there is a tendency or a topic that may need specific guidance (e.g., penthouses), the City Architect will work with the heads of divisions to develop and propose the adoption of specific design guidance.

⁹⁹ Awards fall into four categories: 1. New buildings and extensions of housing, businesses, and cultural institutions; 2. Restoration, conversion, renewal, and transformation of listed and conservation-worthy buildings, renewal, and transformation of culturally or architecturally valuable urban areas; 3. Renovation of apartments in buildings that have served other purposes. 4. Urban environments, such as squares, parks, and facilities, etc. See: <https://www.kk.dk/bygningspraemiering>

Office and mandate

In terms of Office, the City Architect relies on a small team of two people, an architectural assistant, and a secretary. The City Architect is appointed for a first five-year mandate, which can be renewed by another four years, until a maximum of nine years (Deurs, 2022: interview). Nonetheless, the City Architect office does not have an allocated annual budget. Every time there is a specific project, initiative, or study (e.g., research analysis), the City Architect needs to prepare an application with a financial plan for its development and apply for the mayor's approval. Above a certain amount, the project must be submitted to the Political Committee for approval, so it may be included in the city council annual budget (Ibidem).

6.1.3 Other relevant actors

By & Havn (City and Port)

By & Havn is a development and operating company that delivers long-term and holistic city development and takes responsibility for creating coherent and well-functioning urban neighbourhoods. Among other tasks it is also responsible for the management of the port area and all related activities. It operates in a coherent high-ambition manner focusing on design quality, economy, social well-being, and sustainability. By & Havn uses a diverse array of tools for developing Copenhagen's harbour districts, including innovative competition briefs, funding schemes, and land value capture tools, among others.

By & Havn is jointly owned by the City of Copenhagen (95%) and the Danish State (5%) and operates on a commercial basis. This form of ownership gives By & Havn a long-term perspective and the means to ensure that the developments existing in the city are strategic, sustainable, and future-oriented (Urban Maestro, 2021, p. 26).

Within its sphere of competence, By & Havn is responsible for the development of several urban neighbourhoods, the buildings of roads and canals, parking garages, urban spaces, and green areas. It sells building plots to various investors as well as to housing cooperatives and participates actively in urban living initiatives, from the initial planning phases until the residents have finally moved in and the neighbourhoods have come to life. With a new business strategy for 2020-2023, By & Havn plans to focus its efforts on putting the creation of sustainable Copenhagen neighbourhoods at the forefront, following the UN's 17 sustainable development goals. These new development areas must contribute to climate and energy-friendly solutions and to the continued positive development of the city's economy (Ibidem).

Danish Architecture Centre (DAC)

The Danish Architecture Centre (DAC) is Denmark's national centre for the development and dissemination of knowledge about architecture, building and urban development. DAC's objective and legitimacy consist in promoting co-operation across the professional boundaries of the construction sector and architecture so that the players, working together, are able

to contribute to the forward-looking development of architecture and construction specifically and Danish society in general¹⁰⁰.

DAC was founded in 1985 through a collaboration between the Danish Ministry for Culture, the Ministry for Economic and Business Affairs and the Realdania Foundation. DAC's core funding was ensured by a public-private partnership between Realdania and the Danish government established in 2004. DAC used to be installed in an old harbour building called Gammel Dok, in Copenhagen. Currently it is housed on a major new building design by OMA architects, which offers amenities like a fitness centre, several cafés, housing, and office spaces.



6.12: BLOX – Home of the Danish Architecture Centre, designed by OMA architects, in Copenhagen, 2018 © Rasmus Hjortshøj

The Danish Architecture Centre (DAC) promotes architecture as a broad concept that encompasses everything from the creative process, planning and urban development to the finished space or the construction involved. The main goal of DAC is to create broad interest for architecture, to clear the way for new ideas traversing traditional boundaries and to show how architecture creates cultural and economic assets for people, the industry and society. To do so, it offers a wide range of professional and cultural activities, including exhibitions, seminars, city guided tours, etc.

Through Danish and international exhibitions, DAC presents relevant themes and trends in architecture, construction, and urban development. The exhibitions are often a result of long-term development and co-operation projects. DAC is also a platform for developing the entire construction industry, namely the Building Lab DK, which is a unit of DAC that carries out

¹⁰⁰ <https://dac.dk/>

projects in close co-operation with leading Danish and international participants in the construction industry. Within this framework, it advises companies on innovative processes and supports projects from the first idea until the finished solution.

Although there are other bodies that play an important role in spatial design in Denmark and Copenhagen, it was not possible to review them for the present study.

Danish Arts Foundation (Statens Kunstfond)

Denmark's largest arts foundation awards grants for arts projects and a wide range of cultural initiatives across the country and beyond. Through more than 60 different funding programmes, it funds the production and promotion of visual arts, film, literature, music, performing arts, architecture, crafts, and design¹⁰¹.

Danish Association of Architects

The Association of Architects is the professional organisation of individual architects in Denmark, providing support to its members, promoting good working conditions for architects as well as fostering design quality across the country¹⁰². Nevertheless, it is not mandatory to be a member of the association to work as a professional architect because the title is not protected in Denmark. Among other initiatives, the association supports the organisation of architectural design competitions, namely by providing experts to sit on jury panels.

6.2 Vienna

6.2.1 Vienna in its national context

Vienna is Austria's largest city, with a population of around 2 million people and a metropolitan area with a population of around 2.6 million, approximately one third of the country's population. It is the capital of Austria and was ranked in some international city rankings one of the most prosperous cities and with the highest quality of living worldwide¹⁰³.

Like German-speaking countries, Austria's political and administrative structure is based on a federalist system, organised in three levels: the federal government, nine federal states (*Bundesländer*) and approximately 2 100 municipalities, which are the smallest units in the state organisation. There is no Federal law on spatial planning as it falls within the responsibilities of the individual federal states, which have their own legislative and executive powers, including spatial planning, building, and housing policy¹⁰⁴ (OECD, 2017c).

¹⁰¹ <https://www.kunst.dk/english/about-us>

¹⁰² <https://arkitektforeningen.dk/english/>

¹⁰³ Vienna was considered one of the most prosperous cities in the world by UN-Habitat report State of the World's Cities 2012/2013 and ranked the best living city worldwide for 10 years running in the Mercer Quality of living city ranking and the second most liveable city in several other city rankings.

¹⁰⁴ Municipalities are entitled to issue general regulations and carry out many of the federal state's administrative tasks: <https://www.wien.gv.at/english/administration/organisation/austria/structure/index.html>

Vienna is a particular case within this system because it is a federal capital, which means that it accumulates both administrative levels: municipality and federal state. As such, the municipal and state roles overlap: the City Council also exercises the functions of the State Parliament, and the mayor also serves as the State Governor. Despite this divide, in 2017, the Federal government adopted the building culture (*baukultur*) guidelines whereas Vienna's City Council adopted its own *baukultur* policy, in 2014, both of which promote high quality environments.

Under the Austrian constitution, spatial planning policy is the responsibility of the federal states while local planning falls within the jurisdiction of municipalities (OECD, 2017c, p. 57). Nonetheless, since the early 2000s, several institutional actors have been promoting initiatives relating to architecture and the built environment under the concept of *baukultur*. The German term *baukultur* is a broad concept that can be translated into English as *building culture* and includes all aspects of the built environment, namely building and urban design, the social and economic context of towns, cities, and cultural landscapes. So, the concept integrates not only architecture but also other disciplines that intervene in the built environment, such as urban design, engineering, heritage, planning, landscape, interior design, and art for public buildings (Germany, 2007).

Although Austria already had a tradition of supporting design quality culture initiatives, a bottom-up movement known as 'Platform for Building Culture Policy' emerged in 2002 to promote architecture and *baukultur* policy involving almost all non-governmental actors in the field¹⁰⁵. A first milestone of this platform was the holding of a Parliamentary debate on the topic of architecture and building culture, in 2004. As a follow-up, the Parliament approved a resolution stating the special role of federal and regional administrations in promoting better living environments and establishing that a report on building culture should be submitted to Parliament within a year, which led to the first Austrian *Building Culture Report*, in 2006 (Austria, 2017a).

One year later, the Austrian Parliament agreed on setting up the *Advisory Board for Building Culture (Beirat für Baukultur)*, a consulting body of the Federal government, in which all ministries as well as representatives of the federal states and other stakeholders could propose measures to improve architecture and building culture in Austria¹⁰⁶. The advisory board's office was located at the Federal Ministry for Art, Culture, Public Service and Sport and held its first meeting in 2009¹⁰⁷.

Meeting at least twice a year, the *Advisory Board on Building Culture* advises the federal government and proposes measures to improve design and planning processes as well as initiatives to strengthen public awareness on building culture. It is also responsible for the

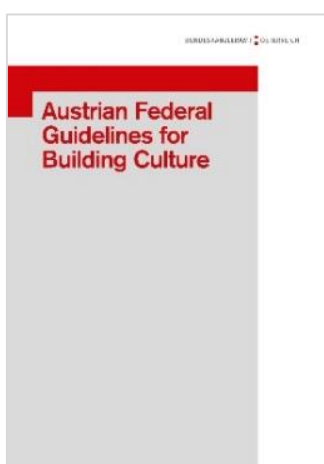
¹⁰⁵ In German: *Plattform Baukulturpolitik*; formerly, 'Platform for Architectural Policy and Building Culture' (Plattform für Architekturpolitik und Baukultur). For more information, see: www.baukulturpolitik.at

¹⁰⁶ The Advisory Board has 28 members, including representatives of all federal ministries, the federal real estate company and the federal monuments office, cities and municipalities, as well as 10 external experts.

¹⁰⁷ The Austrian Advisory Board for Building Culture (*Beirat für Baukultur*) was set up by a resolution of the National Council, with an ordinance of the Federal Chancellor on October 27, 2008 (Federal Law Gazette II No. 377/2008).

coordination of the development of the Austrian *Building Culture* reports, published once every five years (a second report was published in 2011, a third in 2017 and a fourth in 2021).

Following the Advisory Board's recommendations, the Austrian Council of Ministers adopted its first *Federal Guidelines on Building Culture*, in 2017. According to the guidelines, the Federal government should "promote building culture and create a broader societal awareness of its principles, especially among leaders in politics, business, and administration" (Austria, 2017) as well as across all departments and disciplines at the federal, state, and local levels. The Federal guidelines are divided into six action areas, including, for example, the development of towns, cities, and the landscape; promoting awareness and public participation; research and transfer of knowledge; coordination and cooperation¹⁰⁸.



6.13: Front cover of the Austrian Federal Guidelines for Building Culture (2017)

In 2021, the Fourth Austrian *Building Culture Report* was published proposing the creation of an *Agency for Building Culture* to implement a new funding framework to promote high-quality developments and to raise awareness about building culture. The proposed funding would focus on four fields: funding of building culture for cities and communities; research funding; advice and cooperation; and quality development (Austria, 2021). The Fourth report, just as the previous one, was recently sent to the National Parliament by the Federal Government for discussion¹⁰⁹.

The Federal government comprises several departments with sectoral policy competences regarding architecture and urban design (e.g., Federal Monuments Authority). Among these, the Department for Visual Arts, Architecture, Design, Fashion, Photography and Media Arts (from the Ministry for Art, Culture, Public Service) is responsible for providing financial support to programmes, projects, grants, scholarship programmes etc. designed to promote architecture (in the frame of support to the arts). An example is the funding of houses of architecture and other institutions with a yearly programme, exhibitions, projects, prizes

¹⁰⁸ One of the initiatives supported by the Federal Guidelines was the organisation of an international European Conference on Architectural Policies, in September 2018, under the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

¹⁰⁹ The development phase of the new agency should start over two years as a development laboratory in order to set up a pilot funding program and begin work in the areas of consulting, cooperation, and quality development.

for architecture, etc. The Department It also responsible for the organisation of international exhibitions, like the Biennale of Venice, as well as exhibitions on Austrian architecture which are touring internationally.

An additional important actor, at national and local level, is the Federal Real Estate Society (*Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft* m.b.H. - BIG), Austria's largest public property owner and responsible for the planning, construction, and conservation of most state buildings, (e.g., administration offices, universities, schools, residential properties, etc.). Announcing design quality as a priority, BIG promotes several design competitions to obtain preliminary design concepts for public buildings in Vienna (e.g., schools) and across the country. BIG makes a case studies library available online and promotes debates about its building activity, namely round tables and other cultural initiatives (e.g., young talent award for architectural photography)¹¹⁰.



6.14: New campus of Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU), master plan from BUSarchitektur (2013). Together with partners, BIG launched an international design competition for the master plan for the new WU campus © João Bento

As part of its climate change policy, and in addition to other initiatives and tools (e.g., Climate and Energy Fund), the Austrian Ministry for Climate Protection promotes the annual *State Prize for Architecture and Sustainability* since 2006, that distinguishes outstanding achievements by builders and designers that combine sophisticated architecture with resource-saving construction, as well as constructed buildings in the field of sustainable construction and renovation¹¹¹.

¹¹⁰ For more info, see: <https://www.big.at/>

¹¹¹ See: https://www.bmk.gv.at/ministerium/staatspreise/staatspreis_architektur.html



6.15: Smart block Geblergasse, in Vienna, designed by Zeininger Architekten Technical (2021), was awarded the State Prize for Architecture and Sustainability. The block comprises almost 20 plots. The existing houses were expanded, raised, and renovated, and for the first time in Austria, geothermal energy was used in historic buildings ©BMK/Kurt Hoerbst

6.2.2 Vienna's governance of design

Vested with its own regulatory planning framework, the Vienna City Council is both the state and local planning authority due to its dual status as city and state. The *local development concept* is Vienna's main strategic plan where the spatial development objectives for the city are laid down (OECD, 2017c, p. 57). Below this, there are *zoning and development plans* that are binding for landowners, which contain general zoning regulations that establish the permitted types of land use. In addition, the City Council also develops *concept plans* for major development projects, which are not binding but are a way of keeping the public informed and of testing concepts at an early stage (Ibidem). In addition to these formal tools, the City council has several informal tools, namely a building culture policy, urban design competitions, a design advisory board and a wide range of design-related cultural initiatives (see below).



6.16: Quarter Two (*Viertel Zwei*) is an office and residential area located in Vienna's 2nd district and built between 2007 and 2010. After a planning cooperative process between the City Council and landowners, the expansion project was implemented through several architecture and urban design competitions © João Bento

In the framework of Vienna Architecture Year 2005, after a public consultation process, the City Council adopted a design policy laying down the city's vision for architecture and urban design, entitled, "Vienna Architectural Declaration". In 2014, building on this previous policy, the City Council adopted a '*Building Culture Policy*' to establish design quality principles and to promote the quality of planning and execution of urban projects. In addition, it aimed to inform and guide the City Council in its own construction works and thereby turn it into a role model for private investors, arguing that public projects should pursue the principles of quality of life, usability, sustainability, and participation (Baukultur Wien, 2014)¹¹².

Although, unlike Danish cities, Vienna does not have a city architect position in addition to the urban planning department responsible for issuing building permits, the City Council set up a specific department to implement architecture and urban design policies (Department 19). According to the City Council's webpage, the mission of the Department of Architecture and Urban Design (DAUD) is to develop the Viennese cityscape in a contemporary way, fostering a culture of placemaking and strengthened awareness for the designed living environment¹¹³.

¹¹² With a broad scope, Vienna 'building culture policy' defines ten main goals, namely: to promote high-quality built environments, both in new and in existing buildings; to plan, construct and renovate according to quality-oriented and transparent processes; to create quality-oriented conditions and processes for all buildings and open spaces; to promote a vibrant, critical, diverse and innovative scene for creating a better built environment; to increase public awareness about the importance of building culture and about one's own responsibility; to promote innovation in building culture through education, research, innovation in procurement, etc (Ibidem).

¹¹³ See: <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/architektur/aufgaben.html>

According to its Director (interview: 2018), the DAUD has four divisions. The first division is focused on urban development issues and works closely with the urban development department on *zoning and land use plans* as well as on the *concept plans*, mentioned above. For example, when there is a new development project or an area to be developed, the division issues an expert opinion on urban design quality. This division also conducts studies and surveys on different urban design issues, for example a study on some site axes – corridors – where an analysis is necessary to ensure that there will be no skyscrapers interfering with it (ibidem).

The DAUD's second division is responsible for the design and planning of public space and works closely with the department in the building of streets and infrastructure. Additionally, it provides design expert opinions to the relevant municipal authority on the impact of small interventions in the cityscape, such as a kiosk or an advertising board. It also promotes citizen participation on the design process of public spaces and occasionally organises design competitions to find the best solution for specific interventions (Ibid.).

The third division is responsible for providing design advice to the department responsible for processing and issuing building permits. Because the Viennese Building Code has a special paragraph that stipulates that building should fit into the cityscape, this division receives about seven to eight thousand requests per year concerning the design of new buildings or renewals to verify if they comply with regulations; this is basically a design review function. These are most of the time private buildings, whose developers and architects must submit the building design to get a building permission (Ibid.). In the case of complex projects or with a major impact on the cityscape, the DAUD may ask for a design competition or submit the project to a design advisory board (see below).

The last and fourth division is responsible for the design and planning of Viennese municipal buildings, such as schools, kindergartens, office buildings and special buildings for other departments (e.g., fire department and the like). This is the largest division of the department and is composed mainly of architects¹¹⁴ as a large part of the work concerns project development. There will be about two hundred projects every time, in different phases, from small building interventions, which is internally planned and designed by the division, to major buildings, like a school or a kindergarten inside a campus. In the case of the latter, the division works with external providers usually through design competitions. Most of the time, it's an open call competition but sometimes, when there is a special project, the division launches a two-part competition, where architects submit a preliminary application after which 6 to 8 teams are selected to enter the complete design competition.

¹¹⁴ According to its Director (interview: 2018), the staff composition of the four divisions of the Architecture and Urban design Department is as follows: about 6 people in the first division; about 8 people in the second division; approximately 7 people in the third division and about 30 people in the fourth.



6.17: The headquarters of the Austrian Automobile, Motorcycle and Touring Club (ÖAMTC) in Vienna, from Pichler & Traupmann Architekten (2016), was the result of a design competition held in 2013, organised by the Austrian Chamber of Architects with the participation of the City Council © Roland Halbe

According to its Director (interview: 2018), besides the technical activity relating to building designs, the DAUD maintains a very good co-working relationship with other departments, providing design support when requested, for example, to the municipal social housing company (*Wiener Wohnen*), which also promotes design competitions for new housing schemes¹¹⁵ (Licka and Rode, 2014).

A related tool used for promoting high-quality housing schemes is the developer competition (*concept tendering*). This is an alternative way for the City Council to sell or lease in the long-term plots of public land and provide housing subsidies. Developers must submit detailed projects, which are then assessed on the basis of rental prices and design, ecological and social sustainability (Temel, 2019).

¹¹⁵ According to the City Council webpage, around 500,000 people live in the estimated 220,000 council flats, which means more or less a quarter of Viennese population lives in municipal housing.



6.17: Housing Complex in Bednar Park, Vienna - subsidized home with 39 residential units, 500m² common rooms and 400m² commercial units, winning project for the Nordbahnhof developer competition, planning period 2010–2013 and completion end of 2013, designed by Einszueins Architektur © MA19

The City Council Architecture Department also collaborates in and promotes cultural activities together with the Architecture Centre of Vienna and other partners, fostering public awareness about the design quality of places, such as exhibitions, publications, etc. For example, promoting architecture tours around Vienna and developing educational programs aimed at children and young people, as well as producing resources about built environment design to be used at Viennese schools¹¹⁶.

Design advisory board

To provide expert design advice to the DAUD and related departments, the City Council has set up an 'Advisory Board for Urban Planning and Urban Design' (*Fachbeirat für Stadtplanung und Stadtgestaltung*) — hereinafter referred to as the advisory board¹¹⁷. According to the Vienna Building Regulations¹¹⁸, the advisory board has the following remit:

1. appraisal of the drafts drawn up by the magistrate for the establishment and modification of zoning plans and development plans;
2. assessment of individual building projects on request of the local authority if they are of significant influence for the local cityscape.

¹¹⁶ The educational programme "what creates space?" is a joint project of the City Council planning departments in cooperation with the Vienna Education Directorate and Children and Youth Municipal Department.

¹¹⁷ From a historical perspective, an "Advisory Council for Urban Planning" was already in the constitution of the Vienna Building Code of 1929 but was dismissed in 1939. An "Advisory Council for Urban Planning" was re-established in 1947 and its scope was extended in 1987. Since then, it maintains its present form.

¹¹⁸ Ordinance of the Vienna Provincial Government July 7, 2005, LGBl 2005/33, which promulgates rules of procedure, composition and tasks for the Advisory Council for Urban Planning and Urban Design. For more info, see: www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/flaechenwidmung/fachbeirat.html

In practical terms, the DAUD submits to the advisory board projects with a significant impact on the cityscape — or which are perhaps set in a special location which will give rise to public debate — to get expert advice on its design quality, including issues as functionality, visual appearance, mass, scale, integration with neighbouring buildings and close surroundings, etc¹¹⁹. In addition, the DAUD submits to the advisory board all zoning proposals and development plans before they are presented to the public. Regarding the first instance, the expert opinion is not binding although it tends to have a strong influence on the subsequent political decision. In the second, it is mandatory to get an expert opinion on zoning proposals and zoning plans prior to a political decision.

Appointed by the Mayor of Vienna, the members of the advisory board act on an honorary basis for three years, and include 12 experts from different fields: architecture, civil engineering, spatial planning, historical monuments, surveying, urban ecology, social issues, green space planning and site issues. Although the meetings are not open to the public, its members are expected to assess the designs submitted from an independent perspective and free of any political influence. According to the DAUD's director (interview:2018), the advisory board delivers an important non-binding advice that complements the ongoing design review function of the services of the City Council of Vienna.

6.2.3 Other relevant actors

Austrian Architectural Foundation

The Austrian Architectural Foundation (*Architekturstiftung Österreich*) is a joint platform of architecture initiatives founded in 1996 and formed by the architecture houses of the federal states, the Austrian Society for Architecture (ÖGFA) and the Central Association of Architects. Adding to the legal professional associations and the training centres, the independent architecture initiatives are an important third pillar for promoting a building culture in Austria (Feller, 2018: interview). The Foundation's goal is to get people interested in architecture and turn them into ambitious partners in the design of the built environment. The network strengthens cooperation between key players in architecture: builders and users, architects, planners, and engineers¹²⁰.

Architecture Centre of Vienna

The Architecture Centre of Vienna (*Architekturzentrum Wien – AzW*) was founded in 1993, on the initiative of the State and City of Vienna. Based in Vienna's Museum quarter, AZW is dedicated to showcase architecture and urban development in Austria. It offers a wide-ranging program of events and exhibitions, a total of 500 events throughout the year, ranging from symposia, workshops, lectures for guided tours, city expeditions, film series and hands-on formats. It also provides a service for researchers and all those interested

¹¹⁹ The Advisory Board has to assess the projects within a period of four weeks. If it does not provide an opinion within that time, and assuming that the information provided was enough, the building permit procedure should continue.

¹²⁰ For more info see: <https://architekturstiftung.at/>

in architecture. AzW receives funding from the Federal government, the city council and private sponsors¹²¹.



6.18: Open public space in the Museums Quartier, where AzW is based ©João Bento

LandLuft association

An additional ONG that has been very active across Austria is the *LandLuft* association that has been promoting building culture in rural areas since 1999. With a diversified range of design culture tools, *Landluft* offers design training for municipal decision-makers (*Landluft* Academy), research and consulting projects, showcases exemplary building culture projects (e.g., films, publications, leaflets) and lectures at various events across Austria. It also awards the *Baukultur* Municipality Prize every 4-5 years to the most outstanding municipalities in Austria¹²².

¹²¹ For more info, see: <https://www.azw.at/en/>

¹²² For more info, see: <http://www.landluft.at/>

7. SPATIAL DESIGN LEADERSHIP IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

After examining the role of the state/city architects at national and local levels, it is relevant to look across the case studies in this research to obtain a comparative perspective of the different urban design governance systems and on how design leadership is being delivered. Although each state/city has its own specific context — social, cultural, administrative, and legal — there are several lessons that can be extracted by comparing the differences and similarities between them. Nevertheless, the actors and policy instruments in each context cannot be divorced from its background and are used in this chapter to illustrate the different design governance innovations and constraints.

With this in mind, the present chapter will follow a structure similar to the one used in the case studies analysis. A first part will briefly look across the different architectural policies adopted in the cases studies, which embody government's design leadership aspirations. A second part will review the structure of the state architects' teams across the first five cases studies. A third part will analyse the set of informal tools used by the state architects based in the Urban Maestro typology of urban design governance tools (see Chapter 3). A fourth part will briefly compare and discuss the roles and missions played by the Copenhagen's City architect and the Vienna's architecture and urban design department. Finally, a fifth part will look at the role of other actors and stakeholders contributing for a culture of spatial quality across the case studies.

7.1 Public policy on architecture

In all the case studies, governments have been pursuing a public policy on architecture for two decades or more in order to promote design excellence and raise public awareness about the importance of a high-quality built environment. Looking across the case studies, it is possible to identify several similarities and differences among the policies, namely their institutional approaches, the main concepts used and the implementation of strategies. Although the time given to carry out this research did not allow a proper examination of the differences between policies and of the main drivers that have determined its characteristics, the aspects described below should be highlighted.

Firstly, of the five case studies, four have adopted a policy with a comprehensive approach, in which the design of the built environment is seen as a strategic concern impacting a wide range of sectoral remits as covered by different governmental departments. By addressing the design of the built environment in this holistic way, governments set high aspirations for design quality in which the responsibility of all public actors (and others) is made explicit. Nevertheless, the institutional approach of the architectural policies is strongly influenced by the administrative context where the policies were developed.

State/Region	Name	Type	Year	Department responsible
Flanders	Government Architect Policy Statement: Creating opportunities for meeting	Sectoral	2021	Flemish Government Architect
Ireland	Places for People National Policy on Architecture	Comprehensive	2022	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
The Netherlands	Action programme: Spatial Design 2021-2024. Design Connects	Comprehensive (action program)	2021	Minister of Interior & Minister of Culture and Education
Scotland	Creating Places. A policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland	Comprehensive	2013	Planning and Architecture
Sweden	Policy for Designed Living Environment	Comprehensive	2018	National Board of Housing, Building and Planning

7.1: Recent architectural and spatial design policy documents

Although Flanders does not have a comprehensive policy as do the remaining case studies, and considering a wider notion of public policy, the Flemish architectural policy has been formalised through the adoption of several sectoral policies approved by the government and by two other bodies, namely the Flemish Government Architect office, established in 1998, and the Flanders Architecture Institute (VAI), established in 2001 (see Section 5.3). Both have been implementing the government’s policy in this domain.

Secondly, the main ideas and values underlying the discourse on architectural policies as well as the target areas that are prioritised in their action plans are also very site-specific. For example, the Swedish policy focuses on the notion of “designed living environment”, which includes architecture, urban design, art, and cultural heritage. The Dutch policy focuses on the concept of ‘spatial design’, including the several design disciplines and processes that have an impact on the built environment, the Scottish policy bring in the notion of ‘place’. Although architecture is embedded in these broader concepts, the same concerns about placemaking and the importance of design for the quality of life are also present.

Thirdly, as previously seen, all the five case studies have been making efforts to implement their architectural policies. To do so, they have appointed a state architect team to lead and coordinate the policy delivery through different state actors, and to provide design advice and develop several other initiatives. This means that the state architects are key actors in their design governance systems, namely, to push for an effective policy implementation. As in all public policies, architectural policies will only be a useful tool if they are provided with the means and resources for an effective implementation. Otherwise, they will be just a well-intentioned high-level policy statement on the value of good design, static in time and with very little (if any) capacity for intervention and impact (see Bento, 2017).

7.2 State architect teams

In the first five case studies, a state architect was appointed by the government to act as a design champion for higher standards and to promote good practices across and beyond the government, in an effort to foster a place-making culture and capacity. Assisted by a dedicated team, the state architects are responsible, among other duties, for promoting better design of public buildings and places, advising other departments on design quality, providing support in the preparation of design competitions, monitoring the implementation of the architectural policy actions and contributing to the development of best practices in procurement and contracting policies.

State/Region	Position	Ministry / Institution	Unit / Office	Staff	Position
Flanders	Government Architect	Presidency of Ministers	Flemish Government Architect Team	22	Outside (office)
Ireland	State architect	Office of Public Works (OPW)	Architectural Services	90	Inside (department)
The Netherlands	Government Architect	Central Government Real Estate Agency (RVB)	Board of Government Advisers	40	Inside (Office)
Scotland	Chief Architect	Built Environment Directorate	Architecture & Place division	8	Inside (division)
Sweden	State Architect	National Board of Housing, Building and Planning	State Architect	2(25)*	Inside (division)

* The Swedish State architect works with different project leaders according to the state commission.

7.2: State architects' teams and location of the five case studies

Looking across the case studies, the state architect of Ireland has the biggest team composed of nearly 100 people. This is quite a unique situation, as Ireland still maintains a centralized architectural service inside OPW, a department responsible for the management of a huge portfolio of public buildings (except healthcare facilities and others), promoting the urban integration, and the design quality of most governmental buildings. In this context, being capable to influence directly the design quality of most public buildings gives the State architect a reinforced position in terms of negotiation and influence over other state departments in Ireland.

The Dutch State Architect, together with its two government advisors, has a team of around 40 people operating inside the Dutch RVB, which allows him to monitor and provide advice on a high number of public buildings and develop a diversified agenda of initiatives and partnerships (see Section 5.3). Next comes the Flemish state architect with an office of 22 people. The state architect is in direct contact with the presidency of ministers, which gives him/her the legitimacy to work with the entire Flemish administration, delivering a range of informal tools developed over its twenty years of existence (see Section 5.1).

Relying on a team of eight people, the Scottish state architect is responsible for the coordination and development of the Scottish architectural policy, most specifically for monitoring and supervising the state financial budget spent on the implementation of the different policy actions. One important task is the approval of the biennial work programme of Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS), the design champion in Scotland, and of several other associated architectural initiatives. In addition, the Chief Architect works closely with the urban planning team responsible for monitoring the spatial planning framework and the urban design guidelines that are issued for the local authorities.

First established in 2018, the Swedish state architect has the smallest team: 2 persons. Nonetheless, the state architect works with different project leaders across the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) according to the specific commission and project (around 25 people in Boverket). Furthermore, the state architect chairs the steering group for the architectural policy implementation and the Council for Sustainable Cities and takes part in several working groups and design networks. In this context, the State architect has an important leadership role, coordinating initiatives and pushing for a design quality agenda across different groups and levels of the administration.

Therefore, despite the different sizes of their offices and their diverse duties, the various state architects play an important role in design leadership across their administrations delivering a set of informal design governance tools which will be reviewed below.

7.3 Design governance tools

As described in the case studies, the state architects have a wide range of informal design governance tools at their disposal to provide design capacity and foster a placemaking culture to complement the more traditional mechanisms of design control and regulation. Following the discussion in Chapter 3, informal policy tools (non-statutory) are focused on enhancing the capacity, remit and knowledge of development actors and institutions including all sorts of information, learning, symbolic and organisational tools. This type of policy instruments is generally seen as a form of investment in the development of human, social, cultural, and institutional capital (Tiesdell & Adams, 2010).

This section will examine the state architects' policy tools using the Urban Maestro (2021) typology of urban design governance tools described in Section 3.3, which differentiates the informal tools by *Quality Culture* and *Quality Delivery* tools. The former focuses primarily on influencing the broad culture in which the quality of design is prioritised whilst the latter pays particular attention to the shaping of actual projects and places. The two meta-categories are then subdivided into six categories of informal urban design governance tools: *Analysis, Information, Persuasion, Rating, Support and Exploration*. Considering that state architects' tools are informal by nature, these six categories will be used to look into the different tools used by the different state architects.

i) Analysis

The first category of tools is *analysis*, which refers to the research or audit capabilities of the state. As seen in the case studies, the state architects are considered important sources of expertise in building and design related matters and policy. Although each state has a specific funding program of research that includes architecture and spatial design issues, sometimes state architects develop specific research studies together with partners or simply commission research to other sources. For example, both the Dutch and the Flemish state architect mentioned that, when necessary, they commission specific research to universities or other partners (e.g., studies on spatial densification). The Scottish state architect referred to having specific research funding delivered to A&DS (e.g., studies on ecological building solutions). The aim is to provide new knowledge and lead development actors to adapt their *modus operandi*. As such, the different forms of evidence that an administration can communicate and pass on will influence the way the market actors operate.

ii) Information

The second category of tools is *information*, which includes the creation of best practice guides, case study libraries or education & training initiatives about design processes and the built environment. In the case studies, the state architect teams usually promote the development of guides and manuals on different aspects of the built environment, which comprise a wide range of topics, such as architecture, urban design, heritage and conservation, sustainability, etc. This documentation is an important source of information that complements existing legislation with appealing and easy-to-read material drawing from examples of validated best practices, directed not only at the professional sector and public servants but also at the public. The Irish state architect, for example, supports several publications in the areas of architecture, urban design, landscape, and heritage. More rarely, they promote education & training initiatives, which are usually provided by non-governmental and professional organisations, although some of state architects provide funding to other institutions that deliver this type of initiatives.

lii) Persuasion

The third category is *persuasion*, which focuses on the promotion of architecture and spatial design, including awareness raising activities such as design awards or campaigns and target influence through advocacy or partnerships. The state architects usually organise symposiums or forums to discuss specific themes, inviting different decision-makers from relevant fields and contributing substantially to areas that need attention. They also participate in workshops or conferences as speakers, delivering public statements about specific developments from the perspective of design, even if not requested, with the aim of promoting debate and the exchange of ideas. According to this logic, a state architect may be a powerful actor in persuading others and in promoting a change of culture regarding the importance of achieving better places.

With the objective of promoting innovation in architecture and in spatial design, some state architects promote design awards. By publicly acknowledging extraordinary achievements, they hope to enhance design quality and reward reference projects that set up new benchmarks. Nowadays, however, there is already a proliferation of prizes awarded by a panoply of entities, and the impact of this type of initiative can be questioned. To counteract this, the Dutch and the Flemish Government Architects introduced the Client Award, which intends to promote good commissioning practices among developers and promoters (See section 5.1 and 5.3).

Still within this category, some of the state architects coordinate and supervise the granting of funding for spatial design initiatives, such as support to architectural festivals and events. For The Scottish Government, for example, supported the Housing Expo in 2010 and the architectural festival in 2016, including a wide diversity of related activities, such as street installations, exhibitions, debates and conferences, guided walks, parties, design workshops, small talks, etc. Some of the festivals are organised every year and last a couple of days, while others are biennial or triennial. The Irish state architect provides annual funding to the Irish Architecture Foundation as well as to several cultural initiatives (e.g., Open House Dublin).

iv) Rating

The fourth category is *rating*, which refers to different types of formative evaluation tools, such as indicators or informal design review, and summative evaluation tools, such as certification schemes or competitions. Although, according to Carmona (Carmona, 2017), they are informal they have the potential to shape particular outcomes rather than just the decision-making environment. In certain cases, for larger state-owned building projects, state architects select and oversee the work of architectural firms hired by the state to prepare designs and specifications. This is the case of the state architect of Ireland, whose team has to review and approve designs prepared by private-sector architects for critical buildings owned by the state such as schools, police stations, fire stations, etc. The Dutch state architect also provides advice on the quality of design of public buildings. The Flemish state architect also evaluates designs through the previously described Open Call method (See section 5.1).

Similarly, although the Scottish Chief Architect does not have design review duties, he delegates them to A&DS. The organization has been very active in managing Local Design Review Panels and in supporting local authorities to improve the quality of the built environment, by helping them to address design issues early on during the pre-application stage of planning when there is still time for discussion and changes. In addition, A&DS has been developing evaluation tools, such as the 'Place Standard assessment tool', which allows any user to evaluate the quality of places (see Section 5.4)¹²³.

¹²³ The Scottish 'Place Standard assessment tool' was developed by three partners: Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS), NHS Health Scotland and Social Justice Department.

v) Support

The fifth category is *support*, which includes indirect support tools, most notably financial support to key delivery organisations, and direct support tools, such as the provision of hands-on professional enabling, negotiation or advice. Although their scopes of intervention may differ, one of the main missions of State Architects is to promote high-quality public buildings and construction works, in some cases by directly intervening in project design and construction management or by providing design advice on the quality of the projects. By appointing a state architects' team, the government reinforces and improves the public sector's design competences, which will in turn be responsible for certain design tasks and portfolio as well as for assisting other state departments in design processes.

Of the five case studies, the Irish State architect is the one with more direct responsibility in the design and/or construction of public buildings. As a result, a large team of designers is responsible for the design and construction management of a large portfolio of public buildings and facilities, including conservation and maintenance (see section 5.1). The Irish State Architect's office also provides design assistance to other state departments and agencies when requested, while also promoting better urban integration and higher design quality for all other state buildings (e.g., healthcare), even when not requested to do so. In the latter case, there will be an indirect influence, depending on the will of the public promoter, to accept or not the advice.

Although the Flemish state architect does not have direct design competences or responsibilities with regard to the construction of public buildings, he/she has a long experience in assisting public principals at different levels in the administration, namely, by preparing and defining the brief, organizing the design competition, and selecting the designer through the Open Call method. As such, his team essentially guides, supports, and inspires public developers with an indirect influence on the quality of public construction, from small schools to medium-size public offices to major urban planning frameworks (see section 5.1).

The Dutch state architect also promotes and monitors the urban integration and design quality of central government buildings, harmonizing design with urban planning, monument preservation and the use of art works, such as courts, prisons, government offices and ministries. This means he/she may provide advice on how to give shape to design quality in government buildings in new market relationships, even if he/she is not asked to do so. In addition, he/she helps with selecting the architects who will design or renovate state-owned properties, namely by being closely involved in the tendering procedure of selection of architects/parties in RVB projects and in advising on spatial-architectural and artistic quality in RVB projects.

Although the Scottish state architect does not have direct responsibilities on building design, he/she regularly promotes meetings with other state departments that do (e.g., education), to discuss ways of improving the standards of design and construction, which is a type of indirect initiative to improve public-built outcomes. In addition, he/she manages and supervises the work of A&DS, which is the national design champion of architecture and the built environment, an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB). Funded by the government, A&DS has a long experience in assisting different public state departments and local authorities, namely in local design review panels. Through the approval of the A&DS funding and biannual activities plan, the Scottish Chief Architect can shape the action of A&DS towards better public-built outcomes.

vi) Exploration

The sixth category is *exploration*, which refers to different types of proactive engagement tools, such as design-led community participation and professional investigation tools, such as research by design and testing and on-site experimentation. This tool is used frequently by some of the state architects and less by others. About proactive engagement tools, the Flemish State architect includes this in 'pilot projects' that involve a wide consortium of partners in debates about urban design issues with local stakeholders. The same is true for some initiatives of the Dutch and Swedish state architect, which promote design workshops on specific programs with local stakeholders. With regard to exploration tools, almost all five state architects tend to use research by design in some of its activities. For example, the Dutch CRa launched a 3-year program (Future Atelier NL2100), which uses long-term design thinking as a method to stimulate a movement around thinking about the future of the country.

7.4 Design leadership at local level

After examining the tools of state architects operating at central administration, it is possible to draw some overarching conclusions on the role of design leadership at local level by comparing the spatial design governance of Copenhagen and Vienna (see Chapter 6). Considering that this study was only able to research and collect data on two cities, it is not possible to generalise the experience of these local contexts to other cities across Europe. In future research, it would be advisable to extend the scope of the research to a higher number of cities.

Comparing the two cities, a first point to be made is that both city councils have placed design quality in the agenda and are prioritising design to promote high-quality environments. As discussed, although with different approaches, both cities have adopted a municipal architectural policy and have a dedicated design team to lead and foster a placemaking culture.

City	Name	Type	Year	Department responsible
Copenhagen	Architecture policy for Copenhagen 2017-2025. Architecture for People	Comprehensive	2017	Technical and Environmental Administration
Vienna	<i>Baukultur</i> policy principles for Vienna	Comprehensive	2015	Department of Architecture and Urban Design

7.3: Local architectural policy of the two cities

In the case of Copenhagen, the City Council appointed a City Architect to provide leadership and design advice to the mayor and to political committees, as well as to provide design advice and support to all city departments that have an impact on the built environment. As in the case of Vienna, the Department of Architecture and Urban Design (DAUD) fulfils a similar function but with a more internal role in charge of both formal (e.g., design review, review zoning plans, buildings design, etc) and informal design governance tools (e.g., awards, campaigns).

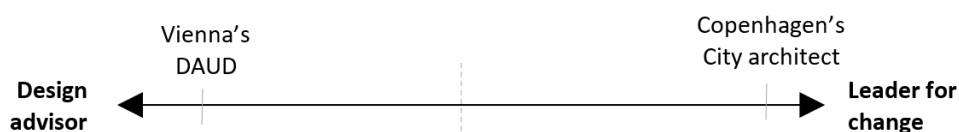
City	Position	Institution	Office / Department	Staff	Position
Copenhagen	City Architect	City Council	City Architect Office	2	Independent
Vienna	Director*	City Council	Department for Architecture and Urban Design (DAUD)	65	Internal advisor

* Director responsible for advising on the quality of architecture and urban design within the state of Vienna.

7.4: Municipal design champion

The current City Architect of Copenhagen has a small team to help her on her mission but also works with different directors and head of divisions across the municipality. In Vienna, the DAUD has a quite large team of architects who offer a robust design capacity to the city council, responsible for different tasks, such as providing design advice to other departments, preparing design briefs and organising design competitions and supervising the quality of planning applications, among others.

One of the lessons taken from the comparative analysis is that the city architect and DAUD have different roles and competences according with its position within the local administrative structure. Despite both play an important advisory role on design, following Tiesdell and Adams' (2010) conceptions of the role of local authority 'design champion', it is possible to place the design champions of the two cities along a spectrum, from a more limited role of 'design advisor' to a more expansive role as a 'agent for change' or 'leader for change' (see Chapter 3).



7.5: Spatial design leadership spectrum

Internal design advisor

Although Vienna does not have a city architect position, it has a dedicated department that is responsible for design review and advice on the quality of building projects, public space, and urban design, as well as on the design of public facilities. The department is composed of more than sixty architects and led by a head of department, who operates within, and adds capacity to, the statutory planning system and supports the building and urban development departments, for example, in reviewing the design of building permits of development projects and the subsequent negotiations and report writing on formal applications (Tiesdell, 2011b). Within this role, the DAUD also helps to shape design policies in development plans or zoning codes, being assisted by an independent urban design advisory board in the development of projects and plans that may have a strong impact in the cityscape.

In addition, the DAUD also works closely with other city departments in building culture (*baukultur*) initiatives, and provides support, when requested, to other departments, such as the municipal housing agency. There is also a regular collaboration with the Vienna Architecture Centre to support or commission the promotion of cultural exhibitions and events. This means that the DAUD is championing design quality across the city administration from an internal and permanent position. Besides the internal staff, the DAUD is managed by a city director who holds a position within the line management hierarchy, reporting to the Executive City Councillor (Administrative Group Innovation, Urban Planning and Mobility).

Although this is a less high-profile role than that of city architect, the DAUD's director is also an architect and has a direct (hands-on) involvement with projects and planning applications, which allows him to have a strong influence on the design quality of projects and municipal buildings (e.g., design competitions). Despite this hierarchical structure, in cities like Vienna there is already good design awareness among the different stakeholders, which appear to have design quality as a priority within the different design and planning processes.

City architect as an agent for change

More proactively, on the opposite side of the spectrum, local governments may appoint a city architect as an agent for change / design champion, with a much more ambitious role. This is a strategic and political role, in which the "agent for change develops a vision of positive change and leads a project to transform an organisation by getting people (...) to think differently about place-making; to alter everyday working practices; and ultimately to achieve better outcomes on the ground" (Ibidem, p. 237). This is the case of the Copenhagen's City architect, whose mission is to foster a placemaking culture and chart a vision for the future.

In this context, one of the main benefits of having a city architect is its design leadership role across the city council seeking to change both institutional procedures and the 'hearts and minds' of local stakeholders (Ibid.). The city architect works across the different departments and forums, stimulating the design sector and promoting a culture of design quality, inside and outside the local authority, in which 'consensus gradually builds that a better-quality built

environment delivers place value and is worth striving for' (Urban Maestro, 2021). Appointing a city architect is also a political signal for key personnel and society as a whole that design quality is important and should be prioritised.

Nevertheless, the success and effectiveness of the city architect depend on a range of factors, such as their personality and personal skills, its team and the organisational structure and culture within which they work. According to Camila van Deurs (2022: interview), the impact of her activities depends on how politicians support and understand the value of design quality, so that she can have an influence on the design governance processes. This is crucial in order to influence the decision-making process when it is necessary to refuse a project or to ask for better designs in a specific development. Because of her informal role, if there is no mutual trust and confidence in her work, politicians can simply ignore her advice and decide otherwise. It is also fundamental to have a good working relationship with other key actors, such as directors and head of divisions, otherwise the City Architect will have very little influence and will not be able to convince them to collaborate and raise standards, even if informally.

Furthermore, the City Architect promotes a culture change across various administrative silos. Traditionally, local administration is formatted to analyse projects and local plans from a legal point of view — if they comply with planning norms and standards. This legalist assessment is not enough to push and raise the level of quality of architecture and places. The City Architect participates in a wide range of meetings with different departments promoting better quality projects and initiating a dialogue with public and private developers about the impact of their projects in its surroundings and about their positive contribution for the city life.

There is also a regular collaboration with the Danish Architecture Centre (DAC) and other cultural organisations in the city to promote awareness raising initiatives about architecture and urban design. This may include institutional support to specific cultural initiatives, such as festivals and major events, to smaller conferences or local debates. In the current year, the City Architect is participating in the organisation of wide range of activities and events that will last for the whole year of 2023, as Copenhagen has been named World Capital of Architecture by UNESCO and will host the International Union of Architect's World Congress.

7.5 Other actors and stakeholders

Following the theoretical discussion in Chapter 3, the concept of governance embodies the notion that a whole range of institutions, actors, tools and relationships are involved in the governing process – a notion that better portrays a new way of thinking about state capabilities and state–society relationships (Pierre and Peters, 2000). In this sense, in a design governance perspective there are a range of non/pseudo-governmental organisations active in this field that contribute for a favourable climate in terms of design quality. Looking across the case studies, it is possible to identify the emergence of three types of actors in addition

to the state/city architects and its governmental institutions that play a relevant role in the promotion of spatial quality: advisory boards, cultural institutions, and professional bodies.

Design advisory boards

As discussed, the state/city architects carry out important spatial design advisory functions¹²⁴. These can vary from specific project design, zoning or master plans to policies or regulations that may affect the design of the built environment. These specific tasks are determined by the political, social, and cultural context of each state/city. Nonetheless, it was possible to verify that in three of the case studies, there were specific bodies with spatial design advisory tasks, operating as non-departmental public bodies (NDPB) or as an independent advisory board.

In Scotland, Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS) takes on some of the tasks of the state architect to champion the highest standards in design in both the public and private sectors. A&DS works through six programmes to advocate the benefits of excellence in design, including urban design, design review, school design and healthcare design. In this perspective, there is a formal delegation of design competences to a national non-departmental public body, which is quite unique in the international context. A&DS was entrusted with several design informal tools, including design review local panels, which are designed to support local authorities in improving the quality of the built environment by helping to address design issues early on during the pre-application stage of planning.

In The Netherlands, the state architect and its advisors also chair design advisory teams, known as Quality-teams (Q-teams), which are multidisciplinary teams of experts that provide independent advice on spatial developments and spatial policy. Spread across the country and at various governmental levels, the Q-Teams provide knowledge and design capacity to the local, provincial, or regional authorities through formal and informal advisory practices, intervening in the early stages of planning and design processes. Looking at the Dutch situation, Assen et al (2020) defined two types of Q-teams: specific and generic. A specific Q-team operates within the framework of a specific planning or developmental area, within the physical boundaries of the spatial assignment. A generic Q-team operates within given administrative boundaries (a municipality, a province, or a region), has no defined end date and plays a more proactive role as it can bring up topics for discussion and stimulate, supervise, assess, and evaluate (Ibidem).

In the case of Vienna, besides the role of design review carried out by the DAUD, there is also a specific Advisory Board for Urban Planning and Urban Design, composed of a group of experts and persons, to provide design advice on projects with a strong impact on the public realm and on new zoning plans (see Section 5.4). Parallel to this, several municipalities across Austria (and other countries) have also appointed design advisory boards to provide expert advice on the design quality of projects likely to have a strong impact on the cityscape.

¹²⁴ In Ireland and Flanders, design advice is part of the State Architects' functions, which have design expertise inside their own organization and in the case of Flanders, if necessary, can request assistance to an expert group.

Architectural cultural institutions

In all case studies, governments have been supporting, with more or less expenditure, the functioning of architectural cultural institutions dedicated to the promotion and championing of architecture, urban design, and the built environment in general. The recognition of the importance of communicating the value of architecture and design to the general public has led governments to financially support architectural cultural organisations, mainly through the ministries for culture, the remaining funding coming from private sponsorship and donations.

Although the structure and remit differ between the different institutions, their main objective is to present and provide information about architecture and urban matters, creating spaces for debate on the future of the built environment. These include programs targeting different audiences, such as younger generations (school workshops, teaching materials, etc.), professional designers (lectures, debates, etc.) and the general public (exhibitions, open houses, TV programmes, etc.). The main aim is to create a climate favourable to generating design quality, which will in turn have an impact on the quality of the built environment by raising consumer (clients, buyers, communities) expectations about the quality of design.

State/city	Name	Year	Main funding*
Flanders	Flanders Architecture Institute (VAI)	2002	Public
Ireland	Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF)	2005	Public & Private
Netherlands	The New Institute (plus 25 local design centres)	1994	Public
Scotland	The Lighthouse, Scotland's Centre for Design and Architecture	1999	Public
Sweden	National Architecture Centre and Design (ArkDes)	2005	Public
Copenhagen	Danish Architecture Centre (DAC)	1984	Public & Private
Vienna	Architecture Centre of Vienna (AzW)	1992	Public

* Adding to its main funding all the above institutions may receive private sponsoring for specific initiatives.

7.6: Architectural cultural institutions in the different cases studies

Professional organisations

In most countries, there are professional bodies entrusted with the professional regulation of architects and other designers, mainly through the obligation of registering the title¹²⁵. The range of designers covered by these institutions differs from country to country. In some countries, access is limited to architects while in others it includes several design professionals. In Austria, for example, the professional body includes architects and engineers whereas in Sweden it includes architects, interior architects, landscape architects and spatial planners.

¹²⁵ From the case studies, Scotland and The Netherlands have a specific organisation in charge of registering the Architect title, entitled the Architects' Register (UK) and Architects Registration Bureau (NE).

Professional organisations also actively contribute for a culture of design quality through a range of initiatives, such as publications, expositions, awards, and events as well as professional skills development programs and lifelong learning for its members. As seen in the case studies, most professional organisations also offer a support service in organising design competitions and technical support service to its members (e.g., interpretation of legislation). In a more demanding way, some of the states have introduced the obligation for prospective designers to gain a minimum period of professional experience before entering the Register of Architects.

8. IMPACT OF STATE / CITY ARCHITECTS

The present Chapter intends to develop a cross-cutting discussion on the impact of state/city architects on processes of design governance with the aim of extracting some conclusions on, and hopefully underpinning a more refined answer to the background research questions. To do so, this chapter is organised in two parts. The first part discusses the impact of the state/city architect on processes of design governance from a comparative perspective across the case studies. The second part discusses the state/city architects red lines and main limitations, as the goal of improving the quality of places involves processes of cultural change.

8.1 The benefits of state/city architects

As discussed, state/city architects employ a range of informal tools of design governance, which aim to shape the preferences of development actors, influencing their choices and decisions by using persuasion instead of coercion. Therefore, their impacts must be seen as long-term since they involve processes of cultural change, positively influencing the system of norms, beliefs and values of different actors. As such, it is not possible to sift this sort of 'fuzzy' assessment by using quantitative inference or exhaustive mapping of the number of initiatives and actions.

"I believe it is important because a state architect gets to represent Ireland at a very senior level. But also, it shows an acknowledgement by government that they value the contribution of design for placemaking. We don't have a state engineer, we don't have a state surveyor, we don't have a state builder, but we do have a state architect – and I think that has been an acknowledgement by government, that the quality of what we are building, the quality of places and how we protect our architectural heritage requires an architect at senior level." (CEO, RIAI: Interview: 2018)

The above quote of the CEO of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) reflects her opinion on whether the position of the state architect was important to foster a placemaking culture in Ireland. The CEO's reply is quite explicit in terms of the symbolic function that the position entails as a strong statement of the political recognition of the importance of design quality in achieving better places. She continued saying that "the state architect has been enormously helpful for the government in leading and encouraging central and local governments to aim for better places, to make connections with other departments and stakeholders, as well as to improve methods of working with local authorities" (Ibidem).

To varying degrees, the same positive view on the impacts of a state/city architect has been expressed by different interviewees in the cases studies under analysis. In fact, they all agree that having a state/city architect is crucial for improving the role of the government, which should lead by example and set an agenda for future action. In this framework, based on the empirical data collected by the interviews, this section will break down the impacts of state/city architects into five dimensions.

i) Providing spatial design leadership

The appointment of a state/city architect is a direct way for the government to take on a leadership role in design governance, by fostering and promoting a place-making culture. In accordance with the theoretical discussion held in Chapter 3, from a governance perspective the state should 'steer and not row'. This means that by setting a state/city architect team aimed at promoting design quality based on a medium and long-term view, the government provides the means and resources to put its policy into action through a dedicated team, equipped with a set of informal tools instead of more traditional "command and control" instruments. This is also important at local level, where city architects champion and promote 'design as a problem-solving process that enlarges the stock of ideas and possibilities' (Tiesdell, 2011b).

Acknowledging that the state is one of the major clients of the construction industry and one of the largest property owners, the methods and criteria used by public bodies are usually adopted as a model by the private sector. Whether through central government and its agencies or by local authorities, the state should set an example by promoting good practices as owner, developer, and user of public buildings (Ireland, 2009). Therefore, it must present itself as an exemplary client committed to quality in every aspect of building procurement and property development (Ibidem). In this context, the State/city architects take on an important role in design leadership, promoting design quality as a cooperative aim across different sectors and levels of public administration, even if in practical terms this does not impose a new statutory framework. In the case of Ireland, this is also done in a direct way by ensuring the overall design and construction management of a huge portfolio of public buildings.

ii) Improving the system of design governance

One of the main impacts of having a state/city architect is, according to interviewees, his/her capacity to enhance the system of design governance. As discussed in Chapter 3, a conceptual shift from 'government to governance' has been taking place since the beginning of the 1990s, which encompasses the idea of a 'new way of thinking about state capabilities and state-society relationships' (Pierre, 2000). In most case studies, the state/city architects mentioned that they were able to start and develop a process of participation and negotiation between different policy actors, including public and private stakeholders. This type of informal interactions is crucial to improving decision-making processes in policymaking as well as in major public projects. Nevertheless, the extent of the impact of state/city architects and its ability to influence others will be constrained by their mission, specific attributions, and level of political support.

Although to varying extents, the state and city architects are entrusted with the role of design champions, in charge of promoting a change in mindset of both public (e.g., politicians, planners, etc.) and private actors (e.g., developers, designers, etc.) about the quality of buildings and places. The Flemish, Dutch and Swedish State Architects take on a more

pro-active role as agents for change promoting new concepts and ideas with local stakeholders and the wider society, while the Irish and the Scottish State Architects play a more advisory and technical role within public administration. The same happens between Copenhagen's City Architect and Vienna's Department. Despite the differences, as discussed above, both deliver spatial design leadership by providing design policy advice, by promoting better public buildings and by fostering public awareness about the importance of design quality, which ultimately will end up improving the system of design government.

iii) Providing advice and support

Given their expert knowledge on spatial design issues, the state/city architects also monitor and provide advice on design policy regarding matters that may affect the built environment. As discussed, the state/city architects are responsible for the development of architectural policies, supervising and monitoring the implementation of the policy goals, initiatives, and actions. Within these processes, they may coordinate inter-sectoral working groups to integrating as many different views as possible. State Architects also provide advice on major development projects, prepare policies, and supervise their implementation. At local level, the city architect provides design advice on the quality of key projects directly to the mayor and the political committee, as well as to different internal departments and agencies.

Furthermore, state and city architects also propose amendments on gaps and contradictions in the complex system of norms affecting the built environment. For example, the Flemish Government Architect office formulates specific recommendations and measures, not only for decision-makers in the federal, provincial, and municipal administrations, but also for educational institutions and professional organisations (Interview: 2018). As such, state/city architects provide expert information and knowledge to policymakers with a sound decision basis.

Another role played by the state/city architects is to represent governments externally. At state level, in international forums and meetings, from open EU initiatives and events, such as the European Heritage festival or the architecture biennales, to specialised international networks, such as the European Conferences for Architectural Policies (ECAP). At local level, in meetings with external stakeholders and local committees, representing the Mayor and City Council, encouraging, and helping to shape a public debate as 'city design ambassador'.

iv) Promoting inter-departmental dialogue and cooperation

As discussed in Chapter 3, spatial design is a cross-sectional issue, involving different political decision-makers and stakeholders, each with its own say on development, policy, and regulatory and enabling functions of the state. According to the interviewees, the state and city architects have been able to create new bridges and communication channels between different state/city departments and public organisations, or in other words, by 'encouraging organisations to act holistically and work in a joined-up fashion with others to achieve a quality place rather than think and act in silos to suit their own professional interests' (Tiesdell et. al.

2013). To do so, they usually organise meetings with distinct public departments and appeal to others to act in a holistic manner when it comes to design quality. From this perspective, the state/city architects offer cooperation with different public actors to persuade them to adopt a more proactive placemaking culture instead of a reactive culture (Tiesdell, 2010). To complement this, they have at their disposal several informal policy tools (see previous Chapter), such as network activities and partnerships, promoting regular initiatives on design-related themes to achieve consensus on common goals and on how to improve results on the ground.

v) Fostering a placemaking culture

According to the interviews, state architects have the ability to promote a communication process between public actors and with external stakeholders involved in the building industry, such as private developers, investors, regeneration agencies, transport companies, designers and planners, the community, and all the other interest groups. Therefore, one of their main tasks is to promote an awareness of architecture and design and foster a placemaking culture where the delivery of high-quality development is embedded in the national culture. At local level, city architects also promote a culture of design quality aimed at internal and external audiences, which may include local and national public agencies, designers, local development companies, community groups and the city's population as a whole.

To achieve the above, state and city architects have been establishing partnerships with other stakeholders to engage them in developing and delivering its programmes of work, emphasising the added value stemming from including design concerns earlier in the decision process. By fostering and raising awareness about the importance of design quality, state and city architects promote a change in mindset of both public and private actors concerning the quality of the designed environment. This role will be played with less or more enthusiasm depending on the personality, communication skills and vision of the state/city architect.

8.2 Limitations and challenges of state/city architects

Although the appointment of a state/city architect reveals a public commitment to the value of design quality, this recognition may not be enough. Besides demonstrating a willingness towards placemaking, governments also need to invest in the front-end vision to achieve quality places. As discussed, the design of the built environment is considered a complex social problem as it is the result of multiple interactions among public and private actors, most of the times with diverging interests and distinct decision power mechanisms. Therefore, state/city architects need to have strong political support and enough level of resources to be able to implement diversified design policy tools and produce substantial impact and give an impetus to cultural change, which is always a long-term process. In this framework, the state and city architects' capacity of intervention in processes of design will always have certain limitations and challenges to deal with along its mandates. This section will take a look at some of them.

i) Interdepartmental barriers

One of the main goals of state/city architects is to promote high standards of design as a way to achieve value for money and improve the quality of public buildings. However, in practical terms, this objective is not easy to achieve as spatial design is a cross-sectional issue, involving different political decision-makers and stakeholders from various sectors and levels of public administration. This means that, to promote design quality, state/city architects need to involve a wide range of departments and agencies (Bento, 2017).

As discussed in Chapter 3, the state is a complex organisation, with its own internal disputes and interests, in which the creation of autonomous semi-public agencies and outsourcing has become the rule. The administrative structures of modern states hinder the implementation of public policies that cross many sectors and levels of the administration. So, one of the main challenges that state/city architects have to face is how to influence different departments and improve the co-ordination of the wide range of policies that affect the built environment.

Furthermore, the multi-level governance system, with the increasing autonomy of local government, may hinder the state architect's capacity to influence local politicians without the appropriate mechanisms or financial means to do so (e.g., design guidance, subsidies, etc). As such, the state/city architects' discourse around the values of design quality will only be ingrained by the different public actors if there are effective interdepartmental channels of communication. This can be done by creating interdepartmental platforms that can build bridges and facilitate communication between different departments. Nevertheless, as seen above, appointing a state/city architect is one of the mechanisms through which the government takes on a leading role in placemaking and pushes for the implementation of a design agenda.

ii) Lack of statutory 'status' and regulatory tools

Since the majority of the state/city architects' policy tools are essentially capacity-building, referred to in this study as informal policy tools, or tools without teeth, state/city architects face the danger of not being able to influence the choices of producers (investors, developers), who end up having the most decision-making power on the overall quality of the development. Although capacity-building tools are important to raise awareness and stimulate both sides of the market, development is still mostly a profit-driven process, in which commercial pressures often go against long-term investment in design quality. In this sense, exhortations of the public benefits of good design will have a limited impact in a climate in which financial value and return are the main drivers for private sector investment (see theoretical discussion on Chapter 3).

One of the main issues continues to be how to change the current procurement process, which is mostly defined by EU regulation and does not potentiate the use of design competitions or other solutions that may value quality beyond the "lowest price" criteria. Unfortunately, state architects continue to struggle to introduce quality criteria in the procurement process. Another issue reported has been the difficulty in stopping the loss of design skills on local authorities and the introduction of more efficient design standards in the planning system.

iii) The need to create a virtuous circle of production: a long-term goal

Although state/city architects aspire to build a culture of high-quality environments, these aims are very difficult to achieve in the short term. As discussed previously, design quality can be considered a complex social problem as it depends on a wide range of actors involved in the production, maintenance, and renovation of urban spaces. In this sense, the state/city architect needs to make use of diversified policy tools covering a wider spectrum of areas. As noted by Adams et.al. (2013, p. 299), if regulatory instruments are the only tools available to policymakers and planners, their primary concern will be reduced to the verification of compliance to the norms and of the speed in which regulatory decisions are made.

Although 'soft power' tools may have a lower impact, they must be seen as a long-term investment in people geared to changing the behaviour of development actors, mainly through persuasion and by promoting a change of mindset, focused on enhancing the skills, competence and knowledge of stakeholders. Only by enabling a cultural change in relation to the built environment will it be possible to routinely achieve more integrated and sustainable places.

9. CONCLUSIONS

This investigation explored the role, tools and impact of state and city architect teams in delivering design leadership and their (potential) contribution to the wider processes of urban design governance. It started by setting out a general outline of the theory of design governance, the different design governance tools at hand, and an overview of the role of design champions. This was followed by a brief review of the role of state and city architects in general, and of several examples of such positions in Europe and beyond. All of these constituted the general landscape within which the state and city architects would be examined throughout this report. Considering that several states and regions had a state architect in their administration, five were selected for inquiry: Flanders (Belgium), Ireland, The Netherlands, Scotland (UK) and Sweden. The objective was to determine whether a state architect could improve the role of the state in promoting better places and in fostering a place-making culture by providing design leadership and strategic advice to the government.

Against this framework, it was also decided to examine two cities in order to understand how design leadership is being delivered at local level, how it operates and what design policy tools are being used. To do so, as explained in Chapter 2, the choice fell on Copenhagen and Vienna, the former with a city architect and the latter with a dedicated department to provide counterpoint information. This would provide a more enriched panorama on the background question of the role of spatial design leadership. The end result is a three-part analysis that addresses the current situation in each of the case studies (Chapter 5 and 6), a comparative analysis of the design governance system and its institutional actors across the case studies (Chapter 7) and a cross analysis of the impact and limitations of the state/city architects' teams (Chapter 8).

The present Chapter outlines the most significant conclusions of this research following the structure provided by the three specific research questions. The first section will review the main conclusions on the role and instruments of state/city architect teams (first research question). The second will discuss the impact of state/city architects in processes of design governance (second research question). The third, and last section, will revisit the background research question on the potential contribution of design leadership on processes of urban design governance across the case studies (third research question).

9.1 The role of and instruments of state/city architect teams

As seen along this report, the appointment of a state/city architect team is a practical way for governments to implement a public policy on architecture and spatial design. In line with the theoretical discussion in Section 3.2, in order to raise the standards of design and achieve better places, there must be a consistent effort on the part of all the actors and stakeholders that intervene in the built environment. As national legislator, planner and development controller, the state plays a key role in the definition of the built environment through several

statutory and non-statutory functions embracing a wide range of tools and instruments. In view of its special responsibility, the state and local governments should set an example, providing leadership in design matters, and promoting better public buildings and places.

In this sense, through the appointment of a state/city architect, governments are creating the institutional conditions for improved public action in this domain. Taking into consideration the wide range of sectoral departments involved in design, the role of the state/city architect is to provide leadership and strategic advice to state/local government, to be able to improve the quality of public buildings and places. Besides planning and designing public constructions, the state/city architect is also usually called upon to provide advice on building regulations or other related legislation. Therefore, they also contribute to policy and advocacy, namely in the definition and development of architecture policy, through the involvement of other stakeholders leading to a more participatory design governance process.

As previously explored, the state/city architects can make use of a variety of informal design governance tools shaping stakeholders' decision-making environment where design occurs (Tiesdell and Adams, 2011). The specific competences and areas of responsibility of a state/city architect vary according to the state/local context. Some involve responsibility for the design and/or construction of public buildings while others involve working closely with other public departments, helping them in the process of selecting and overseeing the work of architectural firms contracted by the state. For example, the Flemish Open Call is an instrument, free of charge for public clients, based on the principle that great outcomes are derived from a good program, an interested patron and a great designer. The underlying belief is that, by improving the design process that leads to the public construction, we can also, in turn, improve the overall quality of the built outcome.

The state/city architects may also develop and support cultural activities to promote spatial design as a cause and provide public statements from a design perspective about specific developments, even if not requested. This set of informal design governance tools are focused on raising public awareness about architecture and place quality, promoting a design culture in society, so that it may become possible to influence the choices of consumers by raising their expectations about their everyday environment. This in turn can influence producers' choices and, ultimately, lead to better quality-built environments. According to this logic, state/city architects assume an important role of leadership, acting as the spatial design champions fostering and promoting a culture change about the importance of achieving better places.

9.2 The impact of state/city architect teams

Starting from an interpretative stance, this research believes that policymaking is a continuous and incremental process in which the main ideas and values sustained by a community will have a determinant effect on the type of policies adopted. As discussed previously, the state/city architects' tools have an informal nature (non-statutory) and are focused on people's mindsets, that is, on reframing actors' value systems about placemaking and on providing support and design capacity to public stakeholders. As such, it is not possible to assess this sort of 'fuzzy' impacts by using quantitative inference of the number of actions generated by the state/city architects. Nevertheless, through the cross-analysis of the case studies it was possible to identify the main strengths and weaknesses of State Architects and their main policy outputs. Based on this data, it is possible to conclude that state/city architect teams are having a positive impact on the wider design governance system of the case studies.

As discussed in Chapter 3, placemaking as a goal can be easily overlooked by politicians believing that the institutionalised system of urban governance (e.g., building and planning permits, municipal development plans, etc.) already provides the necessary tools to shape and create good built environments (Tiesdell and Adams, 2011, p. 124). However, plans and design regulations by themselves will not ensure places with good quality – they may achieve minimum standards and avoid the worse but will not create good quality places (Ibidem). Therefore, the reinforcement of state functions with a proactive actor responsible for developing initiatives and actions that promote a placemaking culture is a step forward and a critical contribution to achieve long-term quality places and a more sustainable built environment.

According to the experience of the case studies, the role played by state/city architects has led to better processes of design governance, namely by improving coordination and interaction between different stakeholders. As was seen, spatial design policy is organized and managed by very different sectors and levels of administration, which makes it extremely difficult to persuade the constellation of public managers and principals to give priority to design quality.

In this context, state/city architect teams have the potential to be able to work across and cooperate with different state departments with design responsibilities and persuade them to improve their standards, promoting round tables and meetings to debate different design solutions and integrate as many different views as possible. Therefore, state/city architects' initiatives and actions have increased the overall opportunity space for interchange and cooperation, which is fundamental to arrive at better spatial design solutions in public building projects and major developments plans. In this sense, state/city architects are having a positive impact on the overall design governance processes providing direction and leading to a more efficient and orchestrated administration.

Considering the complex system of norms and regulations affecting the built environment, state/city architects have also facilitated the conciliation of interests and the establishment of compromises between decision-makers and different policy-making actors, namely by increasing participation in the definition of policy goals and legal frameworks. This means that part of the impact of the state/city architects is not expressed in visible artefacts but as invisible drivers of design governance processes. Therefore, informal policy tools must be seen as a long-term investment in people, geared to changing the behaviour of development actors, mainly through persuasion and by promoting a change of mindset, focused on enhancing the skills, competence, and knowledge of development actors. In sum, state/city architect teams have had a positive impact on design governance processes, mainly by enhancing the role of the central and local government in promoting design quality as a policy ambition, which is something that needs to be managed, cherished, and promoted.

9.3 Spatial design leadership: pursuing a design agenda

As already mentioned, this investigation explored the role and impact of state and city architect teams in delivering design leadership and their potential contribution to the wider processes of urban design governance and whether they can improve the role of the state in promoting better places. The different models of state/city architects found in the case studies reveal that there is not one single solution and a best model of dealing with the governance and the problematic of design quality. As the research has shown, the specific way in which governments exercise good spatial design leadership changes from place to place, according to specific administrative, political, historical, and social context.

Nevertheless, the findings reveal that the same policy goals of better design quality are present in all case studies. So, the background discussion is still not about whether the state should intervene, but with which means this intervention should occur. In the last ten/twenty years, as this research has shown, different European states and cities have appointed state and city architects' teams, in which governments take on the important role of the public sector to lead by example and improve the quality of public buildings and places. Although the different contexts are not easily comparable, they show a continuous commitment of their governments in fostering a placemaking culture and providing design capacity to their organisations.

Looking at the case studies, a first critical lesson is that spatial design leadership involves a public commitment to promoting design quality. To deliver this policy ambition across public administration, it is possible to observe that all case studies have established a dedicated actor (or similar unit) to champion good design within the public sector, raise awareness and stimulate cultural debate. The size and structure of these teams/units varies according to preferences of domestic actors and the level of resources. Therefore, to ensure the effective implementation of architectural and spatial design policies, these dedicated actors and units are playing a key role in coordinating and monitoring its action plan, pushing for the implementation and execution of the different policy initiatives and actions.

Another key finding is that, through the appointment of a state/local design champion – be it by a state/city architect or by any other institutional approach –, governments are providing leadership within the overall system of design governance by pursuing and monitoring a design policy agenda. Although spatial design policy may vary from place to place, the public sector needs strong design leadership to charter a vision for the future and mobilise resources, namely, to promote better public buildings that may inspire and serve as an example for the private sector, as well as for a more efficient use and application of public funds. In this view, state/city architects (or similar units) improve the role of the state in promoting better places, as they deliver governmental spatial design leadership, creating the right conditions under which good places emerge setting the urban agenda and enabling better built outcomes.

Furthermore, the different state and city architects steer, enable, inspire, and motivate key personnel and diverse public actors to raise design standards and seek the most innovative and effective ways of creating better places. This is done by engaging with a wide network of actors across the administration, delivering several informal tools, such as helping to organise design competitions and providing design advice on major schemes and key projects.

Considering that public authorities and politicians play a key role in the definition of the design governance system, strong and committed design leadership has the potential to improve current practices and enhance place-making. Nevertheless, it is important not to reduce spatial design leadership to a single person or an organisation but to recall the importance of collective endeavour in achieving better places. As discussed in Section 7.5, other non-governmental actors, such as architectural cultural institutions or professional organisations, also play an important role in design governance processes, promoting design quality and awareness among professionals, the building industry, and the general public.

Following the lessons learned from the case studies, it is advised that governments appoint a public actor to act as state/local design champion that may lead to a cultural change in relation to the built environment and be in charge of a diversified policy agenda promoting a favourable climate for design quality. Nevertheless, a state/local design champion will only be able to improve design governance processes if they have strong political support and are provided with the means and resources for implementing a mix of informal policy tools (Bento, 2017).

In sum, governmental spatial design leadership is important in place-making as it drives public action towards a better environment in the future, reducing possible risks and increasing public participation. In addition, successful design leadership is able to coordinate and communicate a vision of a fairer, more efficient, and sustainable places by promoting a message of quality and leading collective action (Tiesdell and Adams, 2011). Bearing in mind that built environment reflects a community and that the responsibility for its overall quality rests largely on the hands of the public sector, public authorities must champion the value of spatial design as a public policy to foster spatial quality and a place-making culture.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

For Central Government:

1. Establish a **state architect team (or similar design quality unit)** to provide design leadership and strategic advice to central government, in order to improve the design of public constructions, promote spatial quality and foster a place-making culture;
2. Establish an annual budget for the architecture and spatial design policy implementation in order to support the delivery of a range of initiatives, such as research, guidance, promotion of best practice, awards, design support, competitions, exhibitions, and experimentation;
3. Set up quality-driven procedures to strengthen the inclusion of design professional skills and competences in governance processes in order to achieve high-quality environments;
4. Promote coordination among different governmental departments and agencies to embed a quality-based approach in policies and activities with an impact on the built environment;
5. Deliver training programmes to heads of department, executives and leaders of regional and local governments focussed on culture change and leadership on spatial quality;

For Local Government:

1. Establish a **city architect team (or similar design quality unit)** to provide design leadership and advocate for design quality across local government organisations in order to improve the design of public buildings, promote spatial quality and foster a place-making culture;
2. Establish an annual budget for the municipal architecture policy implementation in order to support the delivery of a range of initiatives, such as research, guidance, promotion of best practice, awards, design support, competitions, exhibitions, and experimentation;
3. Set up local design advisory boards (or similar expert committees) to provide advice in the fields of architecture, city planning, urban development, as well as contributing with advice to the quality of new projects and their integration in the urban environment;
4. Secure enough in-house design expertise according to the size of the local authority in order to support and provide design advice on planning applications and related matters;
5. Develop urban design training programmes of skills development and lifelong learning for key personnel and local stakeholders to promote a placemaking culture.

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12. ANNEXES

Annex A – List of interviews

Copenhagen (Denmark)

Birgitte Jahn, Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces / Ministry of Culture (former advisor)

Tinna Saaby, Gladsaxe City Council / City architect

Tine Weissshappel Holmboe, Danish Association of Architectural Firms / Chief Officer

Camila van Deurs, Copenhagen City Council / City architect

Katrine Østergaard Bang, Danish Architects Association / Senior official

Ireland

Ciarán O'Connor, Office of Public Works / State architect

Kathryn Meghan, Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) / CEO

Flanders (Belgium)

Leo Van Broeck, Flemish Government architect / (former State Architect)

Olivier Bastin, Royal Federation of Belgian Architects' Associations / CEO

Sofie de Caigny, Flanders Architecture Institute (VAI) / Director

The Netherlands

Saskia Naafs, Chief Government Architect's office / Advisor

Milou Joosten, Chief Government Architect's office / Advisor

Freek Ingen Housz, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science / Senior official

Cilly Jansen, Architectuur Lokaal / Director

Scotland (UK)

Ian Gilzean, Scottish Government / Chief architect

Karen Anderson, Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS) / (former CEO)

John Howie, NHS Health Scotland / Senior Official

Sweden

Helena Bjarnegard, National State architect of Sweden

Christer Larsson, former National State architect of Sweden

Kieran Long, National Architecture Centre and Design (ArkDes) / Director

Vienna (Austria)

Barbara Feller, Austrian Architectural Foundation / (former Director)

Franz Kobermaier, Vienna Architecture and Urban Design Department / Director

Gerhard Jagersberger, Federal Chancellery / Department for Visual Arts, Architecture, Design, Fashion, Photography and Media Arts / Senior official

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