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the Urban Design Group

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Topic: **Urban Design  
Policy and Practice**

Practice Profile:  
**Terry Farrell &  
Partners  
NFA**

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# urban design

**Forum for:  
architects • town planners •  
engineers • landscape architects**

The Urban Design Group, founded seventeen years ago, has been established to provide high standards of performance and inter-professional cooperation in planning, architecture, urban design, and other related disciplines; and to educate the relevant professions and the public in matters relating to urban design. Membership is made up of architects, planners, landscape architects, engineers, surveyors, historians, lawyers, photographers, in fact anyone interested in the quality of our built environment. Local authorities, practices, and universities are also members. The U.D.G. runs a series of public lectures, workshops and other events which are valid for C.P.D. The Kevin Lynch Memorial Lecture has attracted such speakers as Leon Krier, Peter Hall, Sir Roy Strong, and Sir Philip Dowson. Annual study tours are also organised. The U.D.G. publishes a quarterly magazine dealing with urban design issues and an Urban Design Source Book which identifies urban design practices, courses and members. The U.D.G. is working closely with the R.T.P.I. to raise the profile of urban design. It has reciprocal membership with a number of complementary organisations including Vision for London, and the British Urban Regeneration Association (B.U.R.A.). The U.D.G. has set out an agenda aimed at explaining urban design and how, using urban design principles, the quality of the environment can be raised. These principles are encapsulated in the U.D.G.'s "The Good City". The Urban Design Group continues to grow. Membership is national, and each region has its own convenor, who organises local events. The subscription is £25 per year with a concessionary rate for students (special rate 95/96) of £10. If you would like more information on the U.D.G. please contact:

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**Errata**

Unfortunately the half-tone illustrations on pages 7 and 22 of the last issue were transposed. Apologies to Nick Falk whose article on Waterfronts in the UK contained an inappropriate photograph.

**Urban Design Studies**

The Group is interested in reviewing studies which are being undertaken, by or for local authorities, to identify urban design issues and define policies. Copies of such studies should be sent to the review editor, Tim Catchpole.

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Photograph: Gloucester Green, Oxford

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### Topic / Urban Design Policy and Practice

- Last October the UDG in conjunction with the RTP1 arranged a day  
conference to consider ways in which urban design is affecting policy  
and practice. Two papers are included in this issue.  
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The July 96 issue will include a special book feature. It will range widely  
- maps, historic books and science fiction are as likely to be included as  
the familiar texts and references on current "urban design".

Alongside specially commissioned articles contributions are invited from  
UDG members. Short notes (300-500 words) on the special personal  
and professional relevance of an individual book (however bizarre) are  
especially welcome, as are 'reviews' of the classics long out of print.

Potential contributors should contact Dr Bob Jarvis, Guest Editor UDG  
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Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2JZ, phone 0171 815 7353 (direct).

# Quality Assurance?

The UDG has consistently supported the DoE's Quality in Town and Country initiatives although raising a number of points that needed particular attention (see UDQ 53).

Similarly it has supported in principle the Urban Design Campaign launched in June this year in which members may have been involved in submitting proposals.

However, despite the undoubted benefits of the government's interest in promoting good urban design there are nevertheless some concerns.

The Urban Design Campaign document tends to focus on individual schemes and projects and as a result it underestimates the importance of urban design as process.

There are many who would argue that urban design is firstly about process and secondly about product, in which case the government may have concentrated on the wrong end - not surprising given the limitations of five year political time-scales. Shouldn't there be much more concentration on urban design strategies being prepared for places - how many have examined their city as Birmingham has done or places such as Portland, San Francisco and Bologna? One positive thing the government could do is to finance prototype urban design studies of different sized communities as was done in the case of Historic Towns in the 1960s. Then we might see the cart before the horse - not that you don't need both to deliver the goods.

John Billingham

## UDG Office

The office formerly located at 140a The Broadway, Didcot has now moved to its own address at 4 Ashbrook Courtyard, Westbrook Street, Blewbury, Oxon OX11 9QA.  
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## Regional News South Wales

Two important draft consultation documents have been issued by the Welsh Office recently. They relate primarily to planning, but they have important implications for urban designers. They are: Planning Policy Guidance (Wales) and Unitary Development Plans in Wales

The Planning Policy Guidance "encompasses strategic planning guidance" and is augmented by "a supplementary series of Technical Advice Notes". The latter document "sets out the requirements for the preparation of unitary development plans in Wales".

Before formulating their observations on these drafts, the Urban Design Group (Wales) invited Mr. W.P. Roderick, Chief Planning Officer at the Welsh Office to address them on the subject on 12th September. Their submission will be published in the next issue.

## Urban Quality Debate

On the evening of the AGM held in June, Brian Goodey (replacing an indisposed Georgia Butina) and Paul Murrain from Oxford Brookes Joint Centre for Urban Design described their recent DoE-funded analysis of responses to John Gummer's "Quality in Town and Country" consultation document. Following an input from Richard Pullen of the Department of the Environment, this prompted a lively and prolonged debate on the issues raised, the nature of what the objectives of urban quality were and, more particularly, how these could be achieved.

Some 40,000 copies of the Government's consultation document were sent out to interested parties. This drew 1,400 responses (a significant if not scientific sample, but questionably cost effective given the lavish quality of the document). These were mainly from building professionals and officers in local and central government, but also from a wide variety of other organizations and individuals. It seemed that the great majority of respondents welcomed the Minister's initiative, as well as the recognition of the complexity of cities and the need for a holistic approach implied in the document.

However, the format of the survey with its open-ended coverage of a wide range of overlapping issues dealing with environmental quality, clearly presented some methodological difficulties for the Oxford Brookes team. Their approach has been to impose an analytical framework of ten key themes towards which policy action and implementation could be directed. These included issues such as mixed uses, user-friendly transport, the need for local involvement in decision-making, the need for local design guidelines and local identity, more environmental awareness and training and increased density.

The Joint Centre's conclusions, outlined in their most recent report, included recommendations for further research into the performance requirements of mixed-use neighbourhoods, a look at the threshold and critical mass requirements for relevant activities, a need to focus on conflicting requirements within the government's planning policy guidelines and a need to look at the role of highway engineering practice in impeding the development of urban quality.

Given the qualitative and ad hoc nature of the survey and the very selective character of the images and language that it used, it clearly did not lend itself to a very scientific investigation. What Oxford Brookes set out to do was to give some definition to its content in terms of the (sometimes conflicting) concerns and to list typical commentaries in order of their degree of representativeness. Their effort was generally commended although someone expressed the concern that the DoE document reminded them of the "Patients' Charter" and might be a PR effort heralding worse rather than better things to come.

### Further Initiatives

The Oxford Brookes team, however, were convinced by Mr Gummer's commitment to urban quality and Richard Pullen from the DoE set out its programme of action in response to the new line. This included a focus on promoting mixed-uses and the vitality of town centres as well as a number of particular initiatives directed towards improving urban quality. Perhaps most significant is the review of Design Bulletin 32, the "road-builders' bible", to allow greater flexibility in road design to accommodate differences in local character and identity.

Pullen recognised the diversity of issues and multiplicity of factors involved in promoting urban quality and the need for co-ordinated and comprehensive action.

Being able to draw on the current urban design paradigms has obviously given the DoE team some help in this area although Pullen suggested that the urban design vocabulary was not easily understood nor urban design easily defined.

Notwithstanding this, Mr Gummer's speech to the symposium that followed up the publication of his consultation document had Paul Murrain, amongst others, fulsome with praise about his grasp of urban design issues. Some of the quotes, indeed, indicated a conversion of epic proportions - the town is the "centre of our culture" and "the hub of civilized life... the human spirit needs boundaries"; "zoning madness... where is the wholeness of forms?"; the need for "confidence in density... our towns are not stand-offish" and even "the executive apartheid of the cul-de-sac". Nothing that Prince Charles might not have come up with, perhaps, but surely some distance down the M25 from the normal Conservative line.

Some concerns about Mr Gummer's lack of response to questions following this speech or his continuing commitment to "more, better car-parking" had not dented the enthusiasm for the speech nor creeping doubts cast shadows on its warm after-glow. How much all this is wishful thinking remains to be seen. Optimistically, it can be seen as a much broader growing recognition of environmental issues by business and government reflected, for example, in the shift of policy on transport issues.

Paul Murrain complained that Mr Gummer's response to the issues had not been matched by the other parties. Someone pointed out they had not got recourse to DoE funds to produce a comparable document. Labour supporters defended their corner though clearly there is an opportunity here not to leave all the running on urban quality issues to Richard Rogers and Mark Fisher and to prod Labour's environment spokesman, Keith Vaz, in the right direction.

### Discussion

Most of the rest of the evening was taken up with a fairly intense discussion of how the consensus urban quality measures, still rather ill-defined, might be implemented. The focus of the agenda, set by Oxford Brookes, was mixed-use development, although as Murrain had already pointed out, there was still a lot of ground-work to be done on defining what we mean by mixed-use and what its performance requirements should be. There was a brief foray on the issues of higher densities, of just what is suburbia and an expression of support for "decentralized concentration" (of which Gummer advisor, Liam O'Connor is apparently a strong supporter).

Alan Simpson focused on the issue of transport and the control of urban quality by transport engineers - "design by plumbing". He suggested that a lot of the necessary change would come from just slowing movement down and that the benefits would outweigh the economic costs. The analogy here was the slow moving stream depositing sediment as it passed along. Paul Murrain told us that the US Transport Manual was now being re-written and he was optimistic that this would have very positive global repercussions for urban planning.

An argument for a return to master-planning and the fine-grained zoning and urban design codes that exist in Germany and some cities in the US was made by Chris Glaister, supported by Roger Evans and others. Murrain was a strong exponent of this line, pointing to some interesting examples of performance-based codes in Australia and supporting the strongly prescriptive codes allowed by local legislation in the US. The problem in America, of course, is that for every example of a progressive city like Seattle, there are many which are quite the opposite. As somebody pointed out, pollution, for example, does not respect local boundaries and cannot be dealt with locally.

Murrain's argument, that mixed-use in Europe is primarily a product of the zoning system, misses the point, perhaps, of what is in reality a more complex combination of economic and socio-cultural factors including the effects of both the broader historical urban culture and the culture of the investment community. It should not be forgotten that public control in many places is exercised more effectively through land ownership than zoning measures.

This argument for more rigid land use control, however progressive in its intention, seems to have forgotten some of the lessons of recent history and to downplay the real problems of urban management in a time of rapid global economic change. John Billingham spoke up for the flexibility of the present British planning system and its emphasis on written policy which he described as "light years ahead" of any zoning system. Jack Warshaw saw nothing wrong with the current UDP-based system except that local planners were hamstrung by government planning policy guidelines and conservation guidelines should be more widely applied.

Kelvin Campbell summed up by stressing the need to combine good urban design with good urban management and the importance of enforcing a finer grain of development to produce good mixed use. He re-emphasized the importance of sustainability and transport issues - the movement economy and the fact that settlements formed in channels. This approach, he argued, needs to be backed up by urban design codes but these could be performance-based and involve quite simple, broad based rules.#

Tony Lloyd-Jones



### The Annual Urban Design Lecture - Piers Gough

"Housing is now the important place to celebrate. We now work in our homes, therefore we must celebrate them."

This was one of many quotable statements made during this year's Annual Urban Design Lecture delivered by Piers Gough and it was probably the most salient. The main theme of the talk seemed to be that, whereas in the past the celebrated buildings have been palaces, churches and town halls, today we are attaching more importance to our homes which have hitherto been anonymous. A home is much more than a machine for living in; for many it is now the workplace.

The architectural practice of Campbell Zogolovitch Wilkinson Gough rose to prominence in the 1980s as the pioneers of new housing in London's Docklands. The Cascades, China Wharf and the Circle development in particular - but also Janet Street Porter's house - have pushed the frontiers of housing architecture into new territory. These developments have "deliberately memorable facades" that residents can identify with. Residents want to take pride in not only the interior of their homes, but also the exterior.

The architecture of CZWG is to some degree controversial. In the same vein Piers Gough's talk was peppered with statements that were to the same degree controversial. For example, until thirty years ago the warehouses on the river at Wapping and Rotherhithe were hidden behind moored ships; today they are visible... "and dreary". Conservation-minded members of the audience must have found this hard to swallow. CZWG's philosophy has been to add spectacle and colour to this dreary scene. They could be right.

Perhaps the most spectacular and colourful CZWG development has been the Circle in Bermondsey, shown above. The site is on two sides of a street. The street has been retained and widened at one point into a circus. The seven-storey housing development has been wrapped around the circus like the interior of a gasholder and clad in glazed blue brick. At the centre of the circus stands an equestrian statue which Piers Gough assured us was not of his making and has evidently been the cause of several accidents.

An important aspect of the Circle development is that the street was retained. The London fabric, said Gough, is like a hunk of cheese with streets cut into it. The street network of Victorian London is a legacy which we should respect.

Architects and planners in the post-war era sought to remove streets in order to create larger sites for mega-housing and open space. Their results have been a failure.

The retention of streets was further demonstrated in another housing scheme, this time on the masterplan scale, in Glasgow. Instead of trying to provide off-street parking CZWG recommended the widening of existing streets to provide landscaped parking. Piers Gough indicated he was quite impressed by the new attitudes being shown to the retention and enhancement of streets by traffic engineers. They are like "born again Christians", he said.

The 'And Finally' item was not a housing development at all but the public lavatory at Westbourne Grove in London. This building is a radical departure from the standard municipal box erected in the early days of public health architecture; it is a lurid green triangular building complete with large canopy, clock and flower stall. As we adjourned from the lecture hall to a wine bar we walked past a disused public lavatory in the centre of Clerkenwell and wondered how soon CZWG would transform this building too. #

Tim Catchpole

### Public Realm Workshop

The Southern Region of the UDG held a joint workshop with the RTPi in June to address the issue 'The Public Realm - Can it be in Private Ownership?'. Over sixty delegates attended in the congenial surroundings of New College, Oxford, to share the experience of local authorities, consultancy and academia.

The region has seen the continuing development of large shopping malls in town centres: lumpy, private, inward looking single use blocks which restrict public access. In comparison, Gary Forster described Hillier Parker's experience in managing Crown Estates land in Regent Street, effectively a public street managed by the private sector.

Marcus Laphorn, Oxford City Centre Manager, then encouraged a pro-active approach to managing the city centre which fully involved both the business community and users. Alan Reeves, currently completing a PhD at Oxford Brookes presented an overview of his research into the attitudes of retailers to different users of the town centre.

It would seem that not only are towns under threat as shopping centres, but we are in danger of perceiving them only as retailing machines. 'Going to town' is an experience which must surely be about more than setting the cash registers ringing, but it is this aspect which is currently getting most attention. Are we neglecting the social and cultural aspects of our towns in our eagerness to conduct retail 'swot' analyses and 'health checks'? Are we taking the pulse of the community or just the pulse of the retailers?

An alternative perspective was provided by Ivor Samuels, teacher and practitioner, who gave an invigorating presentation of his use of design briefs in small French settlements where decentralisation enables villages and small towns not only to participate in the planning process, but also to prepare their own plans. #

Roger Evans

### Book Reviews

Members who consider that a particular book should be reviewed in the journal should write to Tim Catchpole to see whether it has been received by UDG or whether it can be obtained.

### Viewpoints

These articles appear when members have written in their views about a specific matter either independently or in response to an earlier issue. Contributions are always welcome. #

# Readership Survey 1995

Seventy questionnaires were returned from members in May and June providing a useful summary of views about the contents of the magazine and its design.

The results of the survey are shown on this page. Items 1 and 2 were weighted giving 2 points to items that members always read and 1 point to items members sometimes read.

The new design was generally welcomed because of its fresh approach and its graphics but a number of detailed points were made about titles, typeface size, captions and introductory text and these will be examined to see if changes can be made to meet some of the points; a very detailed letter from one member made a number of critical points some of which will hopefully be met in any review.

The response to possible contents was particularly useful and it is hoped to include a section on research reports in the near future and explore the possibility of carrying out interviews and covering urban design news in the UK. In addition, various people offered to write material, review books or take part in the Good Place Guide for which a number of additional places were suggested for inclusion. Practice Profiles were criticised because they can become PR reports for the practice concerned. When they were first introduced, practices were asked to define their approach to urban design and perhaps this is less clearly stated in the recent coverage. The point should however be made that practices contribute £80 towards production costs of the two pages involved which almost enables those pages to be self financing.

If anyone feels we are overlooking some of the key points in the survey then please do respond - there is normally room for members views either as letters or as a viewpoint article.

## 1 Support for popularity of existing features

Weighted response	Always read fig. in brackets
178	UDG Programme (51)
170	Special Topic (35)
155	Book Reviews (32)
155	Viewpoint (25)
149	International (26)
140	Event Reports (18)
133	Endpiece (25)
112	Practice Profiles (16)

## 2 Support for possible features

Weighted response	Always read fig. in brackets
173	Interviews (41)
165	Reviews of research (37)
159	Legislation update (34)
158	Review of UD news in UK (33)
149	Regional reports (28)
140	Refs. in international magazines (28)
119	News of UDG members and practices (17)

## 3 Like Most

32	New fresh layout
24	Wide ranging issues, mixed content
5	Useful UK news
3	Topics
2	Book Reviews
2	International outlook
2	Practice oriented
2	Holistic approach
2	Thick cover/cover design
1	Scheme descriptions
1	Lack of adverts
1	Only contact with UD issues
1	Actual schemes

## 4 Like Least

13	Practice Profiles
8	Four cols/page
7	Vertical titles
6	Typeface too small
6	Not enough illustrations
5	Captions too spaced out or need to be clearer
4	Articles too theoretical
3	Layout could be improved
3	Poor illustrations
3	Lack of critique section
2	Graphics difficult to interpret
2	More UK examples
2	Needs to be controversial
1	More on landscape / courses / employment opportunities /

more local authority / more appraisal  
 1 Too London oriented  
 1 Should be on recycled paper  
 1 Improve topic intros

## 5 Greater space needed for items

7	International experience and practice
6	Reports of events/news
5	UK projects with critique
5	Book Reviews
4	Best practice guidance
4	Street Design/Townscape
3	Viewpoints including outside design profession
2	Critique of bad design
2	In depth topics
2	Political/legislative policies and impact
2	Research funding/reports
2	How to achieve good UD
1	Graphics for UD / case studies of towns and schemes / landscape projects / competitions - news and results / better project references

## 6 Should topic have more pages than 16

42	No
3	Yes
6	Perhaps

## 7 Items that should be included

6	Reviews of research
4	Education analysis
2	Preview of proposals
2	Public sector work
2	UD news items
2	Analysis of existing places
2	Criticism of UD schemes not covered elsewhere
1	Recent theory / legislation update / UD references / bad UD / Government support for UD / quality in T & C update / employment opportunities / background to UD schemes / interviews / readers views / international practice profiles / history of urban form / street design / guides to European cities / practice and business information / list of general events / recent theory / legislation update / relation of UD to other factors / teleconferencing possibilities / overseas subscriptions #

# Dynamics of the City

In July Sherban Cantacuzino gave a scholarly, erudite and analytical paper as the 1995

Kevin Lynch Memorial

Lecture. However, it was

also highly controversial in

certain assumptions he

made concerning future

trends and life-style of British

cities.

He opened his talk by referring to Bramante and Pope Julius II, in order to make the point that although the nature of clients has totally changed since the 16th century, the popular image of the architect as arrogant and headstrong has remained. Cantacuzino stressed the points as follows:

"Architecture and cities have always been the products of a collaboration between patron and architect. The importance of the patron - the client - is paramount, and to the absence so often of a real client must be attributed so many of our failures in urban development today. Julius II acted under none of the constraints that prevail today. The only thing that hasn't changed is the status of the architect, who remains the ready subject of satire."

The paper then concentrated on defining both the forces forming cities, and constraints involved.

## Microtechnology

Cantacuzino forecast that the days of the large office are numbered; mentioning that Rank Xerox estimated that an employee in their London office cost them 2<sup>2</sup> times their salary; and also stated that, "There is also evidence that the productivity of a person working at home with a computer is between 30 and 100 per cent higher than that of a person working in a large office".

Evidently Shell has discovered that "companies which have changed successfully, made full use of decentralised structures and delegated authorities".

Hence it may be assumed that the decentralisation of jobs will lead to a fall in demand for office space in cities, relieve traffic congestion and reduce energy consumption.

However, this could be seen as an over-optimistic view of future trends.

In any case, Cantacuzino considers that the welfare state that he refers to as "a paternalistic form of centralised government is threatened", (quoting William Rees-Mogg in the Times) due to a shrinking tax base.

Moreover Cantacuzino also states that governments will find it increasingly difficult to collect tax from those with top incomes, because the new information age is making it possible for an increasing number of people in the higher tax-paying brackets to work anywhere in the world provided they have a telephone, a fax machine and a computer connected to the Internet, as is already the case of some 24 million Americans - more than 10 per cent of the working population".

Again, he quotes a pessimistic picture as follows:

"Lord Rees-Mogg predicted that Internet, with the other electronic systems would become the main market place in the world, on which the majority of the larger business transactions were likely to be done. The welfare state would therefore break up, not because right wing politicians wanted it to, but because it was entering a period in which the resources would diminish while the demands increased, due to widespread unemployment and under employment, and the increasing number of retired people who would completely alter the proportion of employed to unemployed."

Commenting on Public Transport, Cantacuzino is sceptical about its immediate future, despite the installations of rapid transit systems at Manchester, Sheffield, and Croydon. "Even if there was adequate investment in public transport, there would have to be the political will to restrain the use of the private car and so encourage the shift from private to public transport."

Nevertheless, he is forthright in his condemnation of recent shopping centres as one of the worst products of the market system.

Quoting Sir Richard Rogers:

"They are the embodiment of the "privatisation of cities for profit". Describing this process, he said, "gradually the semi-public spaces that once overlapped and enriched the public domain are privatised. The market becomes a shopping mall; the open university becomes a closed campus and, as this process spreads through the city, the public domain retreats. People who can afford it move out or bar themselves in."

## Public Participation

A major section of the talk was devoted to public participation and community action.

Returning to the absence of a real client in so much modern development he sees Community Action as the only hope in the absence of local authorities with civic pride and sufficient money to improve and maintain public parks and gardens.

Both the RTPPI and the RIBA have backed community action in recent years. Moreover the RIBA Community Architecture Group points out that their initiative in launching its "Percentage for Participation" campaign goes *beyond* social housing and should include commercial projects and involve all architects and planners.

He expressed great faith in the power of public participation and community action in support of conservation.

"Just as the lost battle of the Euston Arch paved the way for the successes at Covent Garden and Bath, so the lost battle of the M3 at Twyford Down leads directly to the abandonment of the East London River Crossing (and the saving of Oxley Wood) and, even more significantly, to the Department of Transport's considerable reduction of its road programme. It is of course an exaggeration, and you will immediately think of examples which prove the contrary, but I believe it to be essentially true that, with the exception of schemes like power stations (where it can be argued that the good of the nation must come first), schemes which are intelligently and resolutely opposed by the local community don't stand a chance. This is real "people power" and, having acquired it, people will have to learn to wield it responsibly."

### Local Authorities

Since 1979 Central Government has cut local authority spending insisting that the private sector should become the main provider of services.

"Central government, one might say, has behaved in a precisely contrary way to the companies which the Shell study found had adapted successfully to changing conditions: it has acted in a centralist manner by depriving local government of what authority it still had."

Nevertheless, such enlightened bodies as the Civic Trust have suggested that there should be more extensive central government support for the concept of town management, together with seedcorn capital to help underpin local partnership. Apparently, Kent County Council has put this into practice.



### Sustainability

The final part of the talk concerned "Sustainable Development". Quoting John Gummer:

"'Sustainable development' is how we develop in this generation *without* stealing from the next. It is avoidance of waste (land, energy, travel time, etc) and the conservation of energy in buildings, fuel, cars, etc. All this leading to a call for "civic responsibility".

And all somewhat ironical coming from the same political party whose former leader stated that there is no such thing as society!

In Cantacuzino's view a sustainable city consists of:

- A city with high densities [e.g. Bloomsbury, shown above].
- A compact city [i.e. walkable, with a network of public footpaths].
- A city with efficient public transport and encouraging the pedestrian and cyclist, whilst discouraging the private motor car.
- A city with well cared for parks and green open spaces.
- A city with energy-efficient buildings, environmentally friendly, restraining pollution and industries depending on non-renewable energy.
- Finally, a city which respects, restores and re-uses its old buildings.

### Pollution

The summer of 1995 should put paid to any doubts about global warming as a scientific fact. He reminded us that by AD 2000, 60% of the world population will be living in cities, and cities are the major causes of world pollution, such as London, Bangkok and Los Angeles.

Also western influence has tended to destroy the essential wisdoms and knowledge of indigenous peoples, who have seen the earth through former crises, e.g. the Australian aboriginal fire tradition.

Cantacuzino stressed the need to make use of these historic "essential wisdoms" to understand what are the right environmental actions. Hence the need for energy saving. Experts have suggested that designers could halve the energy used in buildings.

"I would add that the energy crisis has shown how important it is for the design of a building to take into account not only the cost of construction, but the cost of its maintenance and of its performance in use - life costs, in other words."

Cantacuzino called for architects to produce buildings that are energy-efficient and environmentally responsive, "We only have to look at traditional ways of modifying the climate in the hot arid zones - the mat-screen and the wind-catch for example - that these forms are a direct response to needs, efficient, economical and beautiful".

Following his call for energy economy and conservation, Cantacuzino adds:

"We will learn to make the best of what we've got, and to make what we've got last. Citizens, through voluntary action, will demand energy-efficiency in buildings and curbs on the use of the private motor car in town centres. There will be a return to economy and thrift, and "the replacement", as Mumford said, "of the machine-oriented metropolitan economy by one directed towards the goods and goals of life."

### Planning

Cantacuzino considers that planning has long ceased to be creative - a negative system which stops both the good and bad, and allows the mediocre.

"Planning's only real justification is a work of art at the end of the day, whether it is a building, a city or a whole region. But this can only happen if the State - central and local government - undertakes development, which is something that government in this country has retreated from in the last 15 to 20 years, and is unlikely ever to go back to for the very good reason that there is never again going to be enough money."

### Conclusions

Quoting Maynard Solomon, Cantacuzino concluded his paper as follows.

"Masterpieces of art are instilled with a surplus of constantly renewable energy - an energy that provides a motive force for changes in the relations between human beings - because they contain projections of human desires and goals which have not yet been achieved (which indeed may be unrealisable)."

Summing up, whilst I admire this paper's great breadth of vision, I found the pessimistic prognosis of the future of the welfare state most disturbing and negative. He assumes a total lack of political will and idealism to ensure that a fair and just society can co-exist with a reasonable degree of economic freedom. However, in an answer to a question, Sherban Cantacuzino emphasised that his paper related exclusively to the Anglo-Saxon world as far as his analysis of economic influences is concerned.#

Derek Abbott

# Urban Design's Soft City

Jeremy Cauton

Jeremy Cauton responds to Philip Stringer's question about a holistic approach in UDQ 55.

The number of practice profiles run in the UDQ has provided virtually as many definitions of urban design. It shows the diverse nature of the subject. Few however, though many have tried, can provide a single definition highlighting the complexity of its remit and as a result identify an approach that could be adopted in its execution.

This paper attempts to move this debate beyond that of approach to include product identification and process and how that process can become one of influence and control.

The title of this response reflects on Jonathan Raban's view of the city being one of the mind and ultimately all things to all people. 'The city is a chaos of details..., an encyclopedia, through which the user is constantly coming up against the absolute mysteriousness of other people's reasons'. We mould the urban environment in our image, it is 'soft' to our interpretations and as a result is ours alone to demystify. Its diversity seems to belie rationality to a certain extent and yet to understand and control it we have attempted to standardise its form. 'One man's city is the sum of all the routes he takes through it, a spoor as unique as a finger print' according to Raban. We still, however, tread the road of rationalism simply because it is deeply rooted in our western culture. As with the Greeks, understanding something enables you to state it explicitly and if you can state it explicitly, you can write a code for it, standardise it, control it. Control through rationalisation, however, may be acceptable; laying down a framework based on a holistic viewpoint; trying to standardise it through codes and laws, however, goes against 'natural' urban form and response.

Where does that leave us with urban design; undoubtedly it should be viewed as both product and process, delivering a dynamic urban environment. Its all encompassing nature, by implication, warrants a broad definition, in effect a holistic definition. To my mind, a definition that comes close to this was that given in the Architectural Forum (Nov 1973) - "Urban Design is where business, government, development, planning and design converge" providing the 'ground rules' and the framework into which the 'thousand designers' can plug.

Kelvin Campbell's holistic approach (UDQ 55) befits this definition simply because the urban environment as a system is not necessarily the real world but a *way of looking* at that real world. This is borne out in our approach to design of the urban environment. Intuitively, we approach this design normatively visualising the whole through a series of collective and co-ordinated parts and then we assemble those parts into a working whole; more often than not a standard whole. As far as urban design is concerned attempting to reinvent the wheel serves little purpose.

Ford based his Model T on a standard design. In terms of approach, his vision was holistic, a car greater than its parts. But it was simply that, an assembly of mutually reliant parts into a coordinated working whole. Ford delivered this product, however, through a process of control and influence, and it is from this that we, as urban designers may be provided with some insight. Control is central to the design of most systems - indeed to design itself. But it is not control for control's sake, as a series of codes would, for example, provide but control in the holistic sense; visualising the whole and providing the means to realise that whole. Ford's system did exactly that.

## The Whole City

The City, however, unlike a car is a dynamic system. So, as 'urban designers', how do we respond?; firstly by adopting the holistic approach, viewing the city as a whole; and secondly by understanding that the tool to create this whole is available but is a complex and powerful tool that can only be applied through a holistic approach.

How does rationality fit Raban's city. By all accounts, it doesn't. It is contradictory in that by doing so you begin to eliminate the dynamic soft city. Nevertheless, left to its own devices, the city would naturally create a framework around which the soft city would develop. It is here that urban design adheres to the logic of the holistic approach, having regard for an end result greater than its parts, allowing soft city infill to develop around a system of influence. The system could be any number of components of the city, the street being one, from which responses start to shape the city environment.

Based on this premise, I suggest we dispense with the public realm and other single entities used to describe urban design's remit to city development and replace it with Crane's 'capital web' for this is where 'business, government, development, planning and design converge'. Now we are being holistic, for the capital web, or alternatively capital design, is far more encompassing and influential than the public realm, itself a part of the capital web.

In considering urban design as both product and process, the notion of the capital web is your 'responsive environment', it's the product that provides the process. It is at the macro scale the structuring city framework and at the micro scale the park bench. "It is to the individual city builders or dwellers what a river or canal is to the desert farmer", according to Crane, a product of collaboration "offering enormous opportunity and obligation".

At its generic level, the capital web encompasses all movement channels, the public realm, services frameworks, public buildings and statutory controls; it is the manipulator, controller and guiding influence on city form. It is the interface between the public and the private, the public and the public, and the private and the private. The public sector of urban design also provides the 'invisible' capital web, the controls structuring city design, an invisible control rather than a confrontational control. The private sector of urban design, generally seen as proactive is in fact reactive to the capital web producing responsive development. We come across it everyday in our 'soft city', not conscious of the fact that it is in fact our city builder, the city system, the framework to which the city responds and the whole develops.

Consequently, this is where I believe urban design fits. True urban design and urban designers as a result operate in an interdisciplinary environment to create an interactive environment - approaching the city holistically through the production of its capital web seems the only approach, after all we've been doing it since cities began, we've just never labelled it.#

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Lachlan Robertson presents a controversial theory of design generated by ideas from the physical sciences, deterministic chaos, complexity and fractals.

Would it take the romance out of our much valued, attractive towns and cities if it were revealed that they can be described as geometric curiosities rather than the application of visionary minds? Does it devalue the role of urban designers if it were proven that conscious design is unimportant to the global structure of man-made forms? Would it be sacrilege for a town planner to suggest that the products of town planning will always be subordinate to the laws of Deterministic Chaos over which he can never have control? Would it hurt the feelings of architects if it were shown that their work tends to subtract beauty from the whole rather than add to it?

Of course it will. That is why the ideas presented here are going to be controversial and difficult to accept: not least by myself. Nevertheless, "deterministic chaos" and "complexity" are fields of study in the physical sciences that are already creeping into the social sciences; notably in economics. In our professions, we ignore them at our peril and it is time to debate their implications for our work.

As a town planner, I am very aware that there is a tendency for the development process to be viewed by all concerned as a kind of "black box".

Someone, somewhere desires a building and somehow, sometimes a piece of urban fabric emerges. This "cause and effect" view of the world is deeply embedded in our view of the world. We hope that we are facilitators of good urban design for the benefit of democracy and the general wellbeing.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the public and the professions see a need in a complex and confusing world, with many causes and many effects, to rely upon simple rules of thumb and on experience of what does and does not work to generate good urban design. The urban designer is a vessel for all this experience and for all these rules of thumb; and who then selects what is relevant to the task in hand. Pen is put to paper and the result is Urban Design. All that urban designers can do in a complex world is to poke their fingers into the maelstrom and hope that the results of their efforts are better than if there were no interference at all.

It is therefore not surprising that the professions involved in creating urban form prefer to keep things simple - prefer perhaps (borrowing an analogy from mathematics) to deal in a few constants rather than a multitude of variables. This is why there are a plethora of rule based decision making techniques such as the seven or ten or whatever Principles of Urban Design in an attempt to carve out simplicity from complexity.<sup>2</sup> To be slightly cynical about it, the professions benefit from this complexity as it can always be said that things went wrong because there was an unseen variable that threw the concept. To the architects and the town planners, that variable may well have been each other; as evidenced by their need to pour oil over troubled waters in the continuing interprofessional debate on aesthetic matters.<sup>3</sup>

**The consideration  
of urban form  
needs to take into  
account the  
three-dimensional  
complexity  
produced by  
complex facades,  
and the  
aggregation of  
buildings.**

Philosophers and scientists have debated the question of cause and effect for hundreds of years and out of it has come a particular "scientific" way of looking at the world. The scientific method of analysis requires that the phenomena be examined, that theories and hypotheses be produced to explain them and that these are tested for their validity.<sup>4</sup> Due to the perceived complexity of the world, scientists must simplify and reduce phenomena to their fundamental basics in order to model that which is being studied.

However, there is one branch of scientific enquiry which has over the last two or three decades resulted in the view that reducing the complexity of the world to a few principles need not (or perhaps may never) result in a simpler and more understandable world. In fact, the interaction of as few as three variables may result in unfathomable complexity.<sup>5</sup> It is called Deterministic Chaos. It is a lesson to all professionals in the field of urban design that just because the causes are few and easy to grasp, this does not mean that the effects are going to be any more predictable than if there were many. This is true even though we are sure that there are no external or unknown factors. Ironically, our urban designer who pokes his finger into the maelstrom probably adds to rather than calms the chaos.

The one variable that is well within the control of urban designers is that of shape. Shape is the very stuff that urban form is made from and can be manipulated relatively easily by the skilled designer. However, as we shall see, the urban designer may not take shape for granted!

### Chaos Theory and Urban Form

Chaos Theory and its derivatives are currently fashionable subjects in the physical sciences; not only because it is a powerful idea but because it has caught the imagination of the general public. Essentially, the Chaos Theory (or Deterministic Chaos as it should properly be known) is an explanation of the "hairy" nature of the world which can result from the operation of a simple dynamical process. For example, the movement of a pendulum between two magnets is easily predicted and calculated, but the movement between three magnets is extremely complicated beyond all apparent reason given that only one more magnet was added. Deterministic Chaos can account for this behaviour as it can account for many physical phenomena; from climatic changes to the boom and bust populations of insects. The conclusion is that Deterministic Chaos may be the rule rather than the exception in the natural world.<sup>6</sup>

The concept of the Fractal is a close relation of Deterministic Chaos and Complexity. A Fractal is a class of shapes of considerable variety that have the odd property that at whatever scale they are observed, they retain their self-similarity. For example, a sphere is a sphere however it may be observed across a reasonable range of scales but a cloud is a more tenuous thing that nevertheless has a recognisable shape without necessarily retaining absolute and unchangeable boundaries. It is known that clouds are Fractal shapes along with coastlines, trees, lightning and a multitude of other natural forms.<sup>7</sup> Fractals distinguish themselves by what might be called their ordered irregularity and they can be modelled and displayed using the power of today's microcomputers. They are generally considered to be very attractive and aesthetically pleasing (fig. 1).

Not only is the idea of a Fractal shape a new and powerful means of describing complicated shapes with precision, some Fractal shapes can be considered to be the physical embodiment of a dynamical process. Thus it has been shown that a model of the dynamics of cloud formation can result in physical forms that are nearly identical to real clouds. Thus not only can a Fractal be a measurement of a complicated shape, it may also be a crystallisation of the dynamical process that is involved.<sup>8</sup>

The obvious questions are, do Fractal shapes occur in man-made urban forms and do they reveal an underlying simple dynamical process? There is very little research into this subject and what exists, tends to be found in the field of Geography where there is a history of applying mathematics to the formation (and the forms) of human settlements.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless what has been found is that the structures and forms of cities may be Fractal shapes and that they can be modelled with surprising accuracy in terms of their general structure using relatively simple dynamical models. The important point is that there exists a technique for producing recognisable urban structures that has nothing to do with individual social or economic forces or architecture but is based on the inherent properties of shape.<sup>10</sup>

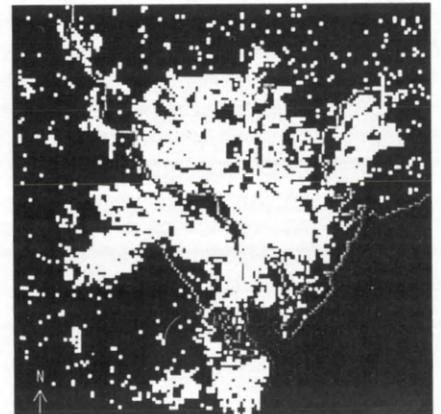
For the urban designer, such ideas are not unfamiliar and there are parallels with the work of Christopher Alexander, Hillier and Hanson and, to a lesser extent, the Urban Morphologists. However, there is no research known to me which is specifically concerned with applying the concepts of Deterministic Chaos, Complexity and Fractals to urban design. Given that shape is what urban design is all about, this seems to me to be a considerable omission.

### Organic Urban Forms and How to Make Them

Christopher Alexander is to me the closest that any well known researcher has come to considering how that feeling of organicness exuded by the most attractive towns and cities may be closely related to Deterministic Chaos. He does not use such a term for it of course but it may be that his work can be re-assessed in its light. Alexander has tried to produce urban form that is as organic in feeling as any of those other beautiful towns and cities that he admires and that seemed to have developed without apparent effort. How he does this has of course nothing to do with applying known techniques of economics, town planning, architecture or any other modern process of construction and design.<sup>11/12/13</sup> For that reason his ideas remain curiosities; admired but not practised.

Of course, attractive irregularity is nothing new in architecture or urban design and has its fashionable moments. There have been many exponents of the value of the incremental, the organic and the inherent qualities of the vernacular. However, Alexander is different as he deliberately tries to separate design from form.

"This feeling of 'organicness', is not a vague feeling of relationship with biological forms, it is not an analogy. It is instead, an accurate vision of a specific structural quality which these old towns had... and have. Namely: Each of the towns grew as a whole, under its own laws of wholeness... and we can feel this wholeness, not only at the largest scale, but in every detail: in the restaurants, in the sidewalks, in the houses, shops, markets, roads, parks, gardens and walls. Even in the balconies and ornaments."<sup>13</sup>



Top: Fig 1 Fractal

Model of a fern

Above: Fig 2

Urban Growth of

Cardiff (source:

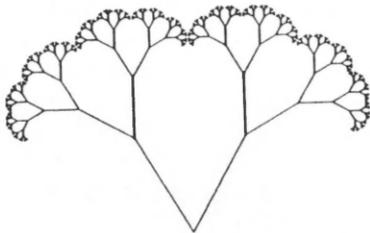
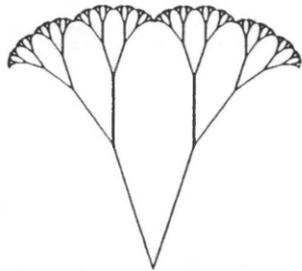
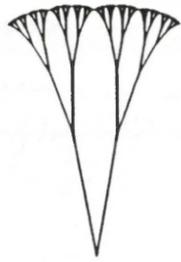
Batty 1991)

Right: Fig 3 Tree-

like Fractals

known as

L-systems



At this point, it is traditional to reproduce a photograph of an Italian hill town or some such image often used to tickle the chins of urban designers. I shall resist. You all know what he means.

However, I believe that there may be a more prosaic explanation of why we are so attracted to such places. Could it be that as individuals we are responding aesthetically to Fractal forms: perhaps divining from what we can see the underlying dynamic? If so, then Fractal geometry can potentially be the tool that allows us to describe *accurately* and simulate *realistically* "organic" urban form.

This is the challenge of these new ideas; to identify the methodological tools, to experiment with simulated urban forms and above all to remain sceptical until they prove their worth. For those of you who feel that they can dismiss Chaos Theory as just another fashionable science that need not trouble the soul of the artist, let me quote from a Sunday colour supplement introducing the theory through the work of a photographer. Referring to the reaction of ordinary people to an exhibition of photographs showing Fractals in nature:

"In the end, Fractals may turn out to be the salvation of all those whose minds turned to stone at the name of Euclid. As one bemused visitor to the Sheffield exhibition wrote: 'What I first thought would be rather boring turns out to be rather interesting once you start looking with real energy and attention'".<sup>14</sup>

### Finding Fractals

The research into Fractals that has so far been undertaken has used a number of techniques of analysis to prove that the object under study is indeed Fractal. The micro-computer is an invaluable tool for displaying Fractal shapes for amusement, but real computing power is necessary if the purpose is to reveal the underlying dynamical system rather than simply describe the shape.

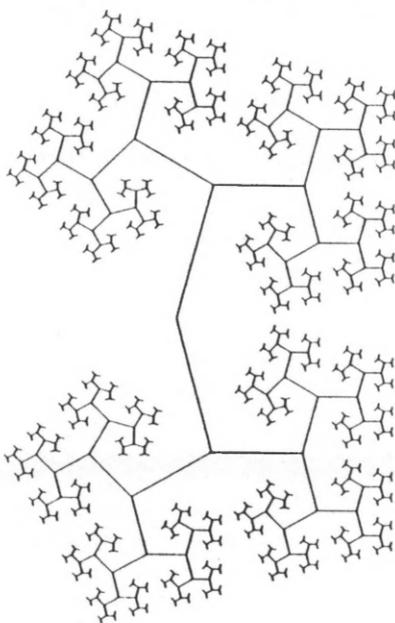
For the purpose of describing urban form as Fractals there are simpler ways. The first is by straightforward analogy where a particular form is likened to a known Fractal. Thus Batty began with a Fractal form known to the science of electrodeposition and which happened to resemble the starfish-like pattern of a city.<sup>11</sup> (fig 2). In my own research, I have used a class of tree-like Fractals called L-Systems as an analogy for the pattern of roads to be found in typical modern private housing estates - taking on board that well known cliché that modern layouts seem to demonstrate "tree-like" attributes (fig 3).

The second method is more analytical and uses a mathematical technique called the Box-Counting Method to analyse two dimensional objects for their Fractal dimensions. It is a crude measurement but the possibilities raised by this form of analysis are that the shape of a town can be quantified and expressed in such a way as to allow comparison with other urban forms and across historical time. The Fractal concept could be used as a means of testing urban designs and measuring the degree to which they resemble the overall structure of the surrounding area: i.e. a sophisticated kind of tissue analysis.<sup>12</sup>

However, there is more to the shape of urban form than its representation on a two-dimensional plan. The consideration of urban form needs to take into account the three-dimensional complexity produced by complex facades, the textures of materials, interiors or the aggregation of buildings (as on page 11). Unfortunately, the techniques for analysing shape in three dimensions as a Fractal need to be more sophisticated and necessarily more complex mathematically. Until such techniques emerge, proving that the three-dimensional Fractals exist in urban form cannot move forward. However, if the *concept* of the Fractal is found to be of use in the field of Urban Design, then the research into an appropriate *methodology* may be worth pursuing by urban designers in the future. #

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# Planning and Urban Design in the 1990s

Peter Hall

Peter Hall's paper may serve in a sense as a follow-up to the Kevin Lynch Memorial lecture, which he delivered to the Urban Design Group in 1992 (Hall 1992). It starts from the view that in the 1990s, after something like a forty year gap, planning is being again taken over by architects.

Perhaps, as Anthony Sutcliffe suggested at the London Planning History Conference in April 1994, it is a fact that architects get very interested in planning during major world slumps, because they lack architectural commissions and so think it would be interesting to fly a few planning kites (Hall 1995). That may sound cynical, but it is part of a wider and deeper phenomenon: a real shift in *Zeitgeist*.

In 1994 we celebrated the eightieth anniversary year of the Royal Town Planning Institute, 1914. That year was really just the end of the beginning of a very long and difficult process, whereby planning weaned itself from its origins in architecture and in engineering and in surveying, and grew up to become a unique combination of social science and design skills. Those interested in planning history will know that well: my own distinguished predecessor in the chair of planning at University College, Patrick Abercrombie, was the quintessential example of the designer-planner; so was another more recent predecessor, Richard Llewelyn Davies. Both saw that if planning is to be any good, it has to be more than applied architecture: architects themselves, they powerfully assisted the weaning process. But now, I believe, we are in the process of rapid retreat. For about the past half decade, driven by Prince Charles, and by his admirers and detractors alike, the state of Britain's cities is being seen more and more as a matter of how they *look*. Purely and simply that: whether it's a matter of modernist Brutalism versus Toytown Renaissance versus neo-classicism, or of litter in the streets, or of the homeless, it's all judged purely as a matter of appearances, of aesthetics.

In 1992, I pointed by way of example to the Penguin book by Richard Rogers and Mark Fisher, which was essentially the Labour Party's official environmental manifesto for the 1992 election.

**The principle of the design competition has been firmly adopted as the basis for the redesign of the South Bank - won by the Richard Rogers Partnership**

It seemed remarkable, at that point, that the Labour vision was dominated by a long chapter on a new vision for the Thames, and then another on the treatment of London's major public spaces, before any treatment of social problems in a place like Hoxton. And then, to sum it all up, another long disquisition on the value of design competitions.

Three years later, the result can only be described as amusing. John Gummer clearly knows the value of the Theory of the Emperor's Clothes as a basic principle of political behaviour, because the principle of the design competition has been firmly adopted as the basis for the redesign of the South Bank, and the winner is Richard Rogers: a proper outcome, though it might have been achieved more simply. And, here as in the wider study of the Thames, the Rogers principles, meaning the architectural approach to planning, are embodied in the new study of the Thames from Sunbury down to the Thames barrier. Planning as architecture is not merely alive and well, but is truly triumphant.

There are reasons for this, as we all know. The most obvious is the postmodern vision of the city as a place of images, images that are designed to project the city in competition with other cities. Whether one likes the postmodernist interpretation or hates it, [and that is doubtless age-related], it does rather accurately describe the way that cities, meaning their city fathers and mothers, want to project themselves in the 1990s. And that surely is the point: the architectural emphasis is all part and parcel of that brutal primary fact, which is the need to package yourself and sell yourself as a city in the brutal, competitive 1990s.

One might well argue that there are other and less trivial ways of projecting cities. The obvious fact is that this is how it gets done.



The counterfactual fact is that it need not get done this way, and could indeed get done better. We are developing these ways now. They make up a pretty effective planning system, that could get even better. In this paper I would like to discuss briefly about how we have got to where we are now; say something about the present state of the art, and then speculate about the next few years.

### Changing Objectives

First, a pedantic paragraph: what do we mean by that elusive word *planning*, in this context? Let me propose a very conventional, almost banal, definition: planning means land-use planning, that is the codification and control of land use in new development and redevelopment according to plans which then form the basis of development control decisions; but it is impossible to confine ourselves to such a restricted definition, because land-use planning inevitably reflects wider urban policy concerns in the fields of economic development, social and community policy, housing policy, transport planning, and environmental policy, to name only a few of the most important. And these links, I want to argue, are central to this discussion.

For even the briefest glance backwards will show that planning has never developed in a vacuum; it has arisen in response to very specific historic circumstances, and it has constantly adapted to changes in those circumstances. The modern planning movement (in contradistinction to ancient or classical or Renaissance town planning, which was largely concerned with aesthetics and was an outgrowth of architecture) arose almost simultaneously, in Britain as in other industrial countries, during the period 1890-1910.

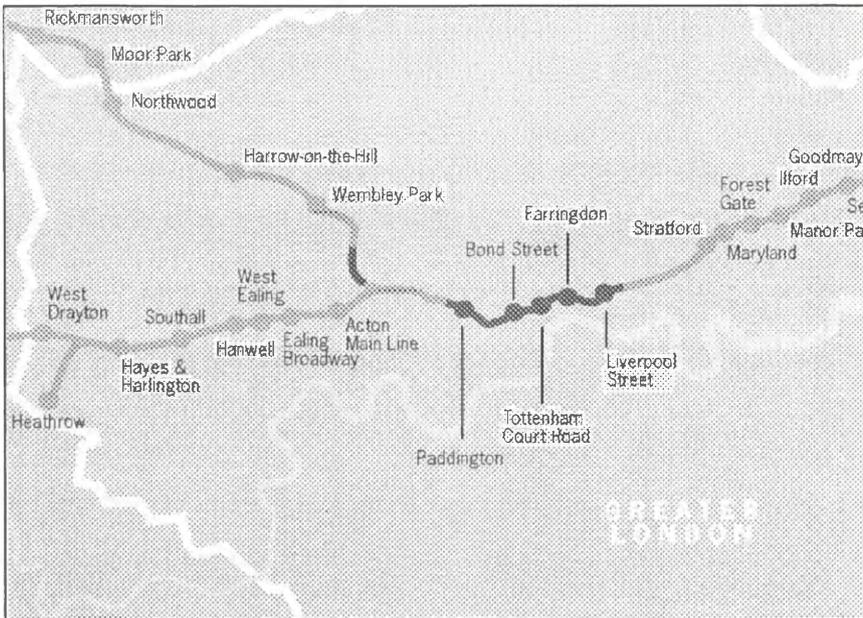
It had a very definite mission, to improve the living standards of the lower-income urban population, and it grew out of the housing reform movement of that time; in almost every country the earliest legislation combined housing and town planning.

Then, half a century later, during and after World War II, the visions of the great planning pioneers, brought more sharply into focus by wartime destruction and the concern with postwar reconstruction, provided the intellectual basis for new metropolitan blueprints: Abercrombie's two great interlocking plans for London make conscious homage to Unwin and Parker, Howard and Geddes. There was a very similar, but subtly different, pressure twenty years on, in the 1960s: a pressure that came from rapid population growth, a result especially of high and rising birth rates and the continuing attractiveness of London and the South East. That demographic imperative was the impulse behind the 1964 *South East Study* and the 1970 *South East Strategic Plan*, as it was of similar exercises in other countries such as the 1965 *Schema Directeur* for Paris; the 1966 *Second Report*, in the Netherlands; and the 1966 revision of the Stockholm Plan. The response was a continuation and indeed an extension of the policies of the 1940s: radical comprehensive reconstruction of the cities, with resulting overspill of population; planned deconcentration of people and jobs out of London and the other great conurbations, to new and expanded towns beyond the green belts.

That brings us to the 1970s, which came at the end of the expansive era and was indeed a direct response to it. The irony is that, during this decade, the 1960s style of planning immediately came under heavy attack.

The reasons will be familiar to anyone who lived and practised through those years: the counterculture which developed during the Vietnam War in America and the events of 1968 in Europe; the Club of Rome report, and the great energy shock of 1973-4. Everywhere, planning went into reverse and upside down: away from comprehensive, large-scale, strategic planning, toward conservation and bottom-up consensual decision-making. Major controversies about schemes of large-scale reconstruction - motorways in London and almost every other British city, the comprehensive reconstruction of Covent Garden, and indeed similar *causes celebres* in other European cities - characterised the new style.

Then, toward the end of the 1970s, came the first evidence of what would become the major problem of the 1980s: the structural decline of urban economies, concentrated especially in those cities (and those part of cities) that had most highly concentrated their economies on the older, traditional bases forged in the nineteenth-century industrial revolution: heavy industrial processes and small artisan workshops, inner-city port activities, railway freight. Exacerbated by the developing worldwide recession of 1979-82, but fundamentally driven by longer-term and deeper global forces - the new international division of labour, the off-shoring of industrial production, the increasing local competition - whole sections of cities saw their economies virtually stripped away, as factories closed and goods-handling activities relocated to greenfield or estuarial sites. And this came hard on the heels of the energy crisis, with its connotation that, to reduce travel, cities should again become compact.



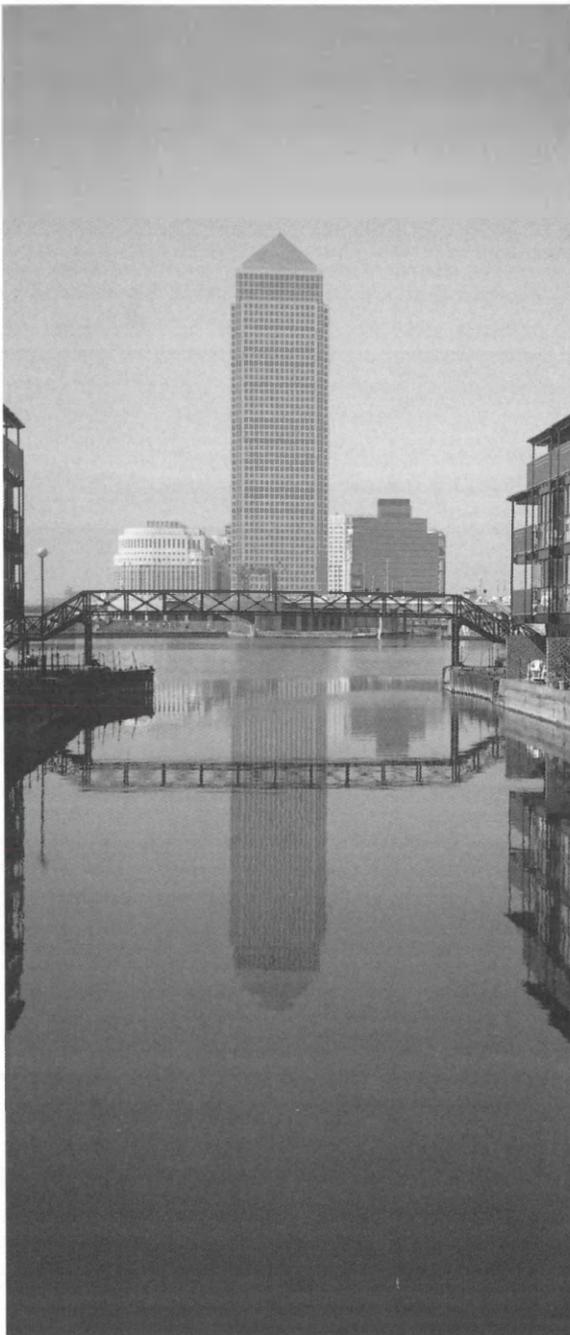
**The 1980s**

So, by 1980 there was already a major policy shift: in place of planned decentralization out of the conurbations and into the new and expanded towns, there was now a new priority to reconstruct the inner-urban fabric and to find ways of regenerating the failed inner-city economy. The Inner Cities White Paper of 1977 and Inner Urban Areas Act of 1978 marked the start of this major shift; what is interesting is that the advent of the Thatcher government in 1979 changed only the means, not the ends.

Against this background, we can more clearly understand the changes that occurred in the 1980s. It is necessary here to emphasize something that should need no emphasis at all, but in Britain we sometimes tend to be insular on this, as on other topics: the problems and priorities were far from unique to Britain. They were general throughout Europe and the United States, though the policy responses might differ from country to country, and even there we find a great deal of imitation and borrowing, even across ideological party lines. These trends and resulting problems fell into three groups: demographic; economic; and socio-political.

The demography was complex. Birth rates fell to historic low levels in the late 1970s and then rose, partly because of differentially high rates among groups who had immigrated in the previous decade and a half, which contained large numbers of young adults. At the same time, people continued to leave the cities: the net migration trend was strongly toward deconcentration. Around London and other major conurbations, entire conurbation areas went into decline, as population migrated out altogether into other neighbouring urban systems and sometimes other regions. In the London case, decentralization might be extremely complex and long-distance in character, such that the beneficiary areas might be up to 100 kilometres and more away from the parent city. But high birth rates, coupled with large-scale housing redevelopment of old industrial and port areas, slowed London's decline virtually to zero after the mid-1980s.

There were parallel economic changes, but the processes were not identical. Cities experienced net job losses, not so much because of outward migration of firms - though that happened - but more because activities closed down or contracted in the city while others opened or expanded elsewhere.



**Growth in public transport ridership, triggered a strong political demand for investment in new centrally-oriented rapid transit such as the CrossRail proposal shown above. London Docklands required the injection of very large amounts of public infrastructure investment in order to attract an even larger amount of private capital.**

These activities included especially older-established manufacturing and warehousing, which sought locations at key locations on the inter-city highway networks; ports and related activities, which relocated on estuarine locations (Tilbury, the Haven ports); high-technology manufacturing and related R&D, which was variously attracted to high-amenity locations close to attractive cities and international airports, such as London's Western Crescent; and back offices, which reconcentrated both in older urban transport nodes like Croydon and Reading. Especially in and around London, these shifts continued a trend already evident by the 1960s, which was the gradual replacement of the old uncentric metropolis by a polycentric city region extending over a wide area, whose nodes interconnected principally via road transport. We still do not completely understand this phenomenon, either its causes or its functional expression; though research is just beginning to throw light on both.

This decentralization or deconcentration is to some extent a paradox, because something contradictory was happening: in the boom of the middle and late 1980s, London and to some extent the major provincial cities enjoyed something like a boom, with speculative reconstruction of the old manufacturing and port areas to meet the needs of the growing informational economy: London's Broadgate and Docklands symbolized this change. Paradoxically, since jobs were growing in the urban cores while the population was growing in distant exurbia, this double process was accompanied both by increasing highway congestion and by growth in public transport ridership, triggering a strong political demand for investment in new centrally-oriented rapid transit such as London's Jubilee Line extension and CrossRail. Since recession struck in about 1989, there has been an abrupt reversal: the services have taken the main brunt of the job losses, and the effects have been felt not only in City of London wine bars but also in the places where the City salary cheques went, that is the growing market towns of the South East.

The socio-political aspects were of course the most obvious: the 1980s were marked by a deliberate reversal of the trends of the previous thirty to forty years: a deliberate retreat from the welfare state traditions which had been established so strongly in advanced western countries in the postwar years, and in which planning represents such a significant element. Logically, here in Britain, planning - especially strategic planning - came under suspicion, as an obstacle to "wealth creation" and an impediment to enterprise. The emphasis was on freeing entrepreneurial capacities, in the regeneration of the inner city or through new communities in the countryside.

The result was interesting: these initiatives produced the regeneration of London's docklands, yet few attempts at creating new communities survived the counter-attacks of the rural NIMBY movements. In any event, political slogans do not capture the complex reality: London Docklands required the injection of very large amounts of public infrastructure investment in order to attract an even larger amount of private capital. The rule, here as elsewhere, was public-private partnership rather than pure capitalism, all focused on relatively small areas of intense short-term physical change.

There were related changes in other areas of urban policy: the attempt to privatize public services, like public transport (through franchising and/or deregulation) and public housing (through sales to sitting tenants, and the transfer of social housing responsibility from municipalities to housing associations); and the attempt to restrict public expenditure, both at central and local levels. Stemming from right-wing ideology, they often shared some strands with left-wing anarchic thinking, and might even join hands with it, as in community design and community building. In any case, by the early 1990s such notions were occupying the centre ground of politics and policy-making. Centrally, they represented a quite specific attack on local government, whose powers would be devolved both downwards, to communities and individuals, and upwards, to central state institutions and quangos which took over the former responsibilities of local government.

Having got this far, we should perhaps congratulate ourselves that we have got through the 1980s with the planning system intact and in some ways as strong as ever. One might echo the Abbe Sieyès, who, when asked what he did during the French Revolution, said, "I survived". We are now well beyond the Planning Guidance on 2<sup>o</sup> pages of A4 or the attempts to set the Housebuilders' Federation free. I think that politicians learned a lot about politics in those years, including the fact that there was solid, very solid, political support for the planning system in just the critical areas where it mattered, that is the Tory Shire Heartlands. So it will be some time in the history of political ideas before we hear all that again (except perhaps from the Treasury). We will continue to find pressures for simplification at the implementation level (basically, for taking more development outside the sphere of planning permission). But, since moves of that kind soon prove to come up against strong political counter-opinion, there will be limits.

## Planning and Urban Policy

Where does that leave us in the mid-1990s? First, to come back to an earlier point: the extraordinary close relationships that exist, that must exist, between planning and both inner-city policy and environmental policy. With inner city policy the links are so close that to all intents and purposes they form a seamless web at both the DoE level and that of the local authorities. If urban policies are partly about money and partly about regulation, then the jobs are divided between two DoE directorates and invariably between two local authority departments. If one takes any critical policy issue like Thames Gateway or the regeneration of inner Manchester or the relationship between urban regeneration and overspill housing around almost any city, then both sides will be closely involved.

One reason for being concerned about this is that over the next few years the relationships could become closer and more complex rather than less so. A major fact of life is that roughly within the lifetime of this government, assuming a reasonably full lifespan for it, we will see an end to most of the UDCs and the rise of English Partnerships. EP will be effectively disbarred from operating in UDC territory, at least so long as the UDCs exist, which will create a rather interesting set of problems if the UDCs die with their work half undone. On that, your bet is as good as mine: we've seen a remarkable rise in what Keynes called 'animal spirits' among the property developers recently, but it seems to apply chiefly to number one prime sites rather than the more interesting peripheral areas which the UDCs are handling. Basically, can we see large-scale spontaneous private redevelopment of London's Royals or of Manchester's Pomona Docks within the next two to three years? One must doubt it; it is going to require a public carrot, at least in the form of basic site clearance and preparation of the more difficult inner urban sites. So surely, EP will have to assume the UDC mantle here, or as much as they care to take over.

There are at least two problems here. One is that these huge sites are going to be redeveloped, when they get redeveloped, on the basis of quite new activities, different from the fairly standardized commercial office developments of the 1980s. We could be talking about large-scale entertainment, cultural or educational centres. The other is that they may require new kinds of public-private partnership, the ground rules for which we are still trying to work out. For instance: suppose we want to persuade a major university development in the Royals or develop a Media Park in Manchester, how exactly would we (including especially EP) start bringing the different parties, both public and private together?

How is the funding package to be developed, considering that EP's remit is strictly to prepare land? We hear constant reports that the private sector is disillusioned with progress on the partnership schemes, first presaged in Norman Lamont's Autumn statement in 1992. Were they expecting too much? Were they expecting no risk and virtually all the profit? Whatever the case, we do not seem to have the right formula.

And this is compounded in cases where - as in Manchester Docks, or still more in the Thames Gateway - it may need basic infrastructure before the developments can happen. Who pays for large-scale Metrolink extensions into the Trafford UDC area? Or for the Union Metro through the Royals? As we must all know in the English regions, the DoT have so far proved fairly resistant to financing even the first stages of new public transport schemes in the English conurbations and cities - though hopefully (who knows?) the recent reorganization, bringing all infrastructure under one directorate, may bring about a minor revolution.

The reason for stressing this point is that, over the remainder of this decade, one major set of decisions will concern the rules within which EP are to operate - on which, we have already gone quite a long way - and then the actual decision process on investing in the sites. Far from being exclusively inner-city sites, many of them are likely to be urban fringe locations like Manchester Eastlands or Thames Gateway. They will thus relate intimately to the formulation of regional guidance and to the development of structure plans within that guidance. The money element and the planning guideline element will come into ever closer relationship. How to handle this effectively will need some close attention.

**Planning and Environment**

Discussion of DoT brings us to the parallel relationship between planning and environment. This so far is much less direct than with urban policy, but is becoming more so every day, partly because of the impact of all the directives flooding out from Brussels, partly because the DoE are becoming much more prescriptive in the field. (As witness, look at PPG-13, which is one of the more notable policy milestones to have emerged from the DoE in recent years). There will be a need here to deepen the policies through regional guidance and then through structure plans and UDPs, in particular to render them fully consistent. To take an example: PPG-6 and PPG-13 say that on sustainability grounds, we should be against out-of-town shopping and should encourage development in city centres; and that approach has been supported by Ministerial statements over the past year.

But PPG-13 is also all about reducing emissions caused by private motoring. Suppose it emerges that city centre development will mean increasing the amount of congested and polluting traffic? And suppose it also entails demolishing bits of our historic built heritage? How do we add all that up? I quote PPG-13 here not out of opposition to it (on the contrary), but in order to argue that *mapping* the prescriptions down into real on-the-ground policy may prove far harder than we think.

There is, however, an even wider, hence even harder, question. Michael Breheny of Reading University has published a paper, using the ECOTEC results to conclude that over the last thirty years, population trends in this country have taken us steadily away from a sustainable form of urban development (Breheny 1995). Put simply, fewer people are now living in places that are economical in resource use, more of them in extravagant places. Since that is the bad news in his paper, we should also stress his good news, which is that the overall effect on energy consumption is not very huge. Now, given those findings, what do planners in the DoE and in the planning authorities do? Do they in effect say, "You wretched people of England, you have sinned and we intend to return you to the paths of righteousness by returning you all to high-density city living"? This hardly appears to be practicable politics. What could be practicable would be to spend resources on developing schemes of urban development, from the sub-regional down to the neighbourhood, that might accord with what we know now about sustainable development, and then incorporate that in our policies, from regional guidance to development control appeals. And, on that last point, I should reiterate a previous plea: we are going to have to be more careful that the policies embodied at these levels, whether in regional guidance or local plans or decisions on planning appeals, really square up with the general planning guidance.

These points - about the articulation between planning policies and environmental policies - need stressing, because we appear to be passing across a major political watershed in this country, perhaps indeed in all advanced countries. The old conflicts between the capitalists and the proletariat are being replaced by new political fault lines of a complex character, one of the most important of which is the conflict between, on the one hand, wealth creation (hence the demands for deregulation and privatization, which paradoxically brings with it a need for more built-in regulation) and, on the other hand, the campaign for more control over the environment and related standards such as health.



**Planning and urban policy: Basic infrastructure may be needed before developments can happen - for example, who pays for large scale Metrolink extensions into the Trafford UDC area?**

This is not exactly a new conflict - one can find it one hundred and fifty years ago, in the first industrial revolution - but latterly it seems to have come to occupy a rather central area in politics.

And it does not easily map onto current party political lines: this Tory government says it is for deregulation, and tries periodically to have bonfires of controls, but on the other hand it finds itself agreeing to more and more of it; one can suspect that a Labour or LibDem government would find itself in exactly the same dilemma, albeit with subtle ideological shading. This is basically because the conflict is an endemic and basic one: it is between wealth creation - call it the producer interest - and quality of life, including the quality of public goods - call it the consumer interest. It may occur for the same group or even the same individual. (We dislike officious health inspectors, but we dislike salmonella poisoning even more; we do not like fussy planning regulations, but we do want to stop our neighbour ruining the view out of our window; we are all sick of traffic jams, but we will organise enthusiastically to stop a new by-pass next door to us.) So the resulting conflicts are going to continue, and the Department of the Environment is going to find itself in the middle of most of them.

One reason for thinking this is that, apart from the inevitable business pressure groups, the Treasury will fight for the wealth creation case. They therefore seem likely to go on sniping at the planning system, which they tend to see as one of a series of regulatory brakes on the progress of the economy. So planners should be seeking to develop their case that the overall economic effect of the system is at worst neutral and very probably benign - even though we know the most basic fact is that one cannot quantify, ever, most of the positive effects of the system. We very badly need some continuing attempt to record planning costs and benefits within some common metric, quantifying and monetizing where we safely can. The same goes for environmental considerations.

So those are critical points of articulation: between Planning and Urban Policy, and between Planning and Environment. But there is one final area that will surely need closer attention in the next couple of years, from planners both within the Department of the Environment and those in the local authorities: the sequence of planning advice, planning guidance, structure plan, local plan, and development control decisions.

## Implementing the System

Here, surely, we have achieved something like a triumph in recent years: a triumph that has gone unheralded and almost unnoticed in the wider world. We have developed a very neat and effective sequence. First, the system of reciprocal regional advice from Standing Conferences and forums and the like, and regional guidance from the DoE's regional offices, now part of the integrated regional office structure introduced in April 1994. Then, within that framework, there is the production of UDPs for the metropolitan areas, and of structure plans for the rest. Within that, in the latter areas, there is the preparation of local plans. And these plus the UDPs, since the 1990 and 1991 Acts, are really critical; for, in the new plan-led system they will set the crucial criteria for development control decisions and determination of appeals. It is really quite a neat system, like a set of nested Russian dolls. It is actually, and still more potentially, a well-articulated system in which each level provides the framework, the critical parameters, for the succeeding stage. It has its critics, particularly the lack of any equivalent of the structure plans for London and the other great conurbations, but for London this gap has been filled very effectively by the advice from LPAC, which could provide the basis for a kind of regional guidance and structure plan all in one.

Now one should ask what exactly the system has to achieve at each stage. At the regional advice-and-guidance stage, it has to set the broad distribution of population and activity, including that most critical and contentious element, the planned provision of new housing area by area. At the structure plan stage, it has to map those elements down to a more precise, though still broad and diagrammatic, set of locations. At the local plan stage, it has to translate those locations into a detailed set of land use allocations.

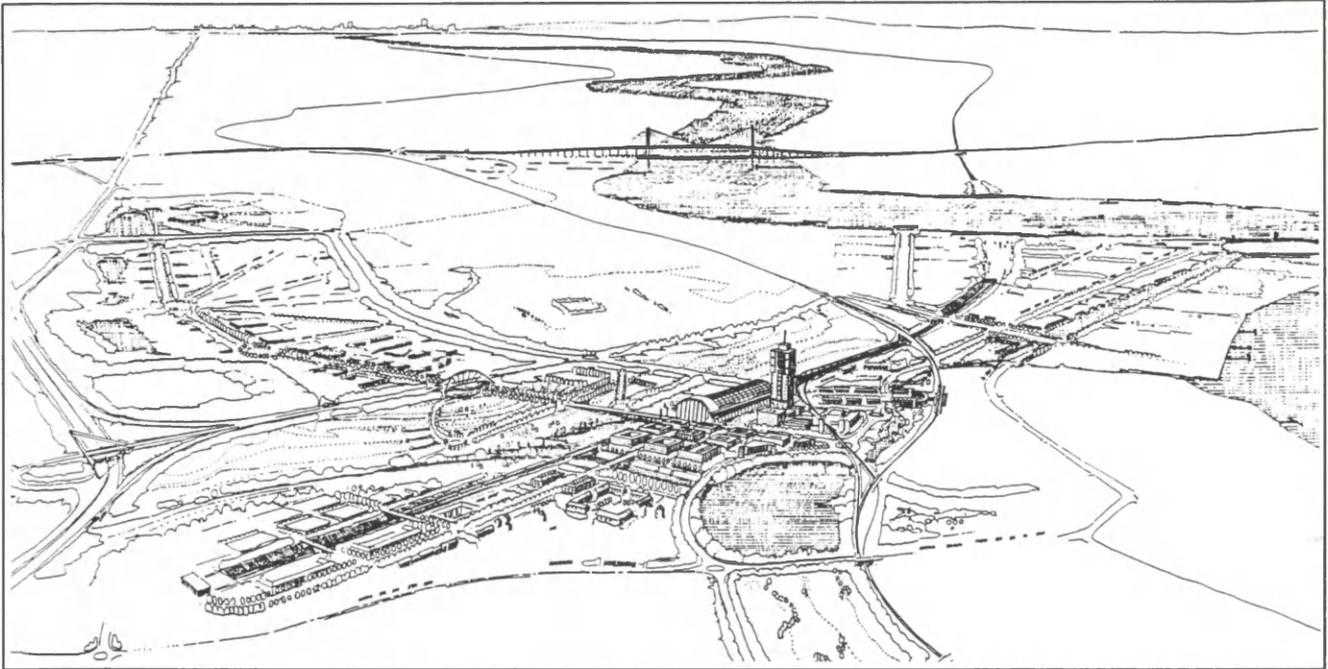
Everyone knows that this is sometimes easy, often difficult. There are political conflicts, small-p political conflicts, between the interests of localities and the interests of the wider collectivity. They often express themselves most contentiously over the housing allocations, though they can also concern other types of development. They may occur as between counties and the DoE regional offices, and as between districts and counties, with the two sets of conflicts knocking on from one level to the other.

## Regional Guidance

The main problems I see in implementing and developing this system (and I should stress that all this is a very personal view) are three.

The first is that we need to get more beef into the regional guidance. Now that it is fuller, I sense that it is also blander. We surely do not need to get back to those 2° pages. We - specifically the Government Regional Offices - do need to be somewhat more definite and prescriptive. Above all, they need to start mapping those general principles, embodied in the PPGs, onto the specific geographies of the regions. How do we implement PPG-13 in the very different contexts of Greater London, to take one of the Department's current priorities, where they have received a very positive challenge in the excellent LPAC advice, or of the rural South West, where every day there are challenges in the form of new superstore proposals? This could surely be very creative and exciting work.

Above all - and here I must declare an interest, as Chairman of the Town and Country Planning Association - I think that the regional guidance documents will need to be more creative and more specific about key strategic issues, including the vexed one of new communities. One of the most ironic but also one of the saddest aspects of the 1980s saga was the way in which Secretaries of State urged the volume builders to come out with their proposals, in the sure expectation that they would get Ministerial blessing, and then turned and fled as soon as they felt the resultant political heat. What they learned, of course, was that planning was political and that Tory politics were not just a matter of pleasing the volume builders and their potential customers. But that has left a political vacuum in which only a few bold authorities, such as Cambridgeshire and Hampshire, are still toying with the notion of new communities in their structure plans. Now it could very well be, and one should be open-minded on the point, that further research on sustainable urban forms may show that new communities are not a good idea. The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution has thrown down a strong challenge on that and other points (GB Royal Commission 1994). There is general agreement among the few real experts: new communities should take specific forms: that they be grouped in quite substantial clusters along public transport spines, for instance. That would pose quite a challenge for policy makers at both central and local government levels. Whatever the case, we must doubt that for long we can continue to put our collective heads in the sand and hope that we can resolve our regional housing targets simply by continuing to develop new housing in penny packets on old railway sidings and old factory sites. Eventually, the land will run out and we will be staring the problem in the face. It will occur as soon as the housing market really lifts again, as lift it will, perhaps in 1996, perhaps 1997. We should be preparing for it in regional guidance.



**Local Government Changes**

The second is that the whole process of regional guidance and structure plan formulation could be enormously complicated by Local Government changes. We have been discussing built-in conflicts. A local government system will never remove these conflicts; but, in considering reorganization, we should ask whether it will make things easier or harder, better or worse.

That question is difficult to answer, because the proposals are quite devilishly complex. In this country, ever since the late nineteenth century, our local government system might not have been the best possible, but at least it was reasonably standardized and reasonably comprehensible. We will now have an extraordinary mosaic of different arrangements from one county to another, and even within the same county. So it is very difficult to generalise.

And that raises the crucial question of how they are going to produce the equivalent of structure plans.

Now, we all accept that we don't want to make a fetish of consistency. But one cannot help feeling that if the essential geography is similar, and the resulting planning problems are similar, then the solutions ought to be similar; otherwise, they are simply inconsequential. And it should worry everyone that, time after time, the proposals are manifestly going to make it more difficult to achieve the kind of broad strategic planning for which we introduced the Structure Plans in 1968.

For again, though there is no consistency, there is a general predominant drift: it is to keep the cities within their existing boundaries, so that there will be no one authority responsible for handling the questions of peripheral development and green belt preservation, which are the meat and drink of so much of our everyday life in planning. Thus Bristol will stay within its current boundaries, as will Leicester, even though their own physically contiguous suburbs extend far into neighbouring authorities; and there will be no structure plan authority above them.

Frankly, we should be concerned about how this is going to work. The Commission themselves are quite clear: they set out their answer in a report of December 1993, *Renewing Local Government in the English Shires: A Progress Report*. It is a very good, very plain report. But it spent a lot of time arguing with itself, indicating rather clearly that the Commissioners themselves were unhappy about what they were recommending. If they were worried, then we should be doubly worried. The problems are going to be shifted upstairs, to the Standing Conferences and to the Integrated Offices. Indeed, I would say the strong probability is that the Regional Guidance will subsume the structure plan process over wide areas of the country. But that will not necessarily resolve the problem. First, the Standing Conferences are going to become much larger bodies because they will have to include all the unitary authorities; there cannot be much chance that they would allow their interests to be represented by someone else. And this is going to mean some exponent of those numbers in terms of the difficulty of agreeing. So much more of the Regional Advice would be hedged about by reservations and minority reports, which up to now has been mercifully avoided.

Second, the Government Regional Offices will inevitably have to be expanded to reflect the much bigger workload, and this could well reduce some of the calculated financial savings from the exercise. In any event, it would mean that decisions now taken by elected local government would inevitably be shifted to central government, albeit mediated in some way by formal local authority groupings. It would be a further step in the slow decline of local government as an independent part of our democratic system, and, like many others, I would view that as reprehensible.

The profound pity about all this is that it is happening just at the point when we have at last got the planning sequence so splendidly right: as right as anything we have enjoyed in the forty eight years since the 1947 Act. It cannot do much for the good of that system; it might well do it quite grievous harm. And there do not seem to be many knowledgeable people who think differently. So I find myself among those who would wish it wasn't happening.

**Effectiveness of the System**

The third topic which we ought to brood upon is the effectiveness of the new plan-led system. True, these are early days yet. But, in so far as we do have new-style development plans in place up and down the country, we ought to be looking rather closely to see whether they are delivering what we expected of them. In particular, we should be asking whether in practice local authorities are following the plan in giving or refusing permission or, on the other hand, they are still trying to invoke other material grounds, which could land them in all kinds of legal challenges once the system begins to bed down.

**Early concept for development around the new Ebbsfleet International Station in the Thames Gateway corridor.**  
**David Lock Associates**

In parallel, and above all, we ought to be asking how easily the system can react to the unforeseen development: to the arrival of a major job-creating proposal from an outside company at a time of high unemployment, for instance. For, if there is a really fundamental criticism of the new plan-led approach, it is that it runs completely counter to the freewheeling, entrepreneurial local authority culture that governments have been trying to encourage throughout the 1980s, whereby localities compete to encourage job-creating development rather than the reverse. Many of the most contentious and difficult planning cases that come up for decision in the DoE are of that ilk: for some major new factory in the middle of a green belt, coming from a company which is threatening to take its business away: the wealth creation/quality of life dilemma, again. One can of course argue that in the new system, such cases will either get called in or go through the appeal/inquiry system, so passing the buck back to the hapless Secretary of State and his officials; but there is the ever-present danger of legal challenges in the light of the rather strict wording in the Act. (The CPRE might have a lot of fun in future with some of the green belt decisions, if it cared to). In any event, one outcome could be that local authorities find themselves having to make rather frequent modifications to their plans, which could be time and resource consuming.

There is a related point, and it directly relates once again to that wealth creation/quality of life dilemma. It is the increasing force of European directives, especially in the environmental field, and above all having to do with the protection of wildlife and of habitat.

These directives go in the same direction as the plan-led system, but even more so: they do not easily admit of compromises or derogations, and so they impose a highly codified set of rules upon a system that was traditionally based on pragmatic trade-offs within an economic rather than a legalistic framework. Key decisions are beginning to emerge, especially in coastal areas, where the flexibility of our traditional system is now unhappily challenged and compromised. It is far from clear what can be done about this, save to work within the cracks and around the edges to soften some of these rigidities. But, given that these are highly political decisions with a number of doughty players on the environmental side of the field, it is surely not going to be at all easy.

### Urban Design Implications

What are the implications of all this for urban design? I would like to stress my non-qualifications for the task. But let me close with some personal speculations.

At present, we face a paradox. On the one hand, we have the change in the *Zeitgeist*, the idea of planning as design, and the new emphasis on competitions between designers as the basis for competition between cities: the approach embodied in the DoE's City Challenge and City Pride initiatives. On the other hand we have the new sequence of planning, the Russian dolls approach, coupled with the new plan-led system. The entire emphasis of that system is going to be on legal codification, on unambiguity, on sticking to what the plan says. It will not be exactly easy to combine these two approaches. It may well be possible to get design creativity out of this, but will be tricky.

Further to complicate it, there is the question of funding. Planning, we should constantly remind ourselves, is essentially a legal process; it does not say, is essentially not supposed to say, anything about money. But throughout its history, especially in the biggest and most challenging projects, it has inevitably become tangled up with questions of resources. This time round the money is going to come through government, in the form of the Single Regeneration Budget and the Urban Development Corporations and English Partnerships, levering in other money from the private sector. The question is how we simultaneously get a good design solution and a solution that proves viable to both the public funders and the private investors. It will not be easy.

The acid test will probably come first in London: on the South Bank where Richard Rogers is already appointed, in the Royal Docks where development will soon start in the form of the first urban village and the new Exhibition Centre, and at key sites down the Thames Gateway Corridor including Rainham Marshes and the vast development around the new Ebbsfleet international train station. Thames Gateway illustrates in almost cartoon form the questions I've just been talking about in the abstract: the question of how you go from regional and sub-regional guidance, in this case the Framework, to unitary plans and to urban design projects, all within the constraint of public-private funding. It will provide a set of examples for the rest of the country to follow. So it is critical that we get it right there.

Those then are the issues. They provide quite an agenda for the remainder of this decade and this century. Time is not on our side, as the new projections of household formation - 4.4 million additional households in England by 2016 - should remind us. The one good news about the recession is that it has dampened the pressures for development and redevelopment, and thus given us a breathing-space in which to think. But we should not expect it to last much longer, and we need to be intellectually prepared.#

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# The Urban Design Process

Jon Rowland

Jon Rowland's paper begins by asking why urban design has become so important recently and defines the essential parts of the urban design process.

Why is urban design becoming more important? Why have people like the Secretary of State, Mr Gummer, or the opposition spokesman, Mark Fisher, been using the words?

I'd like to think that this has come about for a number of reasons.

- The Urban Design Group's (UDG) activities over the last few years, promoting the idea of urban design across the professions;
- Recent initiatives by Richard MacCormac, when he was President of the RIBA, and Martin Bradshaw, Civic Trust Director and ex-president of the RTPI - both members of the UDG;
- An architectural advisor and a planning advisor to the Secretary of State, who are both members of the UDG;
- London Planning Advisory Committee's (LPAC) report on Urban Quality;
- New research on design guidelines, soon to be launched by the DoE both carried out by consultants who are members of the UDG.

It may be because over the last few years we have come to see an increasing concern by Government with delivering more effective assistance to urban areas. The end result has been the City Challenge programme. Really the first time that local authority departments have had to work together - with the community and with the private sector - to produce a *vision* of the area, a *strategy* of how to attain the vision, a *business plan* that sets out how and when the funds become available, and a *set of mechanisms* that enable implementation to take place.

The success of City Challenge has led to the Integrated Regional Budgets, co-ordinated by the new Regional Government offices made up of an integrated team from the various Government departments. This is a watershed in Government policy. Finally the opportunity for co-ordinated action! Could this be the beginning of a broad, some would say, team approach to the management of urban change?

Another element in the changing climate is the planning guidance framework which is starting to recognise the idea for interdependence and the need to break down barriers between the sectors to reach

a common goal. I believe that perhaps one of the reasons that urban design is now being considered (some would say re-discovered), is its integrative role.

For those of us who have been involved with urban regeneration this comes as a welcome bonus. For too long the emphasis has been on economic objectives and planning gains at the expense of the quality of environment. If there is one thing we've learnt, it is that regeneration takes a long time and that if we don't get the quality right at the start of the process, a major opportunity is lost. Urban Design with its advocacy of co-ordinating disciplines is an important tool in helping local authorities, developers and funders maximise the overall benefits of urban regeneration.

How can we benefit from this situation? Well one way is to understand how to use urban design as a tool that can help improve our built environment.

## Defining Urban Design

Michael Wilford defined urban design as

"A clear physical expression of the community's hopes and intentions through the medium of urban design is essential for the communication of a *consensus image* of the city of the future".

David Gosling sees urban design

"not to be a series of statutory proposals but rather a prospectus to engage the interest of the existing community, local authorities and potential investors in promoting a rational and imaginative development".

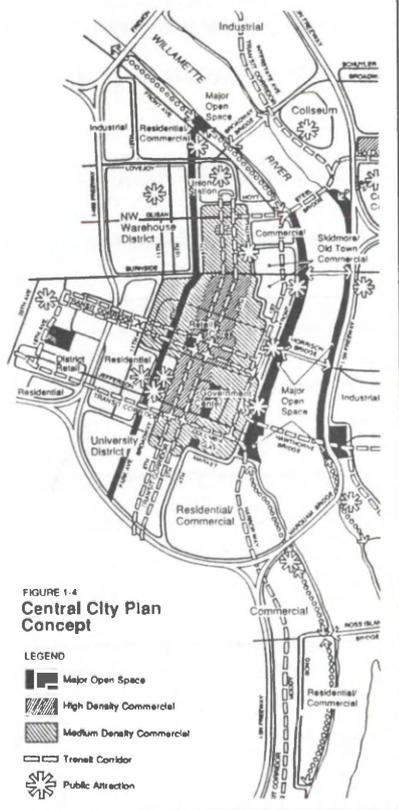
We need to forget the way the environment has been divided up between the professions. Urban design brings together the professions, and it operates in a 'popular', people context.

- Urban Design is not architecture writ large; rather it is an integrated approach.
- It addresses the public realm, dealing with the structure of development, and the space between buildings. It is about the physical design of the public domain.
- Urban Design deals with the design management of development, which includes such aspects as height, massing, scale, creating character and diversity, all in three dimensional forms.
- Urban Design helps re-interpret the grain of the city, balancing urban capacity with the fabric of the city using pragmatic, understandable systems and concepts. It is what Bernard Tschumi calls "part of the vision of the City as a whole, rather than an accumulation of zones and pockets".

## Central City-wide Fundamental Design Guidelines

The goals and objectives of Central City Design Review are:

- Encourage urban design excellence in the Central City.
- Integrate urban design and preservation of our heritage into the process of Central City development.
- Enhance the character of Portland's Central City districts.
- Promote the development of diversity and areas of special character within the Central City.
- Establish an urban design relationship between the Central City districts and the Central City as a whole.
- Provide for a pleasant, rich and diverse pedestrian experience in the Central City.
- Provide for the humanization of the Central City through promotion of the arts.
- Assist in creating a 24-hour Central City which is safe, humane and prosperous.
- Assure that new development is at a human scale and that it relates to the character and scale of the area and the Central City.



Top: goals and

objectives of

Central City

Design Review

City of Portland

Oregon

Below: Central

City Plan

Concept, Portland

- Urban Design is about the enduring principles of 'people friendliness', access, orientation, robustness and sensitivity that enable us to create a 'sense of place'.

But I also believe urban design has to include the need to understand and respond to social and economic culture. In a pluralistic society such as ours that means reflecting different needs and aspirations, mixing uses and activities. That also means *designing* and filling the spatial structure with activities, vitality and all those things that make a city a worthwhile place. The objective is to enable us to enhance the physical, visual, and social characteristics which we think important - those elements that give us the great sensations of wonder, comfort, excitement, relaxation, interaction, curiosity and above all a "sense of place".

This 'holistic' view is critical if we are to move forward and start proposing the idea of a new urban agenda.

### Making it Happen

If we are trying to achieve this integrated agenda, what is the gap between present practices and this goal?

The existing framework is currently provided by the local plan or the UDP. This sets out the type of development that is acceptable in certain situations. These uses are set out in words or in a two dimensional way on a plan of the borough - or sometimes on a plan of a critical area of the borough, such as a town centre. There are few examples of three dimensional interpretations of these areas. Yet Abercrombie was finding ways of illustrating plans in this way fifty years ago.

Planning is not very pro-active and urban design is not part of the usual vocabulary. At the moment the problem for a local authority is that whilst it can deal with blobs on the plan indicating uses - and it can deal with brick details, fenestration, and so on, there are few mechanisms to bridge these aspects or relate them to reality on the ground.

The alternative to a traditional, planning and zoning exercise is to look at the qualitative aspects of the area, and the interdependence between the different elements affecting development, such as transport, economic development, informal activities, art and so on.

I believe there are six interdependent parts to the process.

- Establishing goals
- Urban Design audit
- Urban Design framework
- Design briefing
- Urban Design guidelines
- Creating a vision

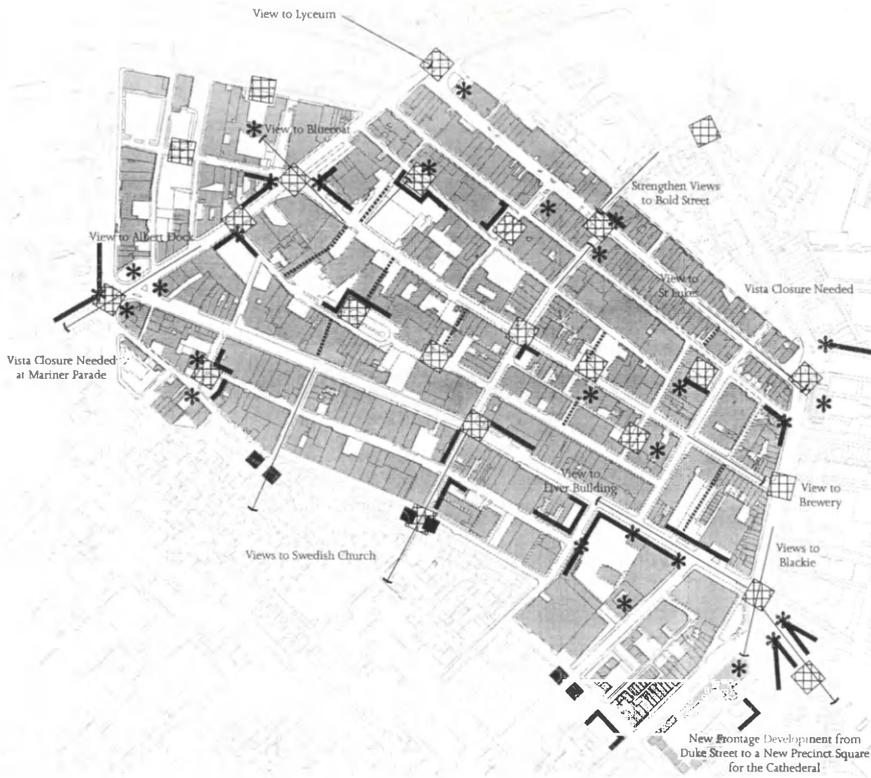
### Establishing Goals

Some would say the first thing is to establish the goals and ambitions of the town or city. For instance LPAC's London - World City project is exactly that. London wants its role to be a world city. That sets the parameters for the character it wants to achieve. But on a smaller scale some towns are now getting around to asking themselves what sort of place they want to be in 10-15 years time - a quiet market town, a major regional service centre, or a cultural focus. This is not just a mission statement but includes an understanding of the future spatial implications for the area - the impact of infrastructure investment, the need for quality spaces, and the idea of areas of significance where care and attention is needed. The Goals will inform the process that will lead to a vision that in turn informs the planning and other policies of the local authority.

That may be over ambitious. For most towns it may be more productive to identify those areas that are critical to what may be termed the character of the town. It may be the town centre, or a high street. Establishing goals is also the first leg of what is essentially a partnership route. Common visions are no good if they are not based on common goals.

For instance, the recent work done on the South Bank exemplifies this. There the common goal is to improve the environment, commensurate with its new role as a gateway into London, and to create an overall identity and "sense of belonging" to the area. That common goal is actually made up of a series of coinciding agendas generated by businesses, cultural centres and residents which are related to such aspects as traffic, homelessness, shopping, parking, landscaping, security and orientation. The goals included the perception that the area should become:

- a desirable cultural destination;
- a place of work with emphasis on media and cultural industries;
- a place with a lively residential population;
- a place with open space and riverside walkways;
- a friendly, clean, colourful, safe, dynamic and diverse area.



**KEY**

-  Possible place
-  View/Vista
-  Landmark
-  Strengthen frontage
-  Minor gateway
-  Possible link

**An Urban Design Audit**

The second element is an Urban Design Audit that looks at such aspects as:

- strengths and weaknesses
- hot spots
- capacity and potential
- UDATs

Such an audit can look at strengths and weaknesses as well as a range of indicators such as spaces, animation, routes, movements, constraints and so on; not just in physical terms but in terms of social, cultural and economic activities.

So understanding vistas and views needs to be accompanied by understanding how the market sees the area; establishing the range of uses needs to be juxtaposed with the way such spaces would be used around the clock.

We need to remember that the quality of a place is defined as much by what people do there as by the physical attributes of the area.

Such an audit can identify what are the positive characteristics that give an area its quality. Is it its sense of continuity; its consistency or disorder; its height to width ratios or landscaping; its mix of uses or those of its surrounds, its access to infrastructure or its road pattern?

Such an audit can also identify the negative aspects, where strengthening of character is needed. A checklist of qualitative aspects can be established among a recognised set of urban design principles.

From these a judgement can be made about the robustness of character. It's a type of threshold analysis which helps define the amount of change an area can take. A high street, for instance, may be able to cope with a lot of change because of its activity. A Georgian terrace will be much more sensitive. This form of appraisal needs to be analytical and where appropriate, prescriptive.

**Hotspots**

This type of integrated audit is a useful tool in identifying what we might call "hot-spots" - where the overlaying of issues leads to sets of priorities that might not normally emerge. Certainly this was the case with recent work completed for the Bethnal Green City Challenge.

Such an audit can help determine where investment can best be made, generating the most benefits. These might relate to safety, jobs, development or an improved public realm.

**Capacity and Potential**

Part of this urban design auditing can also be seen as establishing the capacity of an area, identifying development potential and implications. These are simple appraisal techniques that can set the design and management context for future development or improvement, help the local authorities guide developers, and set down the parameters around which discussions about plot ratio, scale, massing, and other guidelines can take place.

This means an understanding of rate, yields and the developer's vocabulary. The context of the area may determine the capacity. If that is so, this may require flexibility by local authorities on such aspects as standards for car parking or open space. The urban fabric may need to be the guiding factor. Recent work in Liverpool illustrates this where the urban fabric will determine appropriate parking standards. Where there is little urban grain left, the context may need to be created.

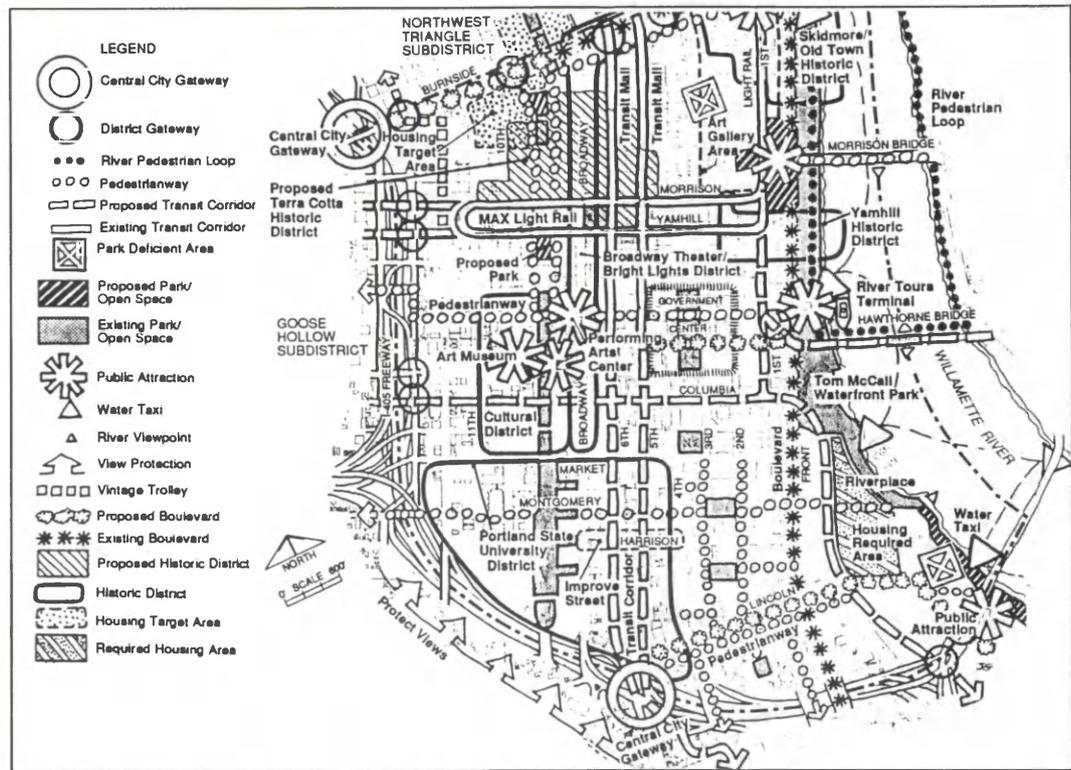
**UDATs**

A different type of audit can establish the critical issues that need addressing. This exercise can take a number of forms. For instance the idea of UDATs, Urban Design Action Teams, has recently emerged as a participating form of agenda-setting that identifies the key issues. This allows developers, residents, landowners and businesses and most importantly different local authority departments who often do not talk to each other, to work together to define what needs to be achieved and points towards ideas, process and mechanisms.

Business in the Community has been carrying out a form of this in Southwark. The Urban Design Group was responsible for the UDAT of Wood Green, Haringey. There have been other community orientated alternative plans such as the alternative Kings Cross plan and that for the Royal Docks. UDATs as a form of audit have to be carefully handled. They can be "tainted" by particular interests using the format and vocabulary of the UDAT, but not the commitment or independence.

**Left: one of the layers of the Urban Design Audit for Bold Street, Liverpool**

**Right: Urban Design concepts for part of the Downtown area Portland**



However, as a means of engaging the relevant parties and professions it is an extremely positive vehicle and one that will become more important in the next few years, as a form of consultation.

**An Urban Design Framework**

An Urban design audit can inform an urban design framework. This takes on the issues and indicates the means of achieving them and enhancing or maintaining character over time - together with costs. It also provides the structure which enables development to be inserted "comfortably".

In the Gun Quarter area of Birmingham the character of a once thriving local industry was dying. Only by connection to the city centre can the area revive but this means changing the character to a more self sustaining, mixed-use environment. Enough of the diversity is there to enable further development to reflect it and respond to the new factors. An urban design framework was required to assist the city in establishing criteria for acceptable development, and to give them a vision to which they, the Birmingham Business Community, and those investing in the area could respond.

An urban design framework is not necessarily bound by land use. Indeed there is an argument against zoning, separating places of work from places for houses or services. But instead, to identify areas as having a propensity for residential development, or commercial development.

The idea of a "Quarter" combining the necessities of life within easy walking distance is being revived. The project in the Gun Quarter in Birmingham was concerned with achieving this. The urban design framework aimed to reduce some of the diversity of form and establish a more compatible visual language. This is a different form of zoning - where, overall scale, massing and mix is more important than use functions. It points the way to the idea of a return to looser fitting, multi-functional buildings in a mixed use area.

**Changing Components**

An urban design framework is a dynamic structure and as such it brings into question the changing components of our urban environment. These are elements that once provided the fixes in our cities.

Aldo Rossi has said that 'memory' of the city resides in its monuments, and that without them the city is no longer special. Our problem today is that we build no monuments. No war memorials, no churches, no libraries or major civic buildings, no banks - just holes in the wall - no formal parks, no traditional elements that would give a structure to our townscape. Where we do use them they are meaningless. I'm not sure what our new monuments are - Tesco Barns, shopping malls?

If monuments are one component then around them is a second element - something we can call urban texture. This is a sort of broadly homogeneous wallpaper that fleshes out the basic urban structure.

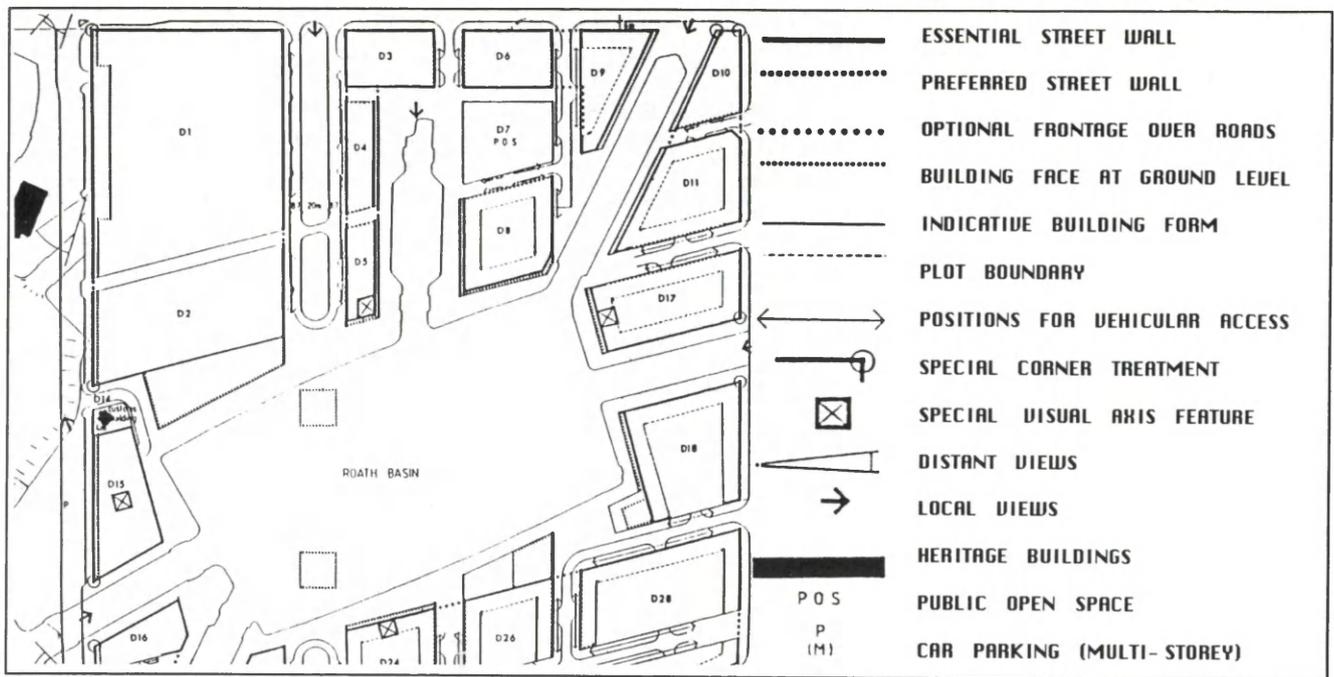
That texture is an intrinsic part of the character - and it is how the streets and rows of houses are put together. When the texture and monuments come together special places such as squares or high streets are created. In the absence of new monuments some architecture has tried to take on that role in an aggressive form of display. It may be better to get the backdrop right to enable the special to shine.

There are three key issues:

- to create a public realm that is accessible, manageable and pleasant to be in;
- to generate an environment that encourages activities to take place;
- to ensure a consistency of treatment, landscape, signage and information so as to encourage sense of belonging and "place".

Addressing these urban design issues will involve a more integrated view of the public realm, and similar co-ordinated policies to encourage street vitality, active frontages, mixed uses, safety and security as well as the need for traffic calming and management to assist access.

The point about an urban design framework is that it can set a structure for the public realm but also a structure for action. The framework is not a traditional fixed master plan in terms of land use, rather it is a means of encouraging appropriate development that contributes to the "well-being" of the city. It also operates on a long timescale. So incrementalism becomes important.



**Design Briefing**

The Framework helps define a briefing process. That process in turn includes guidelines. Currently local authorities, if they are able, establish a development brief for their critical areas. The brief is based on a set of pre-determined land uses, resonates with local plan policies and concentrates on standard densities or car parking requirements. It is essentially two dimensional. But briefing should not be seen as just words. The ecology of the city is more complex.

For instance, a recent development brief for a housing site in an East London Borough drew attention to the requirement for a 4 bedroom house to be accompanied by 3 car spaces and 25% for visitors. In an area of low car ownership this is very familiar and the result is an urban desert. Similarly, open space is given as a ratio of estimated population based on habitable rooms, not use. How the open space is utilised is not defined. The end product is lots of useless space around winding cul-de-sacs, or parking courts, related only to visibility splays. It is the interrelationship between these elements that is so often ignored. Each local authority department, jealous of its power puts forward an array of uncoordinated rules, which seem to be accepted without question.

So let's see the demise of development briefs as such and take on board urban design concerns, setting out not only context and linkages, public space, traffic and transport issues but also design principles and management of the public realm. As with the idea of an urban design framework this advice should be through drawings, interpretative sketches and models.

This was also very much the attitude of LDDC at Surrey Quays where Richard MacCormac, Jeremy Dixon and others provided urban design briefs for developers to follow.

Whilst development briefing is well established, urban design briefing is a new field for the local authorities. Some elements of the private sector, use it to guarantee the character and value of their own development - Broadgate, Bourneville and Milton Keynes are some examples.

In Tattenhoe, Milton Keynes, we established the overall structure into which the diversity of different developers was inserted in a different way. Developers were responsible for framing development on both sides of the street.

**Urban Design Guidelines**

The framework defines the urban design parameters - the structure of the area or town. There is and has been a continuing debate about the use of design guidelines for some time. Abercrombie bewailed Oxford Street for its haphazardness. Some would say that this is exactly its character, epitomising individualistic development and small scale entrepreneurship, adhocery and amateurism; giving London that quality of incremental organic growth. Contrast that with what we love about Paris; its character of consistency, strength, legibility and order.

And yet the incrementalism of our older towns cannot be recreated. Then, houses were built on small plots by different builders. The need to invent a false diversity has been due to the changing delivery systems, timescales and patterns of parcellation.

This has led to large estates each trying to create their own character without any overall physical or landscape structure; and in the teeth of the traffic engineer.

The current interest in urban design guidelines is about improving the quality of our built environment. The DoE's research will point to the need for some form of guidance, though of necessity conforming to current planning policies.

Guidelines are not aesthetic control. They are in a way more important than architectural factors in establishing the quality of our urban environment. Control of scale, form, and height, respecting the context, paying attention to street frontage, access, landmarks, variety and so on, form part of the design brief for architects. Urban Design establishes in three dimensions the parameters and principles to which the architect or developer works. This doesn't stop architectural freedom, it allows for different interpretations on an agreed theme. For this to be understandable and communicable, conceptualisation is important. This is the precursor to the vision.

I believe there is a need for local authorities to use urban design guidelines to help raise urban quality. I also believe there is room for an "urban design statement" as part of a planning application, in the same way as an environmental statement is required for large projects. The Urban Design statement would need to satisfy the principles and criteria established as part of the audit, and set out as part of the Urban Design Framework.

**Left: Design****Guidelines for****part of Roath****Basin Cardiff Bay****Right: A vision of****possible****development for****the Port****Greenwich site,****London**

Urban design guidelines prepared for Cardiff and for Shahestan deal not just with the buildings but with the whole question of the public realm, the public face of development, the space in which buildings sit. So massing, scale, landscape structure, access, routing, management and mixing uses are seen as an integrated whole. This is the structure into which the architect carefully inserts his building. This is what helps create a better quality of built environment.

**The Vision**

Finally the interdependence of these aspects of goals, audits, frameworks, briefing and guidelines make up, and are informed by the vision - the guiding influence. Abercrombie, when producing his plan for the County of London illustrated his ideas with plans, visions, and the forms of development he thought appropriate. A vision is not architecture writ large. It is an indicative three dimensional framework that the local authority can use to give a clear indication of the quality of development it wishes to entertain. The local authority can help set the agenda and the developer responds. That vision is also a product of the players. A common vision is not an end state plan but is about professionals, public and private sectors, and communities working together. That partnership can supplement the vision with a business plan, and from that, a marketing plan.

Part of the vision could be a re-assessment of the way many local authority departments work together.

**Conclusions**

We need to establish a better means of improving the quality of our environment than our current development control system. Urban design is an important tool in that battle. In looking at our urban environment it seems to me there are three concerns:

The first is that we cannot totally recreate a past environment - as if it were a theme park. Our cities need to perform in different ways. If we're not careful we are left playing around with forms but not necessarily the functions that lie behind them. For example, Quinlan Terry's scheme at Richmond as a set piece is appropriate and enjoyable but as an element of the city it is essentially a mono-cultural island. Paternoster Square is similar. That is not urban design as an integrative process.

The second aspect is that we have to come to terms with and control the impact of the car. The car inhabits the architecture of movement, where only large elements are able to make the visual signals. Until we rethink our attitude to the car and reduce its prominence, our environment will become coarser, cruder and more disaggregated. If we continue to unquestioningly accept operator's demands or the traffic engineers' standards, we will end up with an environment of communities divided by, rather than joined by roads. That is not urban design as an integrative process.

The last element is to address the management of change. The components for creating the character of a place are changing. Invisible structure is becoming more important. The electronic network will mean more working at home, shopping on TV, banking by phone, mailing by fax, information retrieval by CD, entertainment by video and so on. What will that say about the quality of our cities in twenty five or fifty years time? Where will the activities take place? What components will we be left to play with to create an enjoyable environment? If we don't address these issues, we may end up with a set of insular urban environments with fewer opportunities for people to interact. That is not urban design as an integrative process.

If Urban Design is about anything it is about creating civilised places. Buildings and spaces are precious. They tell us what we are or wish to be - not only as individuals but as a community.

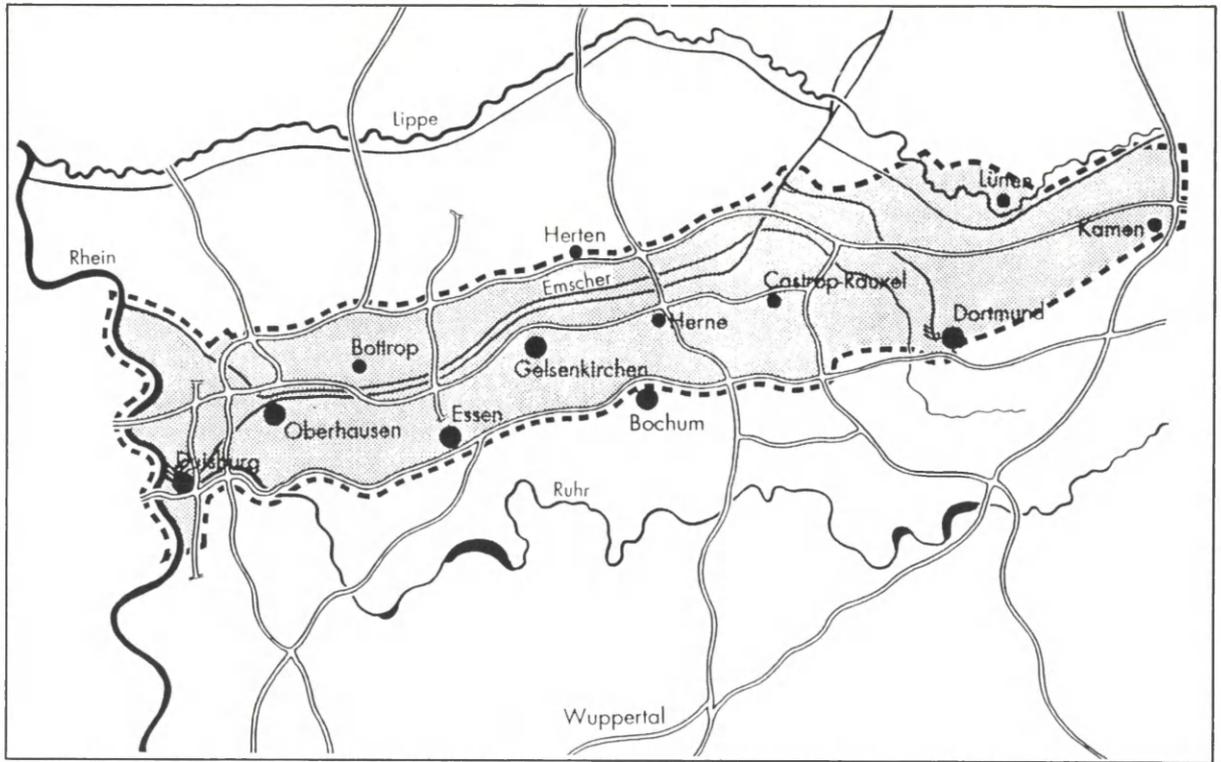
This can only be helped by professionals, investors and communities working together, using an integrated view of the urban environment that an urban design approach can bring.

Ed Bacon summarised the task when he said:

"The test of our achievement is whether we are able to break away from our fragmented approach to this problem and begin to see the city as a whole, dealing with it as a complete organism". #

# IBA Emscher Park

Rob Macdonald



This paper describes the development of the IBA Emscher Park in the Ruhr in Germany, which includes many new urban projects which provide valuable lessons for other cities and post industrial regions.

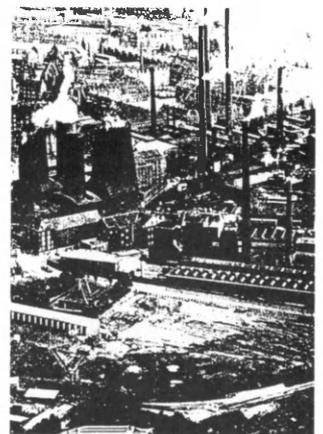
In May 1988 the Government of North Rhine Westphalia resolved to stage the Emscher Park International Building Exhibition (IBA) in 1999. This latest German IBA was seen to be preparing for the challenge which, sooner or later, faces all highly developed industrial societies, namely the repair of environmental damage caused by industrialisation. The intention of the IBA was to bring together international experience and organise a lasting and practical exchange of ideas. The sub-title of the IBA became the "workshop on the future of old industrial areas". The ambitious vision of the IBA involves creating new high quality urban areas and regenerating a natural landscape along the River Emscher between Duisburg and Dortmund. The area of the IBA is 800 sq km and comprises 80 individual projects set in 17 cities with a population of two million inhabitants.

## International Building Expositions

Building expositions can be traced back to the mid 19th century when it became the usual practice to present innovations in architecture, engineering and technology at International Expositions and World Fairs.

The 1851 Crystal Palace Great Exhibition was particularly important in unveiling diverse innovations in engineering. In Germany, the tradition of independent building exhibitions was established in 1901 with the exhibitions in Darmstadt-Mathildenhöhe, and between 1901 and 1904 there were four expositions. In 1909 Heinrich Tessenow designed the simple modernist housing at Dresden-Hellerau and in 1911 Bruno Taut designed Berlin's Siedlung Falkenberg.

The inter-war years saw a number of building expositions which increasingly took on a more forward looking and programmatic character. Against the background of an increasing urban population and an acute shortage of dwellings, the focus became the housing problem. The 1927 building exhibition in Stuttgart, organised by the Deutscher Werkbund, generated the Weisenhof Siedlung. Here the main intention was to create decent living conditions by way of strategies for urban planning and architecture. Following the war the tradition of building exhibitions was revived, first in Hanover in 1951 and then in Berlin in 1957 with the reconstruction of the Hansaviertel.



**Top: plan**  
**showing the**  
**project area**  
**Above: industrial**  
**landscape of the**  
**Ruhr**

Again the aim was to create urban planning frameworks that were appropriate to the need of the time. The 1987 Berlin IBA was the first in German history to address the issue of the renewal of old building stock and the insertion of new buildings into the existing urban fabric.

### The post-industrial city-region

Although the Emscher Park IBA has been inspired by Berlin, more significantly it focuses on broader issues of urban planning, architecture and urban regeneration. In selecting the Emscher area between Duisberg and Dortmund a corridor forty kilometres long and several kilometres wide has been chosen to highlight the question of urban ecology as a fundamental requirement for new working, living and cultural patterns. Historically, the Emscher area of the Ruhr was developed in the 19th century by manufacturing plant and transportation systems for coal, steel, chemicals and energy generation. This process of rampant industrialisation turned the area into the most densely and overworked industrial landscape in central Europe, with exceptionally high levels of environmental pollution and intensively carved up open spaces. The issue of soil contamination is the problem for the late 20th century post-industrial region of the Ruhr. The growing predominance of derelict land and under developed urban sites are the signs of rapid and major structural change, and together with high levels of unemployment are the major issues facing urban designers and architects in the Ruhr.

During the 1970s there was growing concern in the Ruhr about worsening economic conditions and the deteriorating quality of the environment. Coal mine closures, rationalisation of the steel industry and movement of manufacturing industry have changed the economic landscape. These post-industrial cities and regions now comprise spatial voids, as the dereliction changes the physical form of the urban areas, creating new types of urban landscape. These changes call for new attitudes towards urban design, architecture and urban regeneration and new thinking and attitudes towards a restored predominance of nature are developing out of the urban decline. In these situations urban regeneration projects no longer exist within the metropolitan framework of urban design, but rather they are to be discovered in new ecological systems where the landscape and the park are appropriate metaphors for a new greening of the city.

The Emscher IBA is a significant example of this new type of urban thinking, where viable strategies for the ecological, economic and social regeneration of the shattered industrial region are being developed.

The IBA has established special forward prototype urban projects which will constitute the essence of the exposition. Spatial guiding plans have been prepared in order to locate individual projects within the park and new workshops have been established to foster innovation.

Other prototype projects include the conversion of areas of the Emscher Riverside into new landscape parks and river cleaning and ecological improvement of the river and canal systems is developing. The Rhine-Herne canal is being developed into a new experience zone. Projects involving the existing industrial monuments are well represented together with the construction of new industrial workshops, housing, social and sports facilities.

### Local and International Participation

The Emscher IBA aims to be open and receptive to a wide range of problem solving, planning and implementation. Competitions have formed an important part of the process. Panels of experts, symposia and seminars have been used as effective means of gaining an overview of the national and international state of the art in urban design and regeneration. The participation of local project and community groups has been encouraged, as a means of allowing people who live in the region to express their own ideas. These groups have enabled the existing population to keep abreast of the process of urban regeneration. From the very beginning of the project artists have been invited to participate in the process and summer schools have been used as a way of bringing about international exchange of experiences. A planning company was created, known as the "Emscher Park Planning Company Ltd", with the role of promotion, co-ordination, brainstorming, planning and presentation of the exposition. In announcing the project in 1988, the state government allocated DM 35 million to the IBA. Projects are financed jointly by the cities and private companies. In some cases, for example the Landscape Park, all costs are met by the public purse, but many also receive support from central government and EU sources. In the summer of 1993, total current expenditure on projects was DM 2.5 billion, with some DM 1.7 billion from public sources.

### Progress on the Emscher IBA

The Emscher IBA includes sewerage conversion into sensitive systems; recreational renewal of green landscapes; creation of high quality industrial parks; finding new uses for old industrial monuments and construction and conversion of new and existing urban housing and garden city settlements.

The completed IBA Emscher Park projects comprise a number of distinctive themes: The Emscher Landscape Park includes major new 'green paths', a state garden exhibition in 1996 and regional 'green corridors'. The ecological restructuring of the Emscher river system, includes a new sewage treatment farm at Bottrop and Deininghauser Brook renovation. The theme of working in the park is well represented by new Science Centres, Business Parks and Future Technology Centres for Environmental Protection. New forms of living and housing have been developed with new residential projects, conversions of existing settlements and renovation of coal miner garden cities. The re-integration of the urban areas is being brought about by many public transportation projects including new stations, bridges and urban public spaces.

### Working in the Park

A chain of new technology centres have now been completed, and these provide high quality sites for the location of businesses and industries which are playing a part in the economic and physical regeneration of the region. Start up centres for new businesses have been established and run initially with public funds. Their task is to bring together innovative activities, attract technologically advanced companies to the site and thus support technology transfer in the region. A particular feature of the technology centres is their ecological orientation. For example, 'Luntec', located on the site of the former Minister Achenbach IV Colliery, concentrates on packaging technology, and 'Eco-Textil', using the buildings of the former Holland Colliery in Bochum-Watterscheid, focuses on processing textiles using a minimum of chemicals. The Eco-Centre, which has been opened in Hamm, sees itself as providing a forum for the entire spectrum of ecologically conscious urban development and to provide help to those trying to achieve a more ecologically conscious design of the urban environment. The Rheinelbe Science Park in Gelsenkirchen, based on a former steelworks site and neighbouring the site of an old colliery, aims to provide a centre for innovative ideas in energy transfer, storage and logistics. The new building, designed by Professor Kiessler includes its own solar power station with the world's largest roof mounted solar collector.

## Emscher Landscape Park

The scheme to create a landscape park provides the main unifying topic of the Emscher IBA. This is intended to provide the central core of the new infrastructure for the whole region. By connecting isolated open spaces, restoring the landscape, and upgrading the ecological and aesthetic quality of the desolated landscape, the idea is to achieve a lasting improvement of the living and working environment. The ambitious proposal is the further development of a plan to create seven regional green corridors which was first prepared in the 1920s by the 'Siedlungsverband Ruhrkohlenbezirk' but was never properly realized. Taking up this earlier idea, the individual corridors are being expanded and linked to new corridors to form a complete park system of European significance. In Duisburg North a 200ha former industrial site, with a redundant steel works at its heart, is being converted into a new type of park. The planned green path from Oberhausen to Duisburg creates new links between cities using the routes of former industrial roads and railway lines. The transformation of Mechtenberg Hill, lying on the boundary of the cities of Essen and Gelsenkirchen, draws together the ideas of artists, landscape architects and the local community in forming new ways of utilizing a natural landmark of the Emscher region.

## Industrial monuments

It is particularly important for the new identity of the Emscher region that existing industrial plant, collieries, foundries, spoil heaps, transportation lines and warehouses should be preserved, as the only physical witness to the history of the former industrial landscape. Perhaps the most outstanding industrial monuments in the Ruhr are the pithead buildings of the former Zollverein colliery. The industrial plant has been called a 'Cathedral of Labour' of the 'Cologne Cathedral of the Ruhr'. In its new role, the emphasis is on using the colliery site for art and culture. Restoration of the old buildings is being carried out in conjunction with a job creation scheme for the long term unemployed. Many new uses have been developed for existing industrial buildings and perhaps the most impressive is the conversion of the massive Oberhausen gasometer into a contemporary theatre. A new glass lift, inserted into the structure, takes visitors on the roof where panoramic views of the changing Ruhr landscape are revealed.

## Housing Regeneration

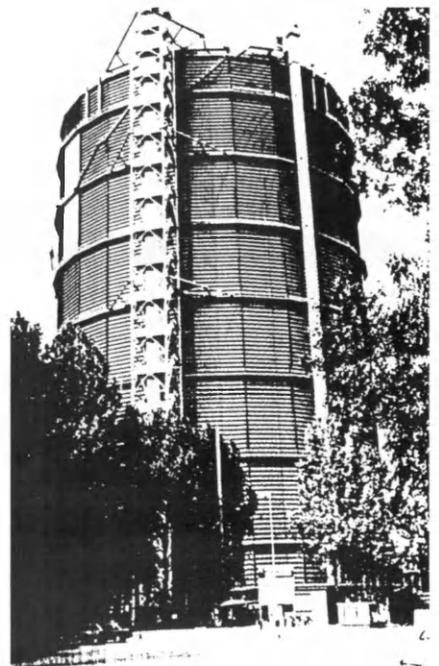
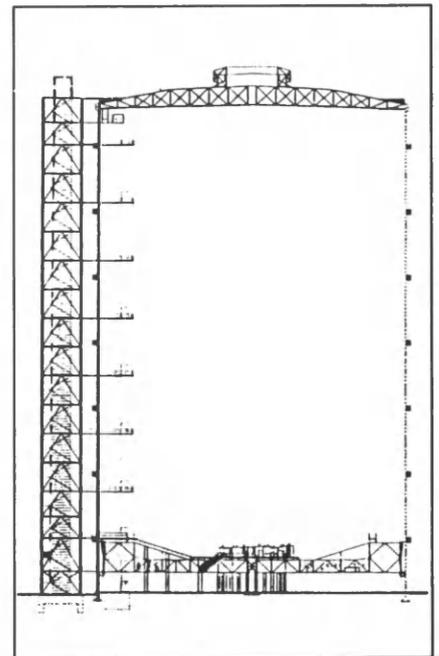
The Emscher IBA includes some twenty five housing projects which have a central role in the process of urban regeneration.

Currently, there are 3,000 new houses at the design and construction stages and a further 3,000 existing houses to be refurbished. The involvement of national and international urban designers and architects in competitions and implementation has been an important factor in ensuring that abstract ideas of quality are actually translated into on-site reality. Many of the housing projects are reusing unused land within existing urban districts thereby giving new impetus to existing communities. There is a revival of the development of new housing 'settlements' of significant size, which have new infrastructure of shops, kindergartens and new public transportation links. The existing garden city residential villages, of which there are over 1,000, are being preserved. They represent a model of quality green living environments and with housing improvement they will continue to offer good quality housing well into the next century. Individual projects include housing designed and built by women in Bergkamen. Here, women architects took part in a nationwide competition which aimed to respond to a common criticism, that public housing has to adhere to over rigid standards. The competition offered the opportunity to experiment with new forms of design and planning which would take the needs of women fully into account. The first people moved into the new houses in the summer of 1993. At the Schungelberg estate in Gelsenkirchen, existing houses are being modernised and new ones built in a traditional miners' settlement. Some 300 historic houses are being renovated and a further 200 new houses are being built. The design and ecological specification for the houses were the result of a competition and in 1995 the families of Turkish coal miners were moving into their new homes.

## Towards the 21st Century

The IBA is managed by a staff of about thirty people. It is their task to prepare and stage urban design and architectural competitions, implement the competition results in conjunction with the project organizers, act as an intermediary throughout the planning process, and supervise the final presentation of the building exhibition.

The IBA appears to be organised around concepts of social democracy and co-determination. The urban regeneration agenda includes many 'green' ideas of conversion, transference and ecological sensitivity. The current IBA refers back to the 19th century and the 1920s when the Settlement Association for the Ruhr Coal Area attempted to control urban growth and create open space.



Left top:

Zollverein colliery

Pithead buildings

Left below:

Oberhausen

gasometer

converted into a

contemporary

theatre

Right top: plan

and view of

former industrial

site at Duisburg

North being

converted into a

new type of park

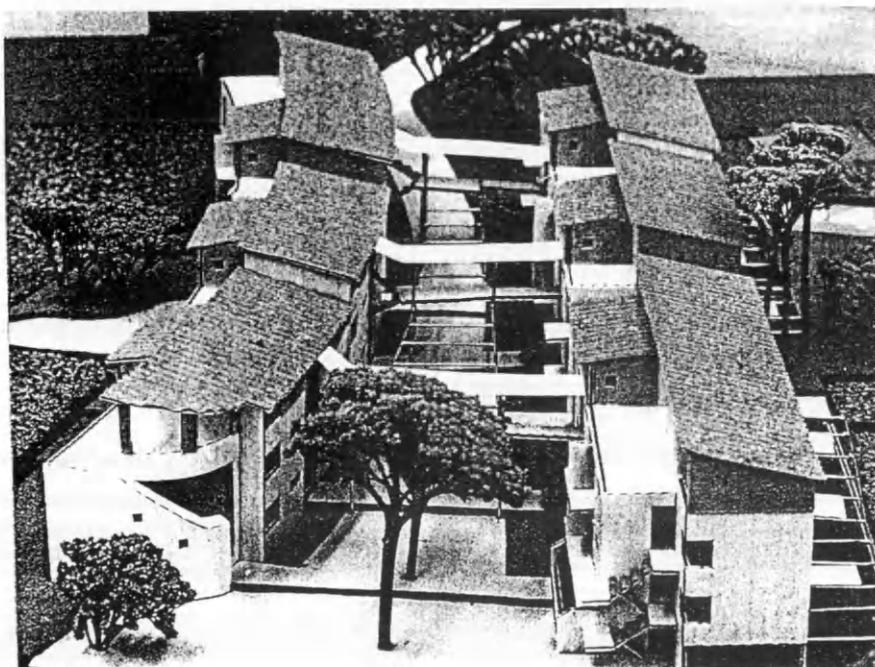
Right below:

Bergkamen

Housing Project

competition

design

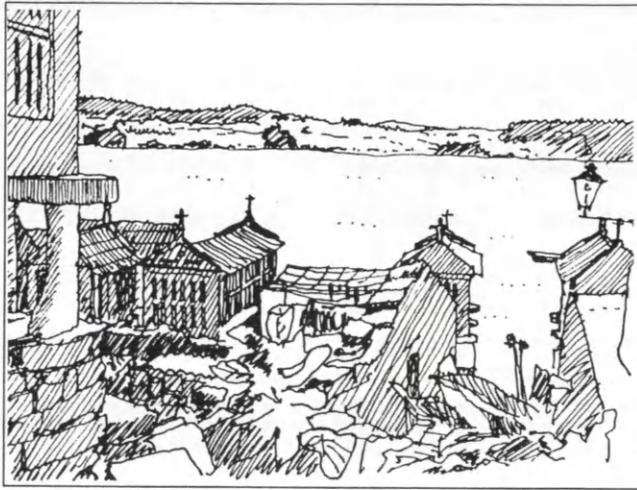


They acknowledge the work of landscape architect Peter Lenne in Berlin, who worked with Friedrich Schinkel in preparing a non-building plan, with its centrally located Zoological Gardens. This has proved to be a very durable plan and with its green hub has provided parks, gardens, canals, promenades and avenues. In many ways the Emscher Park IBA presents responsive and alternative possibilities for the future of cities and as such, it fits into an alternative future which can be articulated as sane, humane and ecological. This scenario raises fundamental questions concerned with the relationship between the city and the countryside. The approach questions the historical dominance of the city over the countryside and suggests that such domination may come to an end as the conventional distinctions between city and country are increasingly blurred by the greening and re-villaging of the city.#

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## Galicia 1995



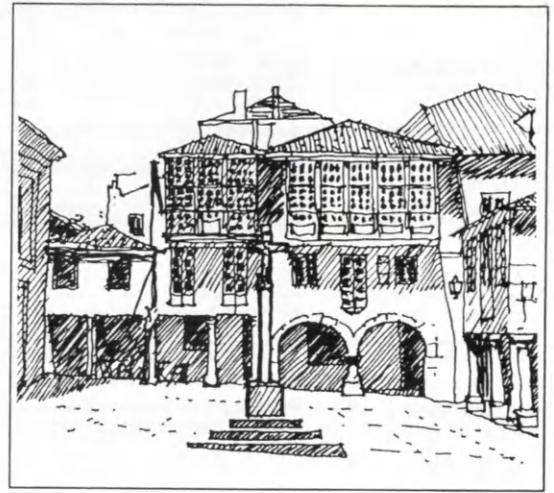
Alan Stones describes this year's UDG Study Tour of Galicia.

Galicia is a remote region. Mountainous terrain puts it a day's journey from Madrid, or a day and half from the French frontier, as we found on our return journey by spectacular metre-gauge railway following the coast of the Bay of Biscay. Yet the region contains one of the three main goals of medieval pilgrimage, Santiago de Compostela. This resulted, *inter alia*, in a concentration of medieval settlement and monuments along the pilgrimage roads from France and from Portugal. It would have been interesting to examine characteristic settlement types and the spread of French stylistic influences along these roads, but such a tour would have taken a month rather than a week. Instead we looked at a number of larger towns typical of their region, including Santiago itself, which is unique.

The pilgrimage of St. James flourished during the Middle Ages, and the superb Romanesque cathedral which shelters the saint's remains dates from the 12th century. The pilgrimage effectively ceased around 1540 with Francis Drake's capture of Corunna, and did not resume until the late nineteenth century, but paradoxically the whole of Santiago wears a Baroque aspect.

Seemingly the eighteenth century archbishops used the accumulated revenues of the pilgrimage centuries to found monasteries, churches and seminaries, and even to re-clad the cathedral in that particularly elaborate Spanish version of the Baroque called Churrigueresque. We were lucky enough to stay overnight in the former monastery of St. Martin Pinarío, partly designed by Fernando de Casas y Novoa, architect of the 18th century west front of Santiago cathedral. The street plan of Santiago is, however, medieval, with a number of informal arcaded squares.

The quality of informal squares was a theme that followed through between the towns of the Minho region of northern Portugal and adjacent Galicia. Braga, Viana do Castelo and Valença do Minho in Portugal all have fine squares fronted by Renaissance and Baroque buildings. The latter town has a commanding frontier position overlooking the Minho river and is enclosed by a number of 18th century walled circuits. It faces Tui on the Spanish side, in a similarly commanding position but with older fortifications that have now disappeared. Pontevedra, Betanzos and Lugo also have good squares, and the latter retains a complete and very forbidding, Roman walled circuit.

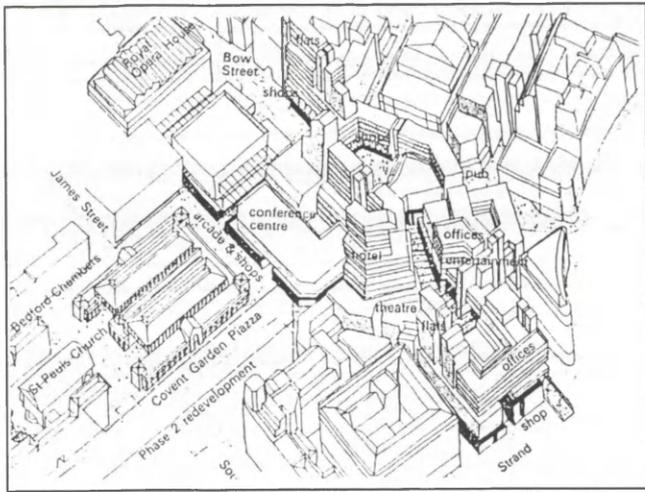


Apart from an architectural stylistic continuity, common features between the Minho region and Galicia include corner pinnacles on the roofs of substantial town houses, crosses or 'pillories' as the focal point of a square, the language (Galician, which is now being revived, is similar to Portuguese) and the 'horreos' or maize drying granaries of stone on staddles.

Discontinuities include the distinctive Minho agricultural landscape of small fields of maize enclosed by trellis vines, and the typical north Spanish streetscape of glazed balconies on houses. Presumably these originated in the 18th and 19th century and are therefore nationally specific, being found from Galicia through to the Basque country, but not in Portugal.

Our return journey gave us the opportunity to see examples of a rare architectural phenomenon, the pre-Romanesque Asturian buildings of the 9th century in and around Oviedo. At this period the tiny kingdom of Asturias was the only part of Spain not overrun by the Moors. King Ramiro II established his capital at Oviedo and erected churches and a palace in a primitive yet refined style which attempted to recreate the glories of the Visigothic capital Toledo, which had been destroyed by the Moors. This was a short-lived episode, as the Asturians soon pushed back the Moors and moved their capital to León, though the Reconquista was not to be finally completed for another seven hundred years. #

**Top left: Horreos at Combarro**  
**Right: Plaza de Lena Pontevedra showing glazed balconies**



### Building Democracy: Community Architecture in the Inner Cities

Graham Towers  
UCL Press 1995  
£45 Hardback £14.95 Softback

*Building Democracy* needs to be read alongside Peter Hall's *Cities of Tomorrow*. If that book emphasises the top-down approach to development and urban expansion, Graham Tower's book shows the impact of the philosophy and politics of the dominators on the people at the receiving end of this process. Tower's marxist background at times leads him to a rather constrained view of community architecture as the little group fighting the paternalism of the social engineers; *the ruled against the rulers*. And that partial paradigm is perhaps why community architecture has occasionally flickered with success in the way it has gradually changed the vocabulary of planning and design, but also why it is seen to have failed. All we have is a scattering of models that have essentially been demonstration projects, sometimes part of ad hoc programmes, sometimes hard won issue-oriented battles.

Perhaps Towers is right that we will never resolve the issue of housing people. Government policy in this country has always been directed towards the provision of houses, not housing. If we look at the past we see a public sector that provided one sort of mass housing product, and a private sector that provided another volume-built product. Neither addressed peoples' aspirations.

Whilst we have been pursuing these forms of provision, we have also been advising developing countries on the provision of housing not houses; enabling financing, setting out land, bringing in infrastructure, mixing uses, training people, helping each family buy its own plot and build its house in response to its own needs and finances. Towers glancingly refers to the influence of John Turner and Colin Ward, but that stream of argument, if it had been explored more fully, might have led him to paint a different view of the image of the city. People, if given the opportunity *can* create pleasant and human scaled environments in an incremental way by themselves either through self-managed construction or like Walter Segal's Lewisham projects, through self-build.

Yet one doesn't have to look at the Third World. Europe provides some examples of the large scale self-help housing. It would have been interesting to have juxtaposed the examples cited by Towers of Louvain Medical Faculty, by Lucien Kroll, or Erskine and Grace's Byker development, with the unsung creators of some of the suburbs of say Budapest or Frankfurt to see the richness of variety and urban form that can be created.

*Building Democracy* is timely and important. The emasculation of local authorities may prove fortunate if the centralisation of power to the DoE can be reversed. Towers, a veteran community activist, echoes the calls for reform that were so much part of the 60s and early 70s.

**Part of the GLC's  
1971 proposals  
for Covent Garden  
objected to by  
residents and  
overturned**

UDATs as a process are ignored. Whilst this is a new and expanding technique, recent experience both here and in the USA suggests it could hold the key to opening up the dialogue of collaboration in briefing, planning, design, and development. With the DoE's Urban Design Campaign perhaps there is an opportunity to test a more democratic process of participative briefing.

The book establishes the historical perspective, ideas and practice. This is helped by a set of well illustrated and simply presented case studies. The polemical section deals with education, politics, and what Towers called "the Urban Imperative". He argues for a change in the way environmental professions are taught, a change in the delivery systems, and the need "to redeem the inner cities".

Certainly the principles espoused by Community Architecture and the idea of the "Social City", bear a striking resemblance to the UDG's concept of the "Good City":

- user participation
- user needs
- urbanism
- cooperation
- multiple skills
- integrated design
- building re-use
- modest scale
- quality before innovation

Set these alongside Francis Tibbald's "Ten Commandments" and the synergy of approach is apparent.

*Building Democracy* is a marker. Not for the demise of Community architecture. That has not died. It is in the process of reinventing itself. That process is crossing political boundaries. Perhaps we *will* see the Community becoming more central to the role of development, but not quite as it has done so in the past.#

Jon Rowland

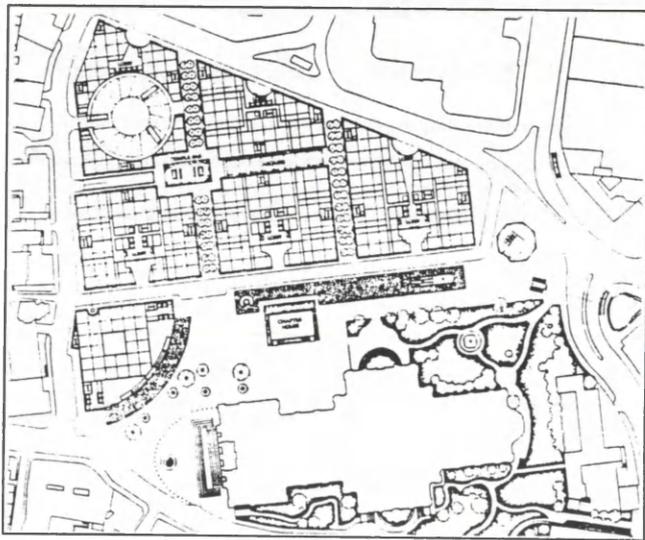
Rethinking the role of local government recalls *Community Decay*. Establishing enabling mechanisms reflects *Housing, an Anarchist Approach*. Listening to people reminds us of *The People of Providence*.

It is this last element that is critical. Community Architecture began with architects, planners and other professionals supporting local groups resisting redevelopment plans. (Michael Frayn's play *The Benefactors* summed up the mood of the time.) This form of action gave way to a diversity of self-help developers, community technical aid centres, and agitators for local government to be more responsive to community needs.

### Participation

The key element through all this has always been user participation. Community architecture "seeks to improve the lot of the poorer members of society. Not by paternalistically imposing preconceived solutions that are supposedly for their benefit. Rather it seeks to empower those who have least opportunity to control their environment..."

Towers describes how this participation can take place. Techniques are identified, ranging from CLAWS idea boards to Planning for Real's use of models. What seems to be missing is the whole idea of a more integrated form of participation, that brings together the key players in any development, the users *and* the providers.



**James Stirling Michael Wilford and Associates Buildings and Projects 1975-1992**

Thames and Hudson 1994  
£48

What does this book tell you, who's it for and is it any use to urban designers? It's worth a look on many levels, and can set us questioning. Here is the latter work of a respected architect, the blossoming from the earlier work in universities and green field sites, and celebration of good modern buildings in the public realm.

The continuity and second part of the documentation of the Stirling oeuvre is impressive - landscape format, three column text, black cloth bound book, heavy good quality paper with crisp and hard edged (Wilford's words) drawings, reproduced it seems without a fault, all in the publishing tradition of His Master's Work / 'oeuvre complete'. Each facade designed and drawn so it could be built off the page.

It's also a classic exhibit from the race of the 90s marketing architect, jostling with a clutch of other architect medallist names on the bookshelf, needing to sell their products in the market place. Get it published. a brochure for the firm. A bonus for the Twentieth Century (Society) historians too, documentation for their period neatly packaged, compared with the other earlier heritage periods where drawings of the masters are searched for in dusty archives.

What is its message to the person in the street, the famous intelligent lay client who really is interest in architecture (small a) with a genuine, but still unformulated quest for architectural quality right across the system? ("I think that I know what I like, but I find it difficult to express, and unfortunately I can't really admit to the fact that I can't read plans"). This layperson is now much more prominent - the target of the potential flowering of the new (London and regional), architectural centres, architecture being read generally at universities as well as literature, (and not necessarily going on to be practitioners - should make really good clients though), the increasing architectural programmes on the media, enjoyed by the young, Open Door et al. What would they make of this book? How do we as a wider profession provide these skills? At this stage they might say "Too expensive, £48, too heavy to read in the bath, too specialised". Certainly if the book was translated as an exhibition - cold, at an architectural centre, it might not draw in the punters. The RIBA have had that experience.

The early concept sketches and the studies, show the questing to find the best solution, which are presented along with the final scheme, work in progress, the down axonometrics, the up - worm's eye axonometric for the initiated (always intriguing, but really incomprehensible for the layperson) - interlaced with juicy colour photographs.

Taken all together, this is a real experience of quality, a marvellous exposure to the creative act of architecture. Each building is worked out as an end state, and nothing really left to chance, each in the main a fully formed end product but not seen as a process, no lessons on how it could be built over time, and if other design styles took on a different tack.

It is of use to urban designers. It shows the needed and possible products of what the public realm could be. In general new city development, examples of what North Americans call "signature architects" designs are needed as markers. Lesser fry can fill in "the capital web" (David Crane), between them, and some of our future cities will be created this way. However, regular 'design and build' solutions between them won't give us the environment the interested layperson deserves. They so need the injection of this kind of quality.

Peter Eley

**Richard Rogers**

Kenneth Powell  
Artemis, London, 1994  
£28

Kenneth Powell's dual language (English and German) monograph on Richard Rogers, published last year, will fit comfortably on your bookshelf and has much to commend it.

The content and format of the book - a pithy introduction, an exhaustive catalogue of projects from Team 4's House at Creek Vein in 1966 to date with representative illustrations in black and white and some brief excerpts from Rogers' own writings at the back - ensure that it should become a standard work of reference on the architect and the practice.

Members of the Urban Design Group and listeners to the recent series of Reith lectures on Radio 4 will be familiar with Rogers' concern with the state of our cities.

They will know of his long-standing commitment to promoting the public realm and more recent focus on environmental issues and planning sustainable cities. A larger public knows Rogers as a result of the fame and sometime notoriety of set-piece "high tech" works such as the Lloyds building on the City and the Pompidou Centre in Paris. What this book does is to provide a context to view what at times may appear as contradictory tendencies within the thought and work of the architect and his practice.

Rogers' concerns are certainly very wide-ranging in their scope. They are presented here as aspects of an attempt at a unified vision of architecture and urbanism. Powell describes Rogers as a humanist in the true Renaissance sense. "Civility implies living in harmony with the past, the present and the future." This image of social, technological and environmental harmony seems strangely out of sync with these stormy, post-modern times.

In many ways, Rogers remains a modernist of the old school - if from its more exuberant wing. The architecture remains primarily a celebration of technology. This, despite more recent leanings towards the more "organic" style typified by Alvar Aalto (seen perhaps as a more appropriate expression of an increasingly environmentalist stance). Rogers disclaims the high tech label. His collaborator on Beaubourg, Renzo Piano has portrayed the building as more crafted than engineered.

This may certainly explain the design process but it is hardly a true characterisation of the expressive spirit of the building.

The symbolic character of Rogers' projects is a direct expression of a definite functional programme. This seeks to distinguish between servant and served spaces, between the building elements that are relatively stable and those with a short life. Each part of the building is intended to show how it was put there and, by implication, how it can be replaced.

At the heart of the design philosophy is the attempt to come to terms with the contradictory demands of change and flexibility on the one hand and stability and identity on the other. But the bolt-on, plug-in bits inevitably come to dominate the more unseen stable elements. The professed aim of his urban architecture is to create transparency through a "multiplicity of planes".

The intentions may be noble, but how successful is the practice? This account of Rogers' philosophy and practice raises more questions, perhaps, than it answers. Are the buildings more monumental in character than the urbanistic approach suggests? Can architects really predict the way a building is going to be used and changed in the future and accommodate this in their design? Are flexible buildings really that flexible? Is a building really a programmable machine or is the relationship between people and space fundamentally different and complex?

Is a high tech solution really possible for the majority of the world's population? If not, is Rogers' approach compatible with his socialistic vision? Will the majority of us get to live in the highly engineered, computerised, responsive environment beloved of the technological utopians, a new climatically sensitive skin of steel, plastic and transistors?

There can be no denying the success of the populist approach of Beaubourg and its impact on the public realm in Paris but what is the place, in the longer term, of such a building in the larger urban context? Is it the prototype of a new urban architecture or a one-off - a late 20th century Eiffel tower? Is its appeal due to the realisation of a new philosophy of urbanism or is it simply a fairground of high culture, a modern extravaganza to please the vanity of Parisians?

We're unlikely to be in a position to get a clear notion of the significance of Rogers' work for some decades to come. In the meantime, this book will help you make up your mind.

Tony Lloyd-Jones

### **International Design Yearbook 1995**

Editor Jean Nouvel  
Laurence King Publishing  
£42

"I learnt in the Beaux Arts to do beautiful drawings of terrible buildings".

This disingenuous statement that Jean Nouvel made at his recent London lecture at the Institut Français is fortunately not borne out by the contents of this book. There are no terrible designs. For here is an architect "who never starts a project by designing". Rather, his concern for the contextual, cultural and conceptual relationships with the surrounds of his projects, has given them intellectual integrity. This ethos he uses whether he moves from urban design and architecture to furniture design. His attention to function and detail may have much to do with his rather tongue-in-cheek statement that it is more difficult to design a chair than a skyscraper. So when we see his furniture are we looking at this ultimate challenge? I doubt it.

Yet in all his projects his starting point is analysis. His paradigm is time. For his architecture, like the Cartier Foundation or the Institute du Monde Arabe, a durable statement is made - "a witness of its time". For his furniture, the variety also bears witness to its need to respond to differing conditions. For the furniture, lighting and products of other designers he has chosen in this beautifully illustrated collection of new design objects, that ethos also applies, whether it is a bookshelf from Ron Arad, a Newton hand computer from Apple, a Virtual Reality headset by Nelson Au, or fabric designs by Yoshiki Hishinuma.

The convergence of technological innovations, and the empowerment of the user have radically changed the quality of our consumer projects environment. If the objective of the good designer is to make the complex simple, then we urban designers need to make our built environments more intelligible and responsive. We also need to reinterpret, excite, and encourage a more dynamic and design-led environment. Could this mean an end to bollards?

Jon Rowland

### **The Cities Design Forgot - A Manifesto**

Rob Cowan  
Published by Urban Initiatives  
1995  
£5 (incl. postage)

Rob Cowan has produced a slim 14 page manifesto suggesting ways in which the urban design and renewal of cities can be positively improved.

His recipe is collaboration and he puts forward ten propositions or components for the design of living cities - process, the public realm, the senses, scale, culture, time, history, activities, choice and interdisciplinary working.

He emphasises the need for a concept that includes both the product and process so that all professionals can understand how their role contributes and also underlines the continuing nature of the process and the need for good management. All the contributing parties to urban design and renewal, developers, architects, urban designers, planners and community organisations too often make and remake their own mistakes. There are lessons to be learnt if all those who contribute to the eventual development are recognised to be participants collaborating together.

He defines seven requirements for successful collaboration - information, contacts, knowledge, inspiration, access to skills, opportunities and a role in the process.

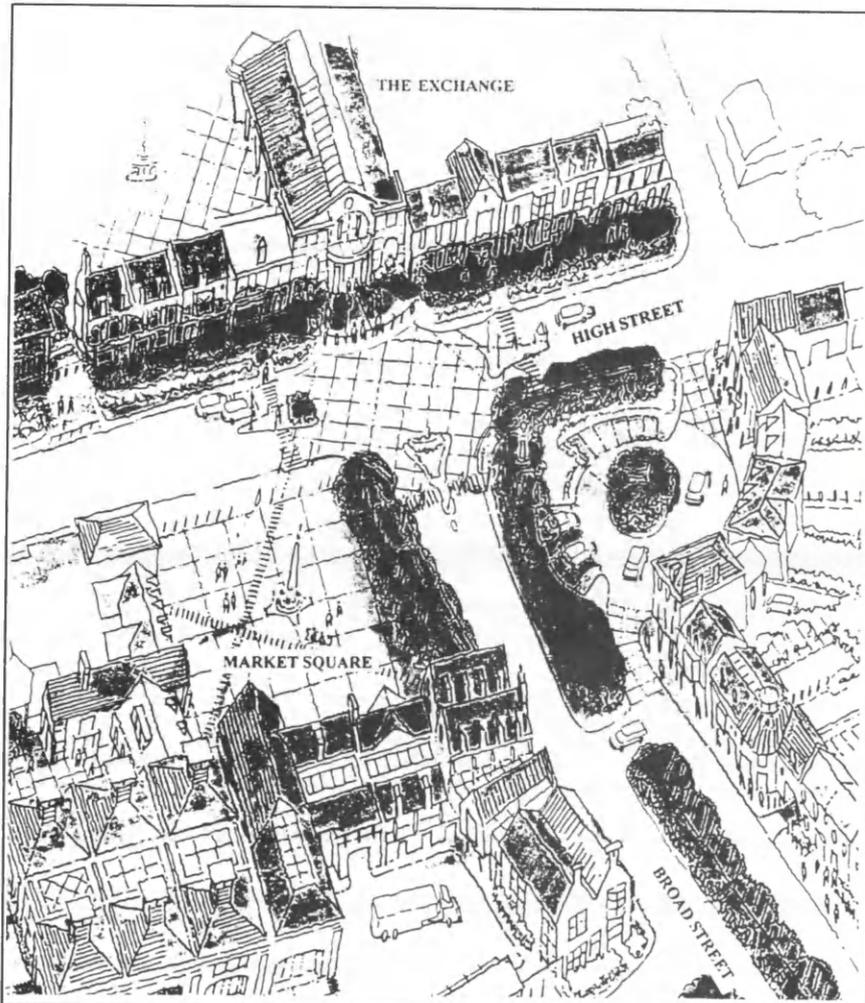
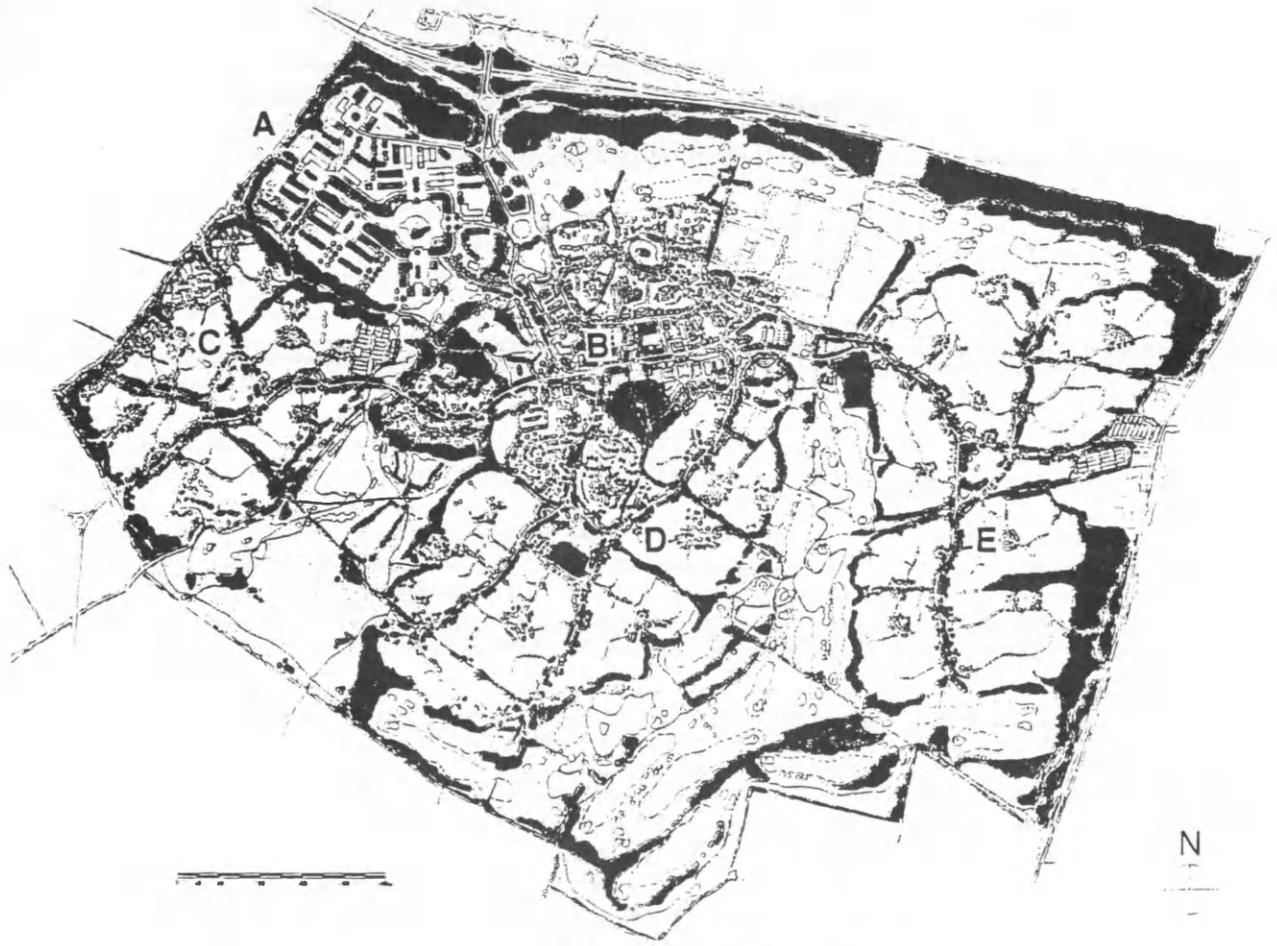
Although partnership has been a theme in urban renewal for the last five years or so he maintains there is limited understanding of how such partnerships might work. There is a real art in creating a collaborative process and this needs to be learned; professionals need to remember their role and recognise participative design as an antecedent for the greatest challenge of all: the collaborative effort of renewing cities. He refers to examples of collaboration such as Urban Design Action teams (UDATs) and 'Visions for Cities' workshops with an appendix describing their lessons. The role of architecture and planning centres is discussed emphasising that they need to be seen as more than just a building and exhibition facility but a centre from which external activities can be generated throughout the community.

Some of the conclusions of his report are that collaboration can provide positive roles for all professionals and the community, that urban design should not be seen as a physical design process but as an all embracing approach. Architects, landscape architects and planners must learn to be able to communicate their ideas to lay people in a comprehensible visual form and this new view of collaborative design should be seen as releasing architects' energies for imaginative designs.

The Prince of Wales Institute in conjunction with bodies such as the UDG and the Civic Trust is producing through Nick Wates a guide to Community Planning weekends such as UDATs. That report could provide specific help to enable people to see how collaborative design events can be organised. Rob Cowan's manifesto places that guide in a wider context but with the same overall objective of seeking ways in which our current condition can be improved. The more people that take the opportunity to read it should enable collaborative design to occur more frequently.

John Billingham

# Terry Farrell and Partners

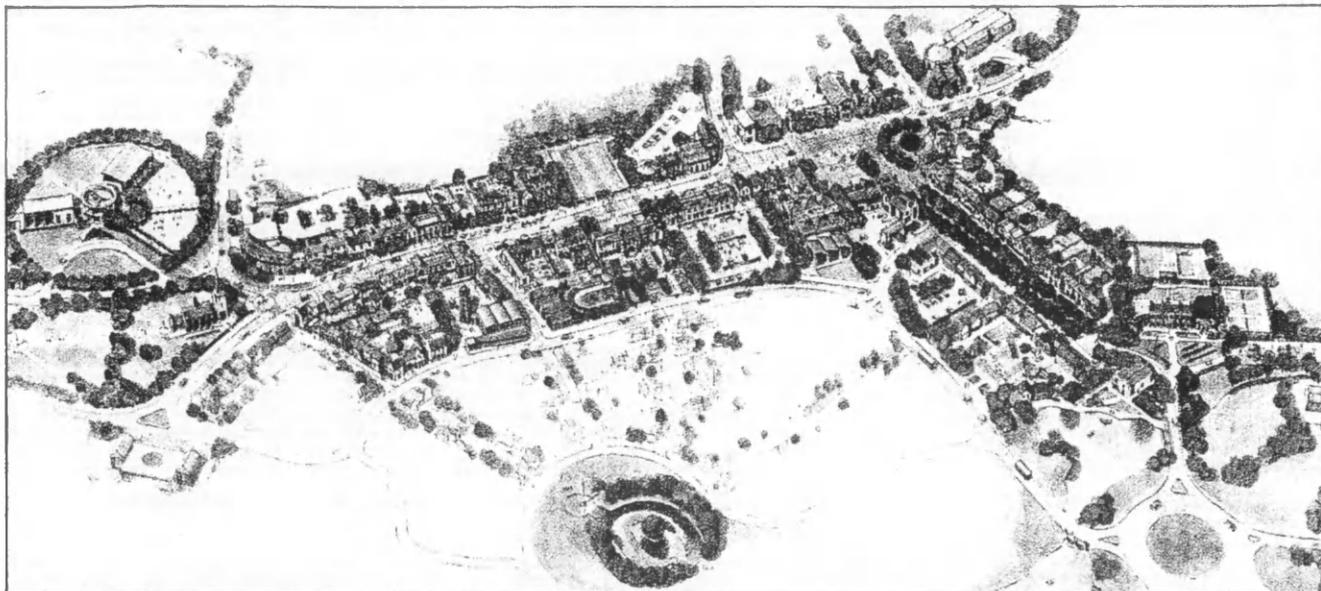


**Above:**  
**Proposed layout**  
**for Cambourne**

- A Business Park**
- B Village Centre**
- C Village 1**
- D Village 2**
- E Village 3**

**Left:**  
**Ideas for the**  
**open village**  
**square in the**  
**settlement centre**

**Above right:**  
**Settlement centre**  
**looking south**



Terry Farrell and Partners' reputation is often perceived on the basis of work in London in the late 1980s on the evidence of the three completed projects at Embankment Place, Alban Gate and Vauxhall Cross. It is possibly not widely recognised that the work of the practice from the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s has orientated towards a broader range of commissions - public and civic building projects which include exhibition and conference buildings, museums, arts and library buildings, retail and the design of transportation interchange projects and railway related developments.

Terry Farrell and Partners was established in 1965. The practice has offices in London, Edinburgh and Hong Kong, and has gained considerable experience with a broad range of projects including offices, residential, retail, leisure, industrial buildings and infrastructure works. Many of these have been large, high profile and complicated projects demanding the full breadth of design, management and organisational skills for private clients, corporations and public bodies including transport authorities, local and national government departments and joint ventures. In addition to building projects, Terry Farrell and Partners have a considerable reputation in the area of planning and masterplans have been designed and completed for a number of major sites in the UK, Europe and the Far East.

Recent UK commissions have included a major masterplan design for Keele University with design guidelines for the expansion of the University as a sustainable development integrated with the existing campus buildings and circulation patterns. Possibly the most significant commission to act as a model for sustainable development in future projects is the Cambourne Masterplan described in more detail.

### Cambourne

Terry Farrell and Partners were appointed by Alfred McAlpine Homes East Ltd to prepare a masterplan and design guidelines for a new settlement in Cambridgeshire for 3,000 homes, a new settlement centre and a 50 acre business park. Outline planning consent had been granted for the site, located 8 miles west of Cambridge within an area of significant landscape with a substantial frontage onto the A428.

The masterplan submitted to South Cambridgeshire District Council for approval, seeks to establish a layout for "three villages" in harmony with the rural setting, to create an identity for each residential area. The three villages are located on the higher ground enabling the existing river valleys to establish a landscape framework for an ecological park, golf course and recreation spaces.

The centre of Cambourne is focused around a high street which links the three villages at the heads of the valleys, and accommodates a range of public buildings, including two schools, church, health centre, community centre, village store, police station and fire station.

A multipurpose leisure centre provides a wide variety of facilities, including football, hockey, cricket, tennis, rugby and golf. Bowling greens and cricket pitches on each village green complement the recreational provision. Informal recreation is incorporated through the new woodlands and a network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways.

Open water is featured in the valleys and surface water attenuation lakes alleviate the risk of flooding to neighbouring areas. Ponds and marshy areas enhance the ecological framework. Reed beds provide filtration for the cleansing of surface water.

Extensive fieldwork has identified the range of existing flora and fauna. Provision has been made for their protection and the creation of new habitats.

A primary objective for the development of Cambourne embodied in the masterplan is to achieve sustainability. The Cambourne masterplan will facilitate the creation of low energy buildings and introduce new ideas for using a biomass energy supply utilising local farms to provide coppicing. Conservation of energy in relation to journeys within, to and from the site is respected and movement by foot, bicycle and other non-vehicular forms has been facilitated. Public transport connections to the wider area with an efficient routing through the site have been established. Motor vehicles have been adequately provided for but that provision is not to be dominant in the plan.

Development of the masterplan will be shaped by design guidelines to ensure it occurs in a manner that respects traditional English settlement patterns for villages and market towns.

The design approach for Cambourne will not be monostylistic and to test initial ideas a two day design workshop was attended by representatives of the project team and seven other architectural practices.

It is envisaged that construction work will commence in late 1995, with the first homes available for occupation in summer 1996. At an approximate build rate of 200 homes per year, Cambourne will take 15 years to complete.#

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# NFA

Urban Design is an integral service of NFA and draws on the practice's planning, landscaping, architectural and project management resources. The range of skills, the location and interaction of its offices allows the group to undertake complex urban design projects internationally.

The selection of projects illustrated here have been chosen to represent the breadth of service and diversity of location of the urban design projects in which the practice is currently involved. In particular we illustrate several large scale projects in the Pacific Rim. The rapid rate of development in most of the Far East means that we are often called upon to contribute to the design of major new urban centres within the existing urban fabric as well as new communities on greenfield sites. We are currently working in the following countries of the Far East: - Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

One consideration is common to all the projects illustrated - the desire to create dynamic and significant open spaces which will, in their context, achieve a sense of place and make a significant contribution to the public realm.

### **Bangkok, New City**

The New City of Muang Thong Thani is being developed by a major development group as a decentralised alternative to the city of Bangkok. Thailand is unique in Asia in that it has pursued its development without the interruption and influence of internationalism. Muang Thong Thani, is based on recognisable and traditional Thai urban typologies reinterpreted via contemporary building technologies. This is a city for one million people with an integration of living and working accommodation. This enormous project is not based on imposed social relocation but on Thailand's changing societal demands and the ability of developers to recognise and market this opportunity.

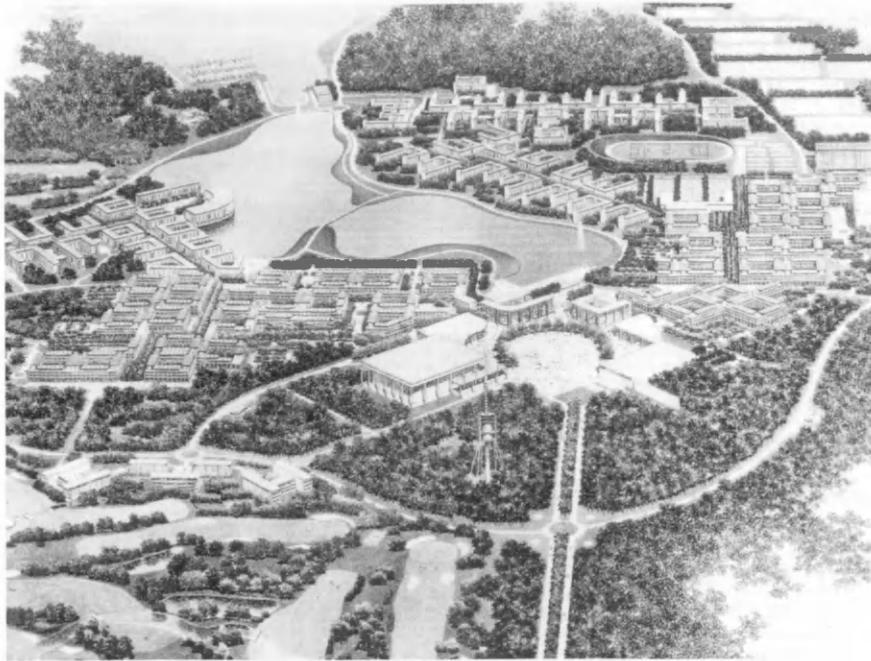
NFA is fortunate not only to have acted as the urban designers but also as the implementing architects. With a pressure and pace of development unknown in the west, in three years accommodation for 250,000 people and 8 million square feet of offices, shops and factories have been completed and a city bigger than Ghent, Salzburg or Cork has already come into being.

The success of Muang Thong Thani has led NFA to be appointed as designers of the Thai new towns of Bangnatrad, Suksawat and Srinakarin.



### University of Malaysia, Sarawak

With Malaysian associates, we are acting as the consultants for the planning and design of this new university to accommodate 25,000 resident students on a 2,000 acre greenfield site. The development is structured as a university town, and will encourage the maximum involvement of the private sector and the use of the university's facilities by the community at large. The urban form has been determined by a McHarg sieve analysis that restricts the development on this fragile site to a horseshoe ridge of higher land. This forms the backbone to the development with a pedestrian spine uniting all the elements of the University town. This will be a fully "intelligent" University town using state of the art technology for its information, control and operational systems, while the individual buildings will be designed against strong performance yardsticks to ensure that they are sustainable.



**Left: New City of**

**Muang Thong**

**Thani**

**Top: Overall view**

**Middle: Industrial**

**condominiums**

**Bottom:**

**Residential**

**Neighbourhood**

**This page**

**Top: University of**

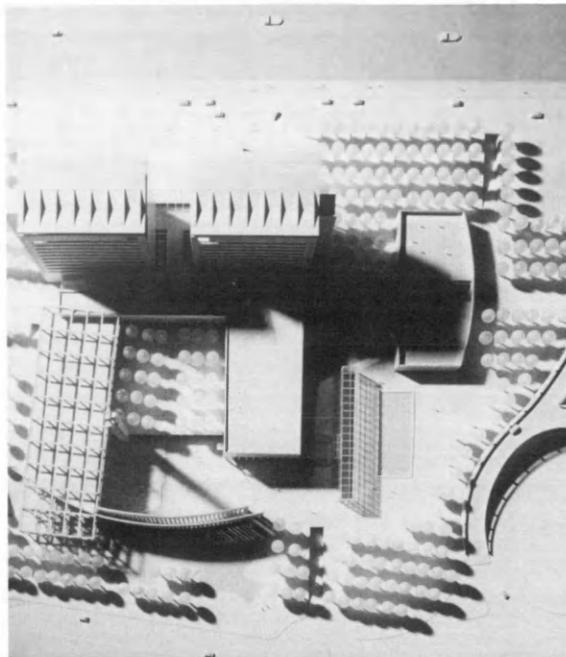
**Malaysia**

**Middle: Er Sha**

**Island project**

**Bottom: Circular**

**Quay Sydney**



### Er Sha Island, Guangzhou, China

Among several current projects in China, NFA, as a result of a limited competition, have designed this mixed development for the Er Sha Island in the Pearl River. This development comprising an exhibition centre, offices and a retail complex enclosing major urban spaces is strategically located above a new transport interchange. The sequence of open spaces have been integrated to knit with existing pedestrian networks, which will be a major addition to the public realm.

### Circular Quay, Sydney

This project was won as the result of a major international urban design competition. Strategically it sets out to link the Opera House with the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the CBD with the waterfront. Circular Quay is currently separated from the centre of Sydney by the Cahill Expressway and what is proposed is the creation of strong linking elements and the creation of a major people place from which to view the splendour of the harbour. Unlike much of the practice's urban design work, which looks to weave itself into the urban texture, here the imposition of a major new nodal element was seen as the key to the creation of the link and in so doing, overcoming the existing environmental problems.

NFA • PDR

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Contact: Peter Verity MArch MCP (Penn)

RIBA



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courses  
subscribing to  
this index**

This directory

**40** provides a service to potential clients when they are looking for specialist professional advice on projects involving urban design and related matters and to students and professionals considering taking an urban design course. Those wishing to be included in future issues should contact the UDG office 14 Ashbrook Courtyard, Westbrook Street, Blewbury, Oxon OX11 9QH  
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# Inside Out and Back to Front

Bob Jarvis

## Liverpool John Moores University School of the Built Environment

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Contact: Professor Chris Couch  
MSc/Diploma in Urban Renewal (Urban  
Regeneration & Urban Design) 1 year  
full-time or 2 years part-time.

## University of Westminster School of Urban Development and Planning

35 Marylebone Rd, London NW1 5LS  
Tel: 0171 911 5000  
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Contact: David Seex  
MA or Diploma Course in Urban Design  
for postgraduate architects, town  
planners, landscape architects and  
related disciplines. One year full time or  
two years part time attendance of two  
evenings a week plus an additional five  
to eight days each year.

## University of Newcastle upon Tyne Department of Town & Country Planning,

Claremont Tower  
University of Newcastle  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU  
Tel: 0191 222 7802 Fax: 0191 222 8811  
Contact: Dr Ali Madani-Pour or Bill  
Tavernor (Architecture)  
MA/Diploma in Urban Design. Joint  
programme by Dept of Town and  
Country Planning and Dept. of  
Architecture, full time or part time,  
integrating knowledge and skills from  
town planning, architecture, landscape.

## Oxford Brookes University (formerly Oxford Polytechnic) Joint Centre for Urban Design

Headington, Oxford OX3 0BP  
Tel: 01865 819403  
Fax: 01865 483298  
Contact: Dr Georgia Butina or Ian  
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Diploma in Urban Design 6 months full  
time or 18 months part time. MA in  
Urban Design 1 year full time or 3 years  
part time. MPhil/PhD by research (full  
time and part time).

## University of Strathclyde Dept of Architecture and Building Science

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Urban Design Studies Unit offers its  
Postgraduate Course in Urban Design in  
CPD, Diploma and MSc modes. Topics  
range from the influence of the city's  
form and structure to the design of  
public spaces.

The students' proposals for the spaces around the new Tate Gallery at Bankside weren't that good. Some rather arbitrary geometric solids, some garden centre statues, some minimalist shelters, a bland strip of shops. The best was a grand stairway and basin - but more A. Sangallo than L. B. Southwark.

But compared to the design of spaces around Bankside in *Tate Gallery: Selecting an Architect* they didn't look that bad. In the Tate exhibition the graphics were slicker, the styles trendier the obsessions more cultivated - but the spaces? Stripped of architectural conceits - OMA even included (printed in dark ink on dark paper) fragments of Ancient Rome - there were still lots of empty grass, combinations of trees from forests to boulevards, flights of Tenochtitlanian steps and ramps, sunken courts, sculptures - and several bridges that didn't even touch down. Only Rick Mather included a sunlight diagram and new buildings that suggested someone had read the third aim of the brief to create a link between Bankside and its surroundings. For the rest fictions - 'an arcade street for the quartier' etc.

To reconnect one of the most deliberately disconnected of modern building types (the power station, here simply oil in by river, power out by cable and gases up the chimney) with its surroundings ('context' would imply *some* sort of relationship) and replace designed impenetrability with a use where public access is central actually parallels the history of the museum. From origins of private, almost secret, collections of wealth and curiosity through selective and invited display to civic and national pride and philanthropy, the museum is now both an architectural monument and a cultural destination, as much part of public consumption (the gallery as department store) and casual interaction (the Ace Caff V&A). But the only real clues to their use (despite architectural virtuosity they turn out ambiguous Ducks or blank screens) are the ephemera of use and activity - banners, coaches, posters, queues, loiterers and ice cream sellers.

The arcades and gallerias, shafts and ramps, indoor cities and outdoor galleries, routes and concourses of the Bankside entries collectively dissolved the seeming substance of Bankside (it's only a brick skin) and stretched the inside out with beams and pools, surprise views and shopping pavilions. Many of these would have stretched the limits of security surveillance, crowd management, environmental conditioning and even ticketing but, like all museums, raise questions of where, exactly, the 'public realm' begins and ends.

What is public and what is private is not historically fixed. Changes in technology and social mores can shift the locale of activities - even Sitte comments on the decline of the public well and the rise of the newspaper. Sometimes new spaces and uses are created - the department store - or rights of entry change - the museum. Everyday perceptions don't necessarily match legal and technical boundaries, we slip across these thresholds without so much as loosening our shirt cuffs. The doors are automatic. Only the mood of the muzak changes. Robert Cowan's definition as 'infrastructure available without charge'<sup>1</sup> operates at the point of sale, not necessarily the point of entry. Having fun for no money might be a suitably détourned definition.

But understanding this won't come from architecture alone. In the whole of the AR's recent museum special issue<sup>2</sup> there are just fifteen people in the photographs. If urban designers want to explore the ambiguities of inside and outside, what is public and what is private they should look for mundane advice - pavement café proprietors, window dressers, street vendors, deck chair attendants who stake out different territories. Or, like shopping mall security guards and church caretakers, police our transgressions.

And use our old maps of Rome not as underlays and backdrops but, like Robert Graves reading off Nolli to acknowledge the ambiguity of passage from public to semi public.<sup>3</sup> Then we might make sense of outdoor spaces by starting with their use.

### References

1. Cowan, R., *The Cities Design Forgot*, Urban Initiatives, London, 1995, p. 13.
2. *Architectural Review* No. 1182, August 1995.
3. Cited in Broadbent, G., *Emerging Concepts in Urban Space Design*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990, p. 267.

### Acknowledgements

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Joint Conference  
London Branches of the RTPI & RIBA with  
The Urban Design Group  
Thursday 16 November

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Further Details can be obtained from the RIBA:  
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