

# urban design

**Urban Design  
Quarterly**

The Journal of the  
Urban Design Group

Issue **68** October 1998

Topic:

**The 1997 UDG**

**Conference:**

**Public Spaces, People  
Places**

Case study:

**Covent Garden -**

**How does the Garden  
Fair?**

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## Transport

The policies put forward in the Government's long-awaited White Paper, 'A New Deal for Transport', will have a significant impact on the quality of urban life. UDAL has remained at the heart of the debate with its high profile seminar 'New Priorities for Urban Design?' Nick Raynsford MP, Minister for Construction, addressed an invited audience with representation from the main government agencies, as well as key professions and organisations. Other speakers included representatives from London Transport, the Pedestrian Association, Transport 2000 and UDAL Chairman, Terry Farrell. This event has provided an ideal platform from which to continue discussions with Government.

## Housing

UDAL continues its dialogue with the Housebuilders' Federation. This has provided an invaluable opportunity to discuss the factors influencing design quality with the country's major volume housebuilders. Discussions have covered the ongoing brownfield/greenfield debate, planning policy and procedure, mixed-use development and the influence of economic and consumer preferences on urban design.

## Education

The Education Group is conducting a comprehensive fact-finding mission on the urban design content of professional undergraduate and post graduate courses. Armed with this information, UDAL will be ideally placed to determine how to influence long-term education policy in urban design. UDAL's ongoing education programme will reflect

changing demands (recognising the need for public participation) and will explore the possibilities for cross-professional accreditation.

## Focus on quality - Urban Design Audit

How are decisions made which shape the built environment and how do decision-makers work together? What principles should govern development? How does the urban factor link in with the network of movement and what is the potential for improvement?

UDAL has commissioned an audit methodology which will be unveiled during Urban Design Week to enable communities and other groups to identify and realise the full potential of urban design in their places and spaces.

## Spreading the word

One of UDAL's greatest achievements has been to increase communication at a regional level. Several joint events have already taken place and UDAL's Yorkshire branch continues to thrive. The RTP1 'Urban Design - Winning Hearts and Minds' series also continues with events in Bristol, Coventry and York (further information from Marie Lawlor on 0171 837 2688). In response to this enthusiasm, UDAL has drawn up a badging mechanism to enable local groups fulfilling the criteria to show the UDAL logo. If you have not received details or require guidance on whether your event complies, please contact the Secretariat.

## So you want to know more?

For more information about UDAL please contact Samantha McDonough. Tel. 0171 307 3677 Fax 0171 255 1541. Press please contact Tony Chapman as above.

You can also consult the UDAL web site at <http://rudi.herts.ac.uk> hosted by RUDI, the Resource for Urban Design Information.

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Neither the Urban Design Group nor the editor is responsible for views expressed or statements made by individuals writing in this journal.

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The Resource for Urban Design Information (RUDI) contains general information on Urban Design and includes material from the Urban Design group including the contents of Urban Design Quarterly issue 53 onwards.

<http://rudi.herts.ac.uk/>.

The Urban Design Group also now has its own website

<http://www.udg.org.uk/>.

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Pedestrian street in Copenhagen

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**69** London at the Millennium

# Midsummer Night's Dream

Summertime and the driving is easy. London is empty of Londoners but full of tourists. Getting places by car takes about half the normal time; parking is hardly a problem. Taking the underground on the other hand is an ordeal since too few visitors know the codes normally followed by the locals, people move in large groups, the abundance of rucksacks creates a health hazard and the heat makes for a less than salubrious environment. Not the best of times for the government to launch the Transport White Paper which aims to encourage us to abandon our cars and switch to public transport. And yet those who stayed in town can see the advantages of having fewer vehicles around: "it is like it was thirty years ago, it is wonderful", they say. "And of course we should not allow our environment to deteriorate again when the autumn starts. Those who went away should not come back, so we can have more space". If only it could be so simple . . . Nimbyism affects us probably more in transport related issues than in land use ones, and solutions to congestion are eminently complex. Yes, we want more pedestrianisation but not if it means more traffic elsewhere; yes, we would take the bus if it was cheap and reliable; yes we would use the local facilities if they were competitive. . . For the time being the ifs and buts are paralysing. We need both strategies that attack the problems at city or regional level (major investment in public transport cannot be postponed) and urban design schemes that improve the quality of life at the local scale. Ambitious? Yes, but this issue of UDG is full of inspirational ideas and the government seems to be listening. So, why not dream? #

*Sebastian Loew*



## The London Planning Dilemma: Transport Infrastructure & Sustainable Brown Field Development

The Gallery, London  
17 June 1998

Delivering the UDG Annual Lecture in front of a full house, the recently knighted Sir Peter Hall explained why the government's target for brown site development in London is difficult if not impossible to achieve and why it will be a hard nut to crack for the government's Urban Task Force under Lord Roger's chairmanship, on which Sir Peter is serving as well.

In the 50s and 60s, design based solutions led to by now unacceptable high rise housing estates to accommodate the projected population expansion. This type of housing did not suit the people who moved to London any better. Eventually some of it was demolished and replaced with neo-vernacular housing for owner occupation.

Thus, mere demographic projections do not necessarily reflect effective demand. While single, widowed and divorced households are declining slightly, single non-married ones are on the increase. The latter tend to

aspire to lucrative jobs which enable them to buy space, especially in London. The question is where to find this space. Prescott seeks 629,000 additional housing units in London (of the 4.4 million units countrywide) of which 71% are for single households. However, bedsits will not do. LPAC and SERPLAN are trying to accommodate these projected numbers mainly on brownfield sites. Their objective is to create sustainable urbanism. A study by Llewelyn-Davies (reviewed in UDG 67, p.42) shows how existing suburbs could be densified, but such solutions are unlikely to be implemented in the current climate of Nimbyism and with the existing fragmentation of land ownership. Similarly, the idea of not accommodating cars to gain space for housing may not be accepted by people. Even if such solutions were acceptable, they would only amount to 10-14% of the total need. Furthermore they do not correspond to the current UDPs and private developers are still pushing for green field sites, including open public spaces. Perhaps Compulsory Purchase Orders or new legislation are needed to make necessary space available on privatised utilities and railway land. #

*Judith Ryser*

## Study Tour of Cities of the Plain

June 29 - July 7 1998

This summer a group of 37 Urban Design Group members visited eleven cities in Lombardy and the Veneto during an eight day trip by rail from London. We were struck by the generous scale, civilised squares and busy civic life of these cities.

In his book on Romanesque architecture, Kenneth Conant describes the Po valley as a natural corridor for trade from Venice to northern Europe via the Alpine passes, and as having "a magnificent row of towns" from antiquity onwards. Today many of these are major industrial centres, but their cores are well conserved and remain the focus of civic life.

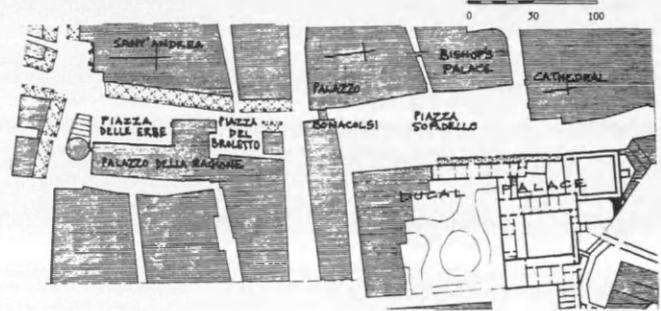
Virtually all the cities we visited started as Roman colonies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Most of them still retain their original grid street pattern. Pavia, for example, began as a typical Roman colony of 50,000 population measuring 800m x 500m, as recommended by the architect Hygenus. The *Cardo* originated from the present river crossing, and the main Piazza Vittoria is on the site of the Roman forum. Though no Roman buildings survive, one frequently encounters Roman columns retained in the street corners of more recent buildings.

Whilst the Lombard cities were powerful enough to confront the Holy Roman Emperor in the early Middle Ages, the tangible medieval landscape dates from the later period of domination by despotic local dynasties, such as the Visconti, the Scaligeri and the Gonzaga. The many stumps of towers make one realise that in their time most of these cities must have resembled today's San Gimignano. From this period also date severe Gothic public buildings, massive cathedrals and baptisteries that combine to form distinctive and extremely fine ensembles of buildings and spaces that are the hallmarks of their cities and the focus of daily life even today. Often there is a sequence of spaces, each performing originally a commercial, an

administrative or a politico-religious function, and each fronted by appropriate buildings. For example, at Mantua the Piazza delle Erbe is a market place fronted by the shops slotted into the side of Alberti's church of Sant'Andrea. This links via a pinch-point to the smaller Piazza del Broletto off which leads the ceremonial staircase to the Palazzo della Ragione or courts of justice at first floor level with arcades for commercial purposes at ground level (the combination of public and commercial uses in one building is a frequent phenomenon). Finally the Piazza del Broletto is joined via an arch under the massive and forbidding Palazzo Bonacolsi (the original ruling family) to the vast, irregular and sloping Piazza Sordello onto which face the cathedral, the bishop's palace and the rambling collection of buildings that form the ducal palace. This sequence of functionally discreet spaces exists in other cities, such as the Piazza delle Erbe and Piazza dei Signori at Verona and Padua.

At Padua the Palazzo della Ragione takes the form of a vast hall with inverted ship's hull roof on an arcaded undercroft (1218) which together with adjoining squares, accommodates the market. Interestingly the plan form of the building was warped into a parallelogram to fit the pre-existing spaces generated by the original Roman plan. Vicenza retains a similar Palazzo della Ragione, which was famously re-fronted by Palladio in 1644-1614 as one side of his very fine Piazza della Signoria. Over the same period he had a considerable effect on the townscape of his adopted city, though the uncharitable might wonder, from the very pretty Venetian Gothic palazzi that survived his attentions, whether the city might not have looked better without quite so many pastiche NatWest banks by the master.

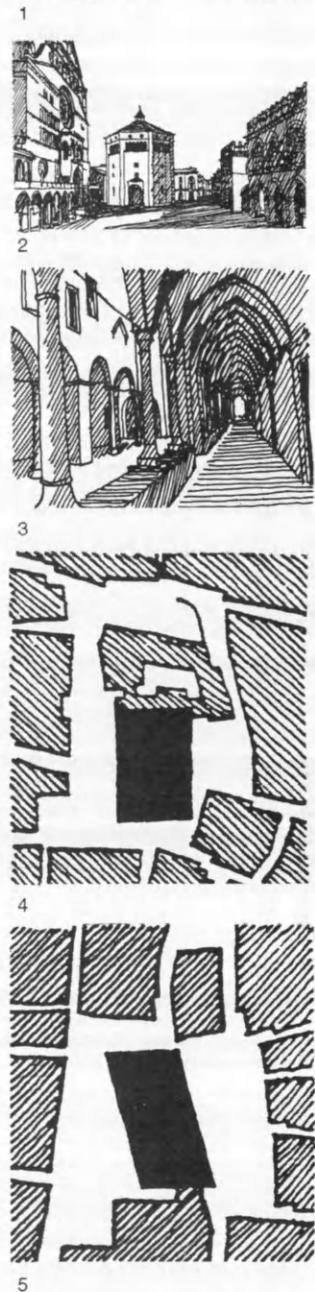
That the Middle Ages perhaps knew more about urban design than did the Renaissance is demonstrated by the totally outside domination of the Piazza del Duomo by Cremona's cathedral and baptistery, which goes way beyond Alberti's



height to width limitation of 6 to 1; and by the formation of very fine arcaded streets, such as the Via San Francesco at Padua, where the width of each flanking arcade is equal to that of the street itself, creating the feeling of three parallel cloisters.

An interesting debate on the relative merits of medieval and Renaissance town planning was provoked by the comparison of the small planned towns of Sabbioneta and Montagnana. Sabbioneta was founded in 1560 by Vespasiano de Gonzaga as a Lombard Athens and residence for himself. It has a small ducal palace, church, theatre, arcaded main square and grid plan within polygonal fortifications. Despite its conspicuous regularity, the town was the subject of a treatise by Ivor de Wolfe in 1963 in his book *The Italian Townscape* to the effect that the plan exhibited picturesque principles in its frequent use of end-stopped views, and that this was encouraged by Alberti. De Wolfe was perhaps labouring the point in order to demonstrate that planned towns do not have to be regular, but we now understand the degree of planning inherent in a town such as Montagnana, founded by the Venetians in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and rebuilt by the Paduans in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Like Sabbioneta, it has three parallel streets and a main square, and is enclosed within most spectacular rectilinear fortifications. But unlike Sabbioneta the streets are arcaded and undulating in their alignment. The effect is most attractive, and, we now realise, no less planned than that of Sabbioneta. #

Alan Stones



From top to bottom:  
1. Mantua - sequence of spaces.  
2. Cremona - Piazza del Duomo.  
3. Padua - Via San Francesco.  
4 & 5. Palazzi della Ragioni in Vicenza and Padua.

**The 1998 Kevin Lynch Memorial Lecture  
Contemporary Urban  
design: Towards a New  
Pragmatism?**

8th July at the Gallery

It was comforting to see a capacity audience at the Gallery for this year's Kevin Lynch Memorial Lecture and it was fitting that the speaker should be Ricky Burdett, the director of the LSE's Cities, Architecture and Engineering programme and a member of the government's Urban Task Force, who attempted to bridge the gap between the design professions and the social sciences.

He started with a series of parallel contrasting images and wondered why our professions have failed to identify the elements that create disharmony and disfunction in the built environment: for instance, with hindsight, it is clear that a housing estate with no visible front doors and no clear connection to the rest of the city would have problems and yet, when it was built, nobody thought about it. As we are facing new housing needs and we are embarking on a new wave of house building, how are we going to avoid making the same mistakes?

Going back in time, Burdett analysed some of the qualities of traditional cities such as continuity and the relationships between buildings and public spaces. Refreshingly he did not blame modernists for all our ills, reminding us that they were trying to solve fundamental problems such as overcrowding, poverty and unhealthy housing. Equally, he did not find the approach taken by some of the American new urbanists

necessarily better, pointing out that their objective was control (just like Bantham's Panopticum). The culprit for a number of changes in thinking and designing since the last war was the motor car which had eroded continuity in the relationship between urban spaces.

Returning to the future and to his theme, Burdett tackled the Millennium Village, a housing development on a brownfield site where new ideas are to be tested, and wondered if we could not find a methodology to chose the best scheme and avoid the problems of the past. Having been on the jury and disagreeing with the majority's choice, he was not over-optimistic regarding the way that decisions were made. He compared Ralph Erskine's winning scheme - which has the advantage of considering the possibilities of expansion of the development over time - to that of Bohigas. The former, though organic, seems to impose a high level of control whilst the latter, much more urban, seems to respond clearly to Lynch's principles of legibility, permeability, clear edges, etc. A particularly worrying aspect was illustrated by a slide showing the size of the Village in relation to central London: its length is equivalent to that from Euston station to the Aldwych, yet it only has one direct connection to central London through the Jubilee Line station at the Dome end of the site. Pious words on sustainability, a car free area (which turns out to be a car free ground but a car full underground) seem contradicted and defeated by this, even if the possibility of surface public transport is being considered.

Defeat has also affected the next scheme considered by Burdett, Foster's World Squares which Westminster City Council has just refused to endorse until the government has clear policies to reduce traffic in central London, a clear case of lack of leadership and passing the buck.<sup>1</sup> In the ensuing lively debate the question was asked about what the objectives for the World Square scheme had been, one which had to remain

without a clear answer.

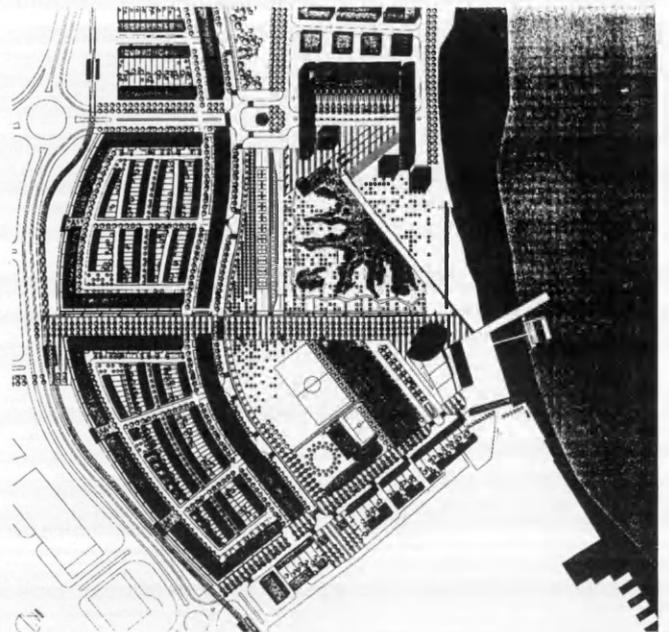
The methodology to make better choices has not been found but it appears that even if it was, there is no guarantee that decision makers would accept its recommendations. This and the examples discussed led Burdett to conclude that our main objective should be to get the message to the politicians. #

*Sebastian Loew*

**Note**

1. Since then Westminster City Council has reversed their decision and the World Squares scheme is to go ahead after all.

*Below: R. Erskine and Hunt Thompson's winning scheme for the Millennium Village.  
Bottom: Martorell, Bohigas and Mackay's scheme for the Millennium Village.*



## The Waterfront and Urban Design in Bristol

We were looking forward to May 15th, the first one day conference of UDG/SW, and the day started clear and bright.

Arriving at Bristol Temple Meads station, we spied a neat little building across the river, which we took to be the marketing suite of English Partnerships where the conference was to be held.

On arrival we found a dinky little building, all white and ship-like spiralling out of the water's edge, complete with crow's nest, around which delegates were already gathering to 'spy the land'. A building of a collection of flat planes and tendon cables defining internal usable space.

Inside, David Beardmore, Managing Director of G L Hearn Planning who had put together the day for UDG/SW, was giving everyone a warm welcome. G L Hearn, celebrating its 75th anniversary, was also generously sponsoring the event.

Over 40 delegates came, from as far away as Manchester and Plymouth, for a programme of talks in the morning and a river boat trip after lunch. Ken Johnson, Projects Manager of English Partnerships, spoke on 'The Role of English Partnerships', Steve Perry and Alastair Brook from Bristol City Council did a double act on 'The Role of the Local Planning Authority and Policy Aspirations', and the third talk

on 'The Design Approach and Implementation' was given by David Mellor of Alec French Partnership. The morning was chaired by John Biggs.

Alastair Brook and Steve Perry emphasised the historical significance of the now derelict former industrial areas abutting the river's edge, Harbourside (Canon's Marsh) and Temple Quay. The Port of Bristol which depended on these sites was the reason for the development of the city's historical international significance. We were shown a number of evocative paintings and photos of quayside activity, extending into the city along the River Froome, now culverted. Then, as now, Bristol's scale is overwhelmingly 'domestic', unlike industrial counterparts Manchester and Liverpool.

David Mellor explained the ideas behind the masterplan for Harbourside, including the 'Millennium Mile' from Temple Meads to SS Great Britain. The design has an active hinterland rather than an active quayside, in contrast to the historical use of the land. Two major leisure uses to the south of the Cathedral, Wildscreen World and Science World, with a projected figure of 750,000 visitors a year, are re-using the listed GWR goods shed and lead work buildings, as well as establishing new buildings.

Ken Johnson reminded us of how essential public sector funding is in catalysing development, even if relatively small beer in absolute terms. For Harbourside public sector funds are made up of £17m from English Partnerships, £10m Bristol City Council, and £4.1m Millennium Commission, as

against £250m private sector investment. By contrast, the creation nearly 200 years ago of the 'floating harbour' - 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> miles of non-tidal water - was financed locally by the Bristol Corporation and merchants.

Public sector money is essential to fund elements which make a 'good place to be'. For example, £6.5m is going into the squares and spaces, with £1m for the famous 'bugle bridge' by Elis O'Connell, which completes the missing link in the Millennium Mile, across St Augustine's Reach.

### Boat trip and walkabout

After lunch we had a wonderful boat trip, seeing 'for real' what we had heard about in the morning. What a variety of environments encompassed in that 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> mile stretch from the Marketing Suite to Hotwells, St Augustine's Reach and back! What a mix of memories we collected, how in some places grass came down to the top of the river's retaining wall; in others, steps down to the river gave close contact with the water and a natural sitting space. By Welsh Back lots of people and great displays of bright flowers contrasted with the warehouses rising sheer out of the water opposite. In some places the view was tightly contained, in others a whole fish-bowl panorama, up to Clifton's brightly painted terraces on the hill top.

Tight water's edges of cafes and lazy day uses contrasted with essential low rent boat maintenance yards, new houses sitting next to old. Lloyds HQ, on the most prominent piece of land, contributed least, with its

'skateboard park' in front. It was here that we disembarked for a quick look round Harbourside.

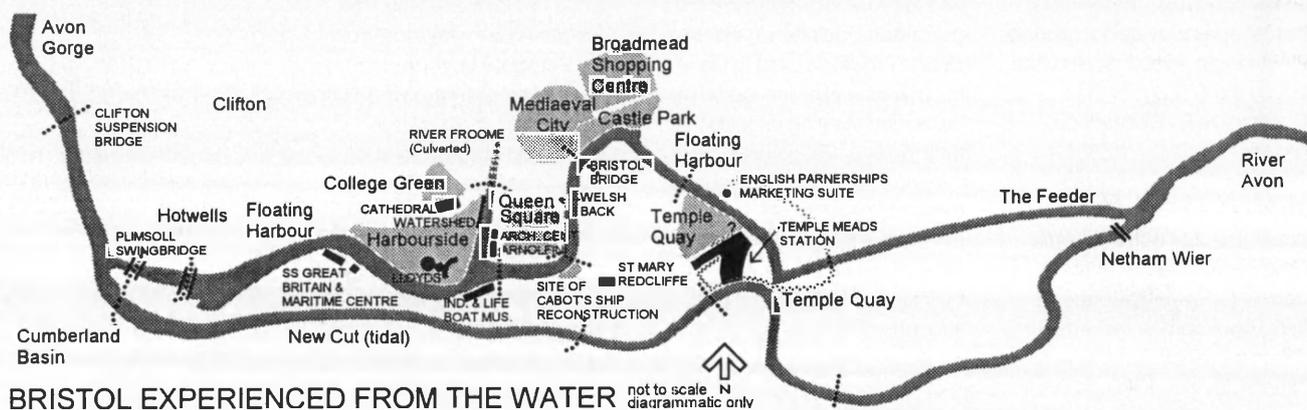
Our little group headed to the Cathedral to experience the 'new' College Green, all quiet greenspace, water and people enjoying the sunshine, the road having been diverted to the south. Via the Norman Gateway we crossed the 'diverted' road and walked round the 'backside' of the Lloyds building to the boat.

### Good places

Back at the Marketing Suite the third session of the day began - UDG/SW third quarterly meeting. The main business was to choose the 'good places' of the region nominated since our first meeting in December. Poundbury engendered a good natured but strongly felt debate about just what was meant by a good place! Bristol Waterfront was well up the list - David's organisation had worked its trick! Other items discussed were the Transport and Movement Group assessment of the white paper on Integrated Transport, and the Housing Group consideration of the problem of speculative greenfield housing developments.

Thus came to an end a very interesting, enjoyable, relaxing, sociable and productive day. On our journey home we reflected on what we had heard and seen during the day, and felt that, if there were an award for the best value conference, this one would certainly win it for 1998! #

*Michael and Penelope Tollit*



**The 'New' Essex Design Guide? A Reply**

Alan Stones, the New Essex

Design Guide's editor,

replies to Penelope and

Michael Tollit (UDG 67, pp

10-14).

First of all one must be grateful for Penelope and Michael Tollit's thorough analysis of the thinking behind the new Essex Design Guide. This is then tempered by the feeling that they may have misunderstood the purpose of the document, which is a 'how to do it and what we are looking for' guide for developers, rather than an intellectually rigorous review of previous practice leading through to a policy framework. It is for this reason that the Guide does not dwell on the experience of the original 1973 Guide or show examples of good schemes already built, since we are starting from a totally new point of departure.

The Guide aims to be comprehensive on matters of layout, but not on building construction or wider environmental issues. Hence the Tollits' dissatisfaction with the selective concern of the Guide with only those sustainability issues that directly affect layout. They feel there is a conflict between starting from an attractive series of spaces as the basis of a layout, on the one hand, and designing for effective pedestrian movement on the other. Experience shows, however, that it is starting from the needs of vehicle circulation that creates conflict, and that attractive spaces and effective pedestrian circulation are completely compatible. The Tollits' contention that "historic townscapes provide no rationale for strategic layout" is not borne out by the findings of the Responsive Environments group.

Above all, the Tollits are uncomfortable with the Essex Guide's steering of higher density (above 8 dwellings per acre) development towards urban forms and spaces with joined-together buildings, when

the buying public's aspirations are for looser, suburban layouts. "Suburbia", they maintain, "is a particularly British phenomenon". It is not, nor should we regard suburbia with the kind of cultural awe that discounts the sustainability problems engendered by the proliferation of suburbia. The Essex Guide provides criteria for the layout of low-density suburbia or Arcadia where appropriate, but it discourages the cramming of detached houses on to tiny plots where densities have to be higher.

The Essex Guide is not a site-specific, tailor-made set of policies produced from thorough-going community consultation involving developers and all the other players in the process. It is a fairly blunt instrument operated in generalised circumstances to alter the behaviour of the speculative housing market in our part of the world. #

*Alan Stones*

**Design and the Local Politician**

In the first of our

contributions by people

involved with urban design

but not as practitioners, a

Southwark councillor

comments on the relation

between design and

regeneration.

Good quality design can lead to good quality regeneration: that is the view I reached after 12 years as a local councillor in the centre of London. Too often in the past design has been used to make the pretence of regeneration by producing startling projects that thrill the eye. But as - at least in the public sector- design quality could not be afforded throughout the scheme, the flaws combined with poor maintenance soon showed through.

The housing estates that surround my area are a testament to the failure to understand design properly. One of them, now pulled down, was built in a marshy area: it was thought that the foundations would be able to overcome this disadvantage. But when the heating pipes warmed the area around them, the ground began to dry and caused the buildings to subside. The scheme started collapsing into the mud. Additionally the Housing Department was in a hurry and its officers calculated that if the scheme was built with fewer lifts, the resulting savings could be spent on more flats. The flaw was that the buildings were ugly and provided no space for people to move around. Tenants were either inside their flat or out of the estate. The designing at speed may have been the excuse given but in reality the problems arose because the scheme was being driven by the wrong drivers.

Councillors are interested local people with a little knowledge of design which time and again I have seen being turned managerially against the residents. The councillors want to use this knowledge but they convert it into a slavish acceptance of what the officers have told them.

Officers are there to be both challenged and supported; residents claim there is too little consultation or time to consult; and councillors have to weigh it all up and make multi million pound decisions. They can rarely get these right but that is what democracy is. Design should ensure better results and fewer complaints, therefore helping in the decision making process.

I joined battle myself when the council who were my landlords decided to pull down the tenement block I was living in, in order to build another large estate, when they had just finished one that was already looking tired and alienating. We won and I became a councillor. Although this is not always required, in my case it was poor design and lack of communications that caused me to get involved.

I would also like to suggest that poor design leads to alienated voters who either do not vote or vote you out. Let me mention two design regeneration schemes, both trying to link the city with its poorer hinterland. I was proud to champion the Millennium bridge from St Paul's to Bankside by the Tate and to help to choose the winning design. It is beautiful to look at, it adds to the area and its attractions, and it is there for people, not for cars or trains. The other scheme tried to liven up the link to the city through the inclusion of lamp posts and dustbins: it looked one coat of paint deep, it never worked and the money spent looks largely wasted. At the next election, the party which promoted the bridge held control of the council whilst the one which implemented the other scheme, lost.

Design is integral to getting London as a world city to the quality we see in the rest of Europe. New Labour, new design, . . . perhaps not, but if design is a function of communication and an expression of the society it is part of, this should be true. #

*Jeremy Fraser*

# A Case for Strategic Housing Renewal?

Tony-Lloyd Jones

Media concern with the current housing debate and related planning issues in the UK is at a level not seen since the sixties and seventies. However, the debate shows signs of lapsing into a narrow polarisation of green and brown viewpoints.

Turning over badly contaminated and poorly located industrial brown field sites to housing use may sometimes be neither appropriate or economically feasible. Other means of long term regeneration of such sites may be more effective. On the other hand, there are areas of existing, highly accessible but low grade housing that could be rebuilt at higher densities to modern standards of energy efficiency and urban design, with a far greater impact on environmental sustainability.

A more balanced view of housing policy would look beyond the simplistic site-focused argument towards a strategic overview of our housing stock, taking in its environmental performance, accessibility and density. Putting housing development in cities on a level playing field with greenfield development needs to involve more than restoring contaminated sites or taxation. At question are conservation-orientated planning attitudes and policies that are applied without distinction to good and poor quality built form alike.

## Accommodating new households

If the projected 4.4 million increase in the number of households between 1991 and 2016 actually occurs and is accommodated at the suburban densities favoured by the planning standards in most local plans, then there will be a corresponding growth in car-based travel, pollution and

sprawl - now regarded as both environmentally and politically unsustainable.

Some of the steam has been taken out of the argument over how many of these extra households can be located in existing urban areas by the government's decision to abandon the official predict and provide approach. Under pressure from below, it has decided that it should be left to the regions to decide their own targets. Nevertheless, despite this and a growing number of challenges to the basic assumptions of the projection, the 4.4 million figure is firmly established in the imagination of planners as the figure upon which housing policy should be predicated.

Not striving to meet this so-called demand raised for many what is a chilling spectre of housing demand management. It is taken as read that, not only does every household have a right to a dwelling, it has a right to the sort of dwelling to which it aspires, which is generally believed to be a suburban house with a garden.

Planners often use the argument against higher density provision in cities that this is not what people want. Polls do tend to support the view that most people in the UK would prefer to live in owner-occupied houses rather than flats.<sup>1</sup> However, such polls are of little value. No doubt many of the same people interviewed would prefer a large Kensington town house to a three-bedroom semi-detached in Surbiton. The effective choice between house or flat depends on available supply. Price and location and other factors, such as transport money and time costs, may be more important, let alone capital availability or creditworthiness.

Dwelling space is and will remain at a premium and we may now be approaching the limits of the environmental 'carrying capacity' of these small islands. The critical issue is what quality and level of space provision and amenity people can reasonably expect in an advanced industrial economy which is aiming to be environmentally sustainable.

Some form of collective decision may need to be taken on this, as on other similar environmental issues, if the 'zero sum' game - where all lose from each pursuing their selfish interest - is to be avoided.

One of the targets on the previous government's hit list of ways of accommodating the projected increase in households in existing towns and cities was 'over-occupation', defined as 'having two or more bedrooms than is strictly necessary.' The fact that 39% of all owner-occupier households have more than one spare bedroom is symptomatic of dramatic shifts in space provision over this century.

The average number of persons per habitable room in the UK fell from 0.83 in 1951 to 0.49 in 1991.<sup>2</sup> While much of the increase in space standards is due to increasing affluence, much is also attributable to the ever shrinking size of households. The average household size was 5.25 in 1901. By 1991 it had shrunk to less than 2.5.

While the pressures for the release of more land outside the cities remains strong, both from mass house-builders and from planners arguing for planned new towns, research has shown that land release on any politically realistic scale is unlikely to have much impact on house prices, supply or access to home ownership.<sup>3</sup> John Gummer's previous 'aspirational target' of 60% of new housing development on urban land has recently been reinstated with some force by John Prescott. The logic of sustainable development certainly means that it must be to the more effective and efficient use of land and infrastructure in towns and cities that we look first before extending into new areas beyond.

## Urban buzz or town cramming?

How we are to do this, whilst simultaneously making our cities more attractive places to live, privileges the urban design perspective over the more

generalist land use planning viewpoint which has shaped the argument thus far. We are hearing a clamour of concerns about 'town cramming' and the creation of new high density 'slums'. Town cramming was a term originally coined to describe the overcrowding that occurred in tightly spaced, over-occupied industrial working class slum housing. This type of overcrowding has largely ceased to exist but a confusion over the distinctions between density and crowding is still widespread.

The crude equation between high density and overcrowded slum housing is being made, not least by politicians. A moment's reflection on the high residential densities that exist, for example, in parts of London such as Notting Hill, Maida Vale, Marylebone or St John's Wood will demonstrate that slums have little or nothing to do with high density (or high rise) and everything to do with poverty.

Density standards continue to be driven by a suburban vision and response to bygone conditions. The 'cramming' problem is not the density of people who, in any, case, are living at much higher standards of space, comfort and security than previous generations but the density of cars. If it becomes much more difficult to own and use cars in the densest parts of our cities, and much easier, cheaper and more pleasant to use public transport, cycle or walk, then there is no reason why densities in cities should not increase in line with improved environmental quality.

Recent studies by Llewelyn-Davies and others have demonstrated how planning standards, particularly in relation to parking, determine the suburban character of new housing development.<sup>4</sup> Much higher densities, as well as a more appropriate urban form would result from relaxing these standards. Experimental car-free housing development, car pooling and a lowering of parking standards in innovative new urban housing are route markers for new planning policy.

On a more strategic level the implications for the design and

management of our towns and cities are profound. Despite making the right kind of noises in its recent Transport White Paper, the government is shying away from the radical measures that will ultimately be necessary to control the use of cars in (and around) major urban areas. Walking, cycling and going by public transport will have to take the place of a substantial number of journeys currently undertaken by car. Walking will have to be a safer and more pleasant experience than it is for most of us at present, as will travelling by bus or train.

Higher densities are the pre-requisite of successful local services accessed by foot and viable, good quality public transport, while urban design frameworks offer the opportunity of linking high pedestrian-priority routes to public transport nodes and corridors. These in turn are the natural foci of the high density and mixed use development of the future.

#### **Energy costs of housing and the need for housing renewal**

In many ways there are direct parallels between demand management issues which are central to the debate on road transport and housing. The emission/energy costs of housing are greater than vehicles. By some accounts, domestic consumption accounts for 50% of all energy use in the UK. A correspondingly high proportion of the source emissions, whether at power stations or within the home, is associated with the use of energy in housing.

The UK has among the worst records in Europe for standards of house insulation, with British homes causing more environmental damage than their European counterparts.<sup>5</sup> This is a historical trend with the British preferring to invest more in space rather than higher insulation standards.<sup>6</sup> David Crowther points out that some of 85% houses in the UK were built before 1975 when insulation standards at last began to improve significantly.<sup>7</sup>

A proportion of these houses will have had improvements in the form of double glazing or loft insulation. Nevertheless, most of the fabric of this inherited housing stock is likely to remain at a low level of thermal performance with a huge impact on the environment.

It is increasingly argued that higher car taxes and road pricing should be imposed to make the motorist pay for environmental impacts and other externalities - the true costs of the car - and, at the same time, create a level playing field with public transport. New pollution and energy saving mechanisms can be enforced in new cars through legislation. Any additional costs will be paid by the purchaser and in a period of ten to fifteen years, car turnover will ensure that most vehicles will meet the new standards. Housing, however, does not work this way.

The very low current level of housing replacement means that the thermal standards that apply to new housing imposed through the building regulations cannot be applied retroactively to the majority of the housing stock. The true environmental costs of thermally-poor housing is not borne by the owners.

In general, if current and future governments are serious about tackling the environmental agenda then some means must be found to improve the thermal performance of housing. There is certainly an argument here in favour of a much higher level of housing replacement, with more new houses built to current standards of thermal performance.

A higher level of housing replacement offers the opportunity of increasing density where appropriate. This could be done on an infill basis but would make more sense by creating special development zones on a street or district basis associated with public transport nodes or corridors as outlined above. This would generalise the Australian 'ped-shed' approach used by Llewelyn-Davies in their study.

Problems of land assembly are

likely to preclude a more comprehensive approach. The last time we tried it, in the sixties and seventies, the redevelopment of large areas of cities and their infrastructure was a disaster. The reaction, which has lasted for twenty years now certainly saved us from more of the same - but it has also given rise to a somewhat stifling attachment to everything that is old.

It has also blinded us to the real causes of the problems associated with mass housing in the past which are to do with the scale of development, poor methods of construction and poor urban design. Above all, however, as recent Rowntree reports have shown, they have to do with management and letting policies and inadequate servicing and maintenance.<sup>8</sup>

High rise housing is being re-considered as a potential solution once more. There are certainly circumstances where high rise is appropriate and it can be made to work with supporting servicing and management. This is incidental to the main argument, however. We know that, without the scourge of contemporary parking standards, high residential densities can easily be accommodated in traditional medium rise perimeter and courtyard block development. Such quality, higher density housing with good access to public transport through renewal would have a really major impact on sustainability.

Current good practice in urban design offers us the means of designing new, quality urban environments that are better than much of what exists in run-down back streets in inner city areas of many of our cities. Surely now is time to review our attitudes and policies and contemplate a major renewal of our outworn housing stock in line with a strategic spatial planning approach to integrated transport and land use. #

*Tony Lloyd-Jones*

# Urban Design from Hunter Gatherers? <sup>1</sup> James Bruges

## Notes

1. See, for example, the MORI poll quoted by Peter Hall: Hall, P., (1997) *City, suburb or Country? Who Cares? A Planner's View*, *Proceedings of The Second Edge Debate*, Royal Institute of British Architects, 12 February. p2.
2. Census figures here quoted by Charles Board (1997) in his MA Dissertation, *High Residential Densities*, University of Westminster. The normal official measure of overcrowding is more than one person per habitable room.
3. Department of the Environment (1992) *The Relationship between House Price and Land Supply* (by Gerald Eve with the Department of Land Economy, Cambridge, London: HMSO, and Bramley, G., Planning, the market and private house-building, *The Planner* 79 (1), 14-16 (1993) both quoted in Hall, P., *The Future of the Metropolis and Urban Form*, *Urban Studies*, Vol. 31.3, pp211-220.
4. Llewelyn-Davies (1998) *Sustainable Residential Quality*, London Planning Advisory Committee.
5. EDAW and De Montfort University (1997) *Living Places: Sustainable Homes, Sustainable Communities*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/National housing forum.
6. Donnison, D. and Ungerson, C. (1982) *Housing Policy*, Penguin.
7. Crowther, D., K. Steemers, N. Baker & M. Nikolopoulou, Microclimate and Urban Form, in *The Integrated Metropolis*, School of the Built Environment, University of Westminster (forthcoming).
8. Page, D. (1993) *Building for Communities: A study of new housing association estates*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

'Women weren't designed to be suburban

housewives'. A comment

only remarkable because I

came across it in a book

subtitled *The New Science*

of *Evolutionary Psychology*<sup>2</sup>.

Later the author is less sexist and more predictable with 'we live in cities and suburbs and watch TV and drink beer, all the while being pushed and pulled by feelings designed to propagate our genes in a small hunter-gatherer population'.

Evolutionary psychology has brought fresh light to bear on why we eat junk food or why children are instinctively afraid of snakes, which they may never have encountered, but not of traffic which threatens them daily. But in this article I will look at its bearing on the formation of communities, a subject of particular concern to urban planners.

One can start with 'the prisoner's dilemma', which is often quoted in EP texts. Two prisoners are questioned separately. Will he betray me? Shall I betray him? In both cases the prudent answer is yes. But if the process is repeated a hundred times betrayal is not the best strategy, it is superseded by 'tit for tat'. This was the winning strategy in an open competition tested by computer simulation. First time round I give him the benefit of the doubt and do not betray him. Thereafter I respond as he responds. The argument is then applied not just to two prisoners but to several. It leads to the conclusion that altruism is a prudent course of action and explains why it is the binding force of small communities, even though self interest remains the driving force of our genes. It also explains why some communities break down, tribalism takes over and open conflict develops. This is an overview of a complex argument which makes fascinating reading and, I will argue below, has relevance to

the planning and organisation of local communities.

## Brain power

Some animals evolved to form large communities, others small ones. The larger the community, the more an animal would need to remember whom to trust and against whom to hold a grudge, among other things (from the prisoner's dilemma theory). This requires brain power! It has been found that one module of the brain, the neocortex, evolved in direct proportion to this need - in primates and carnivores the bigger the society in which an individual lives the bigger its neocortex relative to the rest of the brain. The correlation is so exact that the size of groupings can be predicted with remarkable accuracy. The size of the neocortex in humans predicts that we evolved to live in societies 150 strong (how big is your phone list?).

## Property/ownership

Hunter-gatherers living in forests have survived for thousands of years. They evolved webs of understanding which ensured that the forests continued to provide for their needs. Recently many governments have nationalised the forests in the interest of conservation and, surprise surprise, the forests deteriorate (for forests also read commons). The forests no longer belong to the tribals and their web of understanding falls apart: if they don't exploit and steal trees someone else will. The forests can now only be protected by gunships and searchlights. The concepts of ownership and property are therefore embedded deep in human nature and go back a long way before money, law and government hijacked them. Public ownership has little value for EP, while ownership of urban land by an individual who has left it derelict for a decade is an aberration. Ownership in EP terms is an instinctive relationship between a community and its immediate environment which is supported by a web of trust and negotiation.

## Trade

It has been axiomatic to political theorists from Bentham onwards that government and law are necessary for trade. EP puts it precisely the other way round. Trade was probably practised even before homo sapiens came on the scene. Humans, like some monkeys, form competing groups, and trade is a way of making alliances and avoiding conflict - there is more at stake than just the articles exchanged. Some primitive tribes even suppress their own skills for an excuse to exchange with others. The point is that trade is one of our fundamental tools for creating social stability, but the straightjackets and anonymity imposed by modern governance destroy its effectiveness.

## Applications to planning

The size of the neocortex in human brains suggests that street-scale communities should be the basic building block of our cities (others have come to the same conclusion through sociology). At this scale it is possible for people to know each other and therefore instinctively behave with reciprocal altruism as predicted by the prisoner's dilemma. The growing LETS movement is obviously in line with EP trade theory since it requires personal negotiation rather than translating everything into the abstract world of money. The EP arguments suggest that it is essential for the local authority to step back from its control role and to delegate a real sense of ownership to the local community. The authority's ownership these days is so tightly defined that fundamental instincts relating people to their surroundings are destroyed - remember the group in Hull which grassed over its street for a celebration and was treated as criminal?

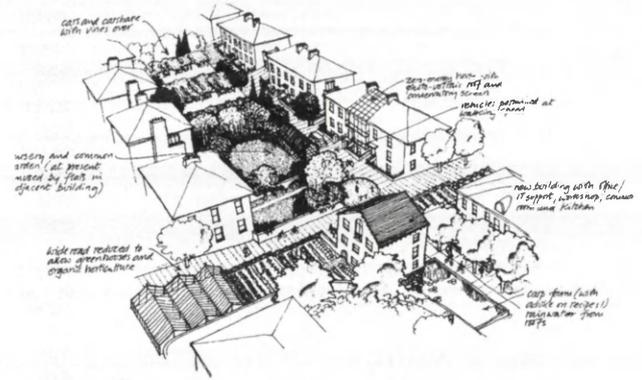
The pattern emerging from EP theory is groups of street-scale communities which, within minimal constraints, can make their own decisions on the use and decoration of their houses, decide on new buildings, prioritise the use of their streets between cars and children etc.

The group would share creche, workshop, car-wash, refuse-sorting, house-repair, street-cleaning, IT support and any other facilities that are normally handled centrally, with local people employed or volunteering to run these facilities. They would run a LETS scheme. The group could organise a car-hire club reducing the number of cars needed. It would enable the unemployed to have mutually advantageous involvement outside the cash economy. Groups would pick up ideas from other groups by example. Local involvement would reduce the need to travel. As well as empowering people to create community, this pattern would result in our cities becoming more diverse and interesting places.

Closely related to this is the CoHousing movement<sup>3</sup> which originated in Denmark and is now growing in the US. People club together to build their own group of houses. Typically there are 15 to 35 self sufficient homes clustered around a common house with shared facilities such as a dining room, workshops, home-office space with equipment, child care area and recreational area. Cars are parked on the edge, there is common green space. Diversity of ages, family structures, race, heritage and economic levels is seen as a strength. In the UK the movement is hindered by the difficulty of obtaining appropriate land but there are some instances of existing streets/flats moving in this direction.

## Conformism

People of course network beyond their immediate area, often with thousands of others. Without a binding force, society would fall apart as each individual or group pursues its own interests. For EP it was the instinct to conform which caused cooperative tribes to survive and selfish tribes to die out. It enabled tribes to act with a common purpose, and it is one of the attributes which set us apart and allowed our species to dominate all others. And it led to the development of culture. Conformism is therefore



View of a residential street in Cotham, Bristol, as modified by a radical and creative community.

at the heart of human nature. This is a massive claim for an instinct that we often regard as an insult. The instinct to conform can blind us to the obvious. To take an important example - a child can work out that a world economy based on growth can not be sustained for her lifetime, whereas an adult conforms to the accepted mantra and even the suggestion makes him angry. When we eventually abandon growth as the basis of our economy, urban planning will of course have very different objectives. This argument also underlines the importance of mixed-use development. Cultural/religious conformity in one tribe can separate it from another and can lead to war. Even within a culture, when groupings polarise, the result can be catastrophic. Architects will be familiar with the Constantinople incident which gave us Hagia Sophia: the sporting faction of the Greens was identified with the 'heresy' party and the Blues identified with emperor Justinian's re-imposition of religious orthodoxy. The Nika riots which followed resulted in the cathedral having to be rebuilt and 3000 people being massacred in the stadium. Celtic and Rangers beware!

## Conclusion

Planners can help to prevent networks from polarising by humanising the streets and by ensuring that cities do not break down into single-use ghettos. The campaign to encourage mixed use in all parts of the city which has been promoted by

the Urban Villages Forum and taken up by English Partnerships, is a step in this direction. It is to be hoped that sometime in the dim and distant future we will give priority to the use of our streets by people walking, cycling and using public transport, all of which are activities that encourage contact between diverse sectors of society.

Evolutionary psychologists have applied their discipline to a number of subjects but, as far as I know, a book relating it to the urban environment has not yet been written. EP differs from other disciplines because it is not concerned with how we would like people to behave in our ideal designs but how they actually are, and we ignore this at our peril. In this article I have concentrated on the one issue of street-scale community which, I hope, demonstrates its relevance.#

James Bruges

## Notes

1. Much of this article is based on: Matt Ridley, *The Origins of Virtue*, ISBN 0-14-024404-2
2. Robert Wright, *The Moral Animal*, ISBN 0-349-10704-1
3. HYPERLINK <http://www.cohousing.org>

between spatial design and pedestrian activity to be measured. In Figure 2, the network of pedestrian routes in and around Trafalgar Square has been analysed using Space Syntax software. This calculates the relative accessibility of each spatial link in the network and represents the most accessible routes drawn as thick black lines and the least accessible as thin broken lines. Accessibility is measured by calculating shortest journey routes between each link and all of the others in the network (defining 'shortest' in terms of fewest changes of direction).

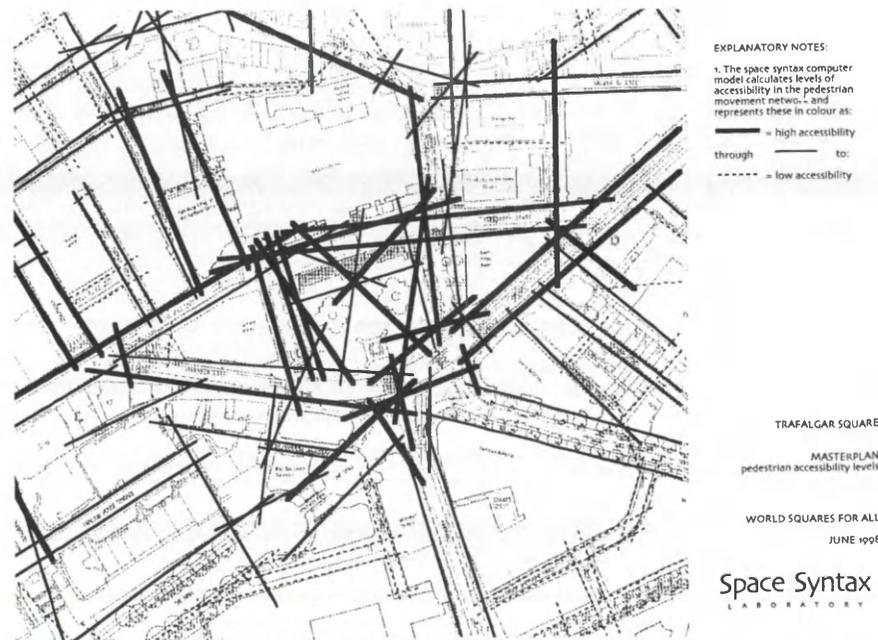
Visual and statistical comparison between the Space Syntax analysis of accessibility and the actual pattern of pedestrian movement in Trafalgar Square shows a high degree of correspondence. In fact, the computer model successfully accounts for approximately three-quarters of the actual movement pattern, doing so even before we consider the effects of other environmental variables such as local land uses, transport facilities, building heights, vehicle movements and population densities.

In this way, the Space Syntax analysis provides the design team with a powerful tool for understanding the current pattern of pedestrian activity in Trafalgar Square, and demonstrating how this pattern is directly related to spatial design. Having understood current activity, the method can then be used as a design tool, by simulating design



Above: Fig. 2.

Below: Fig. 3.



# Valley

Maria Jones

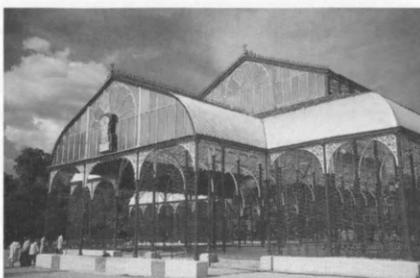
thoroughfares were divided with narrower subsidiary streets into sectors accommodating the various castes, in accordance with traditional Hindu treatises on town planning. The brick houses of Old Bangalore were planned around internal colonnaded courtyards. Four towers, the intended future limits of the new settlement are still referred to as 'Kempe Gowda Towers'.

This basic layout may still be seen today in what is termed Old Bangalore, as can the many temples and markets which Kempe Gowda also established. Both were essential elements in Hindu urban morphology. Temple complexes traditionally included large tanks or ponds for ritual ablution, and their own residential quarters, or 'agraharams'. Thriving bazaars were vital to the commercial life of any Indian town.

This pattern was followed by subsequent Indian rulers, each extending and improving both fort and town, as Bangalore grew in military and commercial significance. It eventually passed into the hands of the Maharajas of Mysore, and by the time the incoming British captured it in 1791, Bangalore was a very well-appointed town. Oval in shape, it was around five kilometres in circumference with wide well-planned thoroughfares and bustling bazaars. It was accessed through four well-defended gateways and surrounded by a 30 metre-

showing the location of Bangalore.

Above: Diagrammatic map of Bangalore.



From top to bottom:  
Kempe Gouda Tower, Lal Bagh.  
M.G. Road with parade ground to the left.  
Edward VII statue, Cubbon Park.  
Glasshouse, Lal Bagh.

deep ditch and exotic sounding hedge of thorn, bamboo and prickly pear.

### British Cantonment

The ruling British then made a series of decisions which were to provide the town with a major boost over rival, older cities such as Mysore. Most importantly, noting the favourable climate, they began to transfer their troops in large numbers to the area, thus laying the foundations for their future Cantonment. Ironically, considering current infrastructure problems, this move was vigorously opposed by the then Governor-General Marquis Wellesley who pointed out the relative lack of water at Bangalore. Wellesley left India in 1805; the army ignored his advice and shifted soon afterward.

The Cantonment of British India was essentially a clearly laid out and defined area for the quartering and administering of troops, adjacent to a conquered town or city. The concept probably derives, appropriately enough for British imperial ambitions, from the earlier Mughal tradition of peripatetic government. The Great Mughal would travel with his entire administration, which would set down vast tent cities, subdivided according to rank and trades. The British developed this further, supplanting permanent thatched huts for tents and incorporating barracks, residences, clubs and religious buildings. In addition, the Cantonment system had the further advantage of enforcing separation from the 'native' town over which it stood guard - for both sanitary and psychological reasons.

In Bangalore's case the Cantonment was laid out on a scale unprecedented in the city's history and its regimented linear layout further contrasted with the tightly-knit grid of the old town. It brought the population as a whole to 156,000 by 1881 and occupied an area of land to the north and east measuring almost five kilometres end to end. Laid out around a series of straight parallel roads it was centred on a large parade ground. To the north lay the 'native' guardhouses with British barracks beyond. To the east and south were laid out civilian areas on a low-density, essentially suburban scale, with tree-lined streets, parks and residential quarters typified by increasingly elaborate bungalows. This pattern persists to the present day: the barracks are now occupied by Indian military personnel, the southern street - formerly known as South Parade - is now Mahatma Gandhi Road (MG Road), Bangalore's main upmarket commercial thoroughfare. The space between is still a parade ground, seldom used, but providing a green kilometre-long strip in the heart of the city.

Crucially for future development, the atmosphere of the Bangalore Cantonment

appears to have tended towards that other Imperial innovation: the hill-station. The pleasant climate attracted a sizeable civilian population, including many pensioners, which increased appreciably from the 1860s following the opening of the Suez canal.

The Cantonment system necessitated a separate commercial and service sector with dedicated slaughterhouses, water and produce supply as well as its own shops and markets. This was usually dominated by Indian merchants who traded under licence to the British authorities. In Bangalore this general market, also known disparagingly as 'Blackpalli', lay wholly within the Cantonment itself, to the north of the barracks on a slope to facilitate drainage.

### Parks

Another major factor in Bangalore's favour was the decision in 1831 by the newly-appointed British Commissioner of Mysore state to relocate the ruling Secretariat there. It was housed in an extensive new park between the Cantonment and Old City, named after a subsequent Commissioner, Sir Mark Cubbon. This was the start of a pattern of large municipal buildings in generous parkland settings which became characteristic of Bangalore, and continued even after Independence in 1947. The Secretariat building of 1868 (now the High Court of Karnataka), in startling red painted stonework, was later faced by the monumental Vidhana Soudha, Karnataka's State Legislature. Designed in assertive Hindu Revival style, this enormous complex was erected in its own garden setting as recently as 1956.

In addition, the British inherited a large park laid out by Bangalore's previous Muslim rulers in imitation of their Mughal cousins. Lal Bagh was a royal pleasure garden of 250 hectares situated east of the Fort. From the 1850s onward the British set about converting it into a Victorian Botanical Gardens. They despatched a professional superintendent from Kew and, by 1889, its cultural transformation had been completed by the addition of a set of cast-iron gates and a large Glasshouse, inevitably 'modelled on the Crystal Palace in London'. It was on the legacy of Cubbon Park with its civic buildings, the remodelled Lal Bagh, and the leafy suburban atmosphere of the Cantonment that Bangalore's title of 'Garden City of India' largely rested.

### Suburban expansion

A traumatic jolt to this civic complacency came with the plague outbreak of 1898. This necessitated the emergency allocation of building plots in outlying areas to families from the most congested parts of the city.

Wealthier sections of Cantonment society not under immediate threat also began to migrate outwards. A fortuitous result of this process was a series of relatively well-planned and pleasant suburbs situated beyond the city limits. These were followed in later years by extensions to the Cantonment itself and, after Independence, suburbs which tended to be more self-contained with their own facilities such as planned shopping complexes. The downside of this expansion has been unplanned layouts, later officially recognised despite committing such violations as building on designated agricultural land or on the beds of drainage tanks.

Since Independence, Bangalore has experienced unprecedented growth and has expanded well beyond the four boundary towers of Kempe Gowda. The former 'Pensioners' Paradise' is now the fastest growing city in India. Between 1951 and 1991 Bangalore's population rose from 778,000 to 4.1 million and is now estimated to be closer to 6 million. It seems to have been assumed, however, that the low-density model of the Cantonment - single dwellings in their own garden plots surrounded by a compound wall - could be extended indefinitely. Indeed, until 1978 there were, incredibly, only two apartment complexes in the whole city. Given Bangalore's post-war growth rate this development form was a luxury that the city could ill-afford, both in financial and land-use terms.

The only substantial challenge to this form of expansion has been Charles Correa's 1974 Structure Plan, which envisaged a radical restructuring of the city as a whole. This was never implemented and the most recent development plan, dating back some 12 years, appears to remain purely on paper. As a result Bangalore experiences dual pressure: in the city and Cantonment bungalows are now being demolished to make way for high-rise residential developments on the same plots with no corresponding improvements to services. On the fringes new industry demands ever more greenfield sites. Here the suburban model is writ large, and development centres on huge self-contained business parks fuelled by lucrative tax-breaks.

### Silicon Valley

From 1952, Indian headquarters of the major state companies have been flocking to Bangalore - attracted by the equitable climate, relatively good labour relations and quality of life. In 1985 the influx increased dramatically under Rajiv Gandhi's Ministry. A pilot by training, he encouraged high-tech development in a city by now already biased towards aeronautical and defence industries. With the opening up of the economy in

1992, Indian states vied with each other to attract inward investment. Karnataka played up the salubrious image of its capital city and its highly trained workforce - the state has some 52 private engineering colleges - and, together with government subsidies, attracted an unprecedented number of foreign multi-nationals. Electronics firms such as Sony, Siemens and Texas Instruments have made Bangalore their point of entry into the sub-continent, earning it a new title: 'Silicon Valley of India'.

### Infrastructure problems

Nonetheless, corresponding investment in infrastructure has not been forthcoming. City centre roads are often pot-holed and those in outlying areas remain little more than dirt-tracks. Pavements are rarely seen other than around MG Road. A scheme to create a ringroad has been under construction (and in the courts) for years. In 1960 there were 20,000 vehicles on the roads, now there are 1,300,000 and the authorities themselves put the capacity of the roads at only 350,000. Hard as it is to imagine now, Bangalore was once a city of flowering roundabouts; in 1970 there was just one set of traffic lights!

Unlike Mumbai (formerly Bombay) which is served by a suburban rail system (its vehicle population a mere 650,000), Bangalore's two rail lines contribute little to either its commuter or freight traffic. The on-off plan for an elevated railway in the town centre and outskirts, apparently funded for years by an extra rupee on petrol prices, is now allegedly up and running again. Construction is scheduled to start in 2000 and the first stage to be complete in 2003. Bangalore's creaking bus system is unable to cope with demand either within the city centre or in the new outlying business districts. As a result employees are often bussed in and out in private company coaches and the city has seen a massive increase in both 'two- and three-wheeler' vehicle numbers - motorcycle/scooters and auto-rickshaws - often the most polluting forms of transport.

Surprisingly, given its exports, Bangalore has not yet developed an international airport. Aside from its vast software industry, the second biggest earner for Bangalore is floriculture, with a large volume of flowers sent to The Netherlands every day. A proposal by Tata (one of India's largest private firms) and a consortium led by the Singapore Government to develop an airport north of the city is deadlocked over final ownership rights with no other solution forthcoming.

Other infrastructure problems are state-wide. Karnataka lacks fossil-fuel reserves and there is a lack of investment in its mainly water-generated power industry - capacity is

barely 60% of current demand. Consequently Bangalore now experiences both 'scheduled' and 'un-scheduled' power cuts on a daily basis. In addition, Karnataka has a decades-long dispute with the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu over water ownership from its two major rivers which flow into that state, resulting in shortages: an echo of Wellesley's warning against establishing a Cantonment at Bangalore? The most extreme manifestation of these problems has been the location of the largest business park, Electronics City, which actually occupies an enclave on the nearby Karnataka/Tamil Nadu state border. This enables its companies to simultaneously utilise the sought-after Bangalore address and circumvent problems with the individual state utilities.

As so often in the history of Bangalore's urban design, the military still plays an unusually large role. It is ironic that the Indian Army is seen as one of the main custodians of Bangalore's verdant reputation. Inheritor of large tracts of land after Independence, it has successfully held on to them, in many cases, refusing to give up even a metre-wide strip for city road improvements. Thus prime real estate in the centre of Bangalore is still undeveloped as are large swathes of greenery, which together with the parks, provide the lungs of the choking city.

### Conclusion

Although Bangalore looks increasingly like killing the goose that laid the golden egg, it would be foolish to write it off as a major new metropolis. Indian cities have a tendency to continue functioning long after their inevitable demise has been predicted. However, without serious investment in infrastructure, Bangalore may find its software-led boom a transitory affair, as despairing companies relocate elsewhere. The city has already lost Microsoft to its rival Hyderabad, which boasts of improved infrastructure despite a relatively extreme climate. It would be a great shame to see Bangalore revert to its two-dimensional Cantonment past, dominated once again by the presence of the military, gardeners and nostalgic pensioners remembering the better times. #

*Maria Jones*

# The Good Place Guide

Richard Cole

From its origins the Urban Design Group has sought to encourage a greater public interest in the fruits of urban designers' labours. There has been great progress in 'spreading the word' among professionals and the Urban Design Alliance is the latest manifestation of this progress.

In spite of the encouraging work reported in the last issue of the Quarterly about public participation, spreading the message to a wider public progress has been less dramatic. In 1991 John Worthington promoted the concept of publishing a guide to good urban spaces, *The Good Place Guide*. John Billingham carried the idea forward in UDQ 54 (April 1995) and Bob Jarvis brought up the rear with his proposals for the M25 and Gatwick. Since 1997 there has been increasing pace of work, and as the following pages demonstrate the giant of places has not been asleep but in fact stirring into greater efforts.

## The taste of a place

This taster to the guide looks briefly at what has been happening since 1997. First, the establishment of a working definition of what constitutes a 'Good Place', next, an exploration of thoughts about the target audience for the 'Guide' and what processes we might use to create the guide. This is followed by some questions prompted by work so far. Your response to these questions is particularly important. Finally some pointers to steer us towards the full publishable guide are set out.

## Definition

As with all issues, definition of terms has exercised much time and the debate is likely to go on. In the end the exact definition is likely to be as elusive as the perfect Good Place. A set of working criteria has however been evolved. These have grown from John Billingham's paper in '95 and have been refined through seminar discussions led by Richard Parnaby in Cardiff and John Biggs in Bath. The current set is as follows:

1. Is the place *identifiable*? Does it have significant entrances? Are there clear boundaries? Do the buildings have distinctive relationships? Is there a special relationship between built and landform elements?

2. Is it *memorable*? Is the place 'different', 'distinctive', 'idiosyncratic'?

3. Is the place *enjoyable*? Is the place warm, safe, does it have human scale, contain a variety of uses, have humour, contrasts and repose? Or could the place be made enjoyable with some simple works?

4. Does the place provide *safety*?

5. Is *access* freely available? Places like Merryhill and Portmerion are closed to the general public at times so to include such places will require a strongly argued case if they are to be considered.

It is my view that few, if any, places will meet all these criteria. In many ways this is a strength and not a difficulty. By identifying 'nearly good places' we can show how the skills of urban designers can be used to create a really good place. By exposing the thought processes behind the creation of an even better place we will help the wider public to develop their critical faculties in a positive fashion.

## Target audience

What of the target audience? There is no purpose in preparing a guide solely for urban designers as they are the converted, the cognoscenti. Instead we should be seeking to appeal to the sort of person who already visits historic gardens and National Trust properties. The guide should also appeal to 'overseas professionals' who are planning a trip to the UK but don't want to follow the hackneyed traditional places route.

What sort of place does this lead us towards? There is no typical good or nearly good place as the four 'taster places' show. If there is an overriding characteristic it is that a good place is one that your in-laws would enjoy and to which you would have been proud to take Kevin Lynch. The place is one that you will have delighted in yourself and probably discovered by chance.

## Towards the Guide

So what of the mechanics? As the tasters show, entries will need to be short, witty and pithy, 200-300 words at the most. Ideally, each place should be introduced with a 'quotable quote', something of the "When you get there, there is no There there" type, although in the examples shown - largely through shortage of space - no quote has been included. There will be room for, at the most, two black and white illustrations which could include a block plan.

We have sought to use the UDG's regional structure to collect material but two difficulties have arisen. First the current regions don't really make sense when used as the basis for a guide that might even be used to plan tours. As a result we have defined a South East Region composed of Kent, East and West Sussex and Surrey. This special region has been carved out of the South which now comprises Hampshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. John Billingham will be co-ordinating entries from the South and I will deal with the South East.

Second, the extent of some regions and the pressure of work that the convenors of many regions are under, means that we are still looking for assistance in the North West, in Yorkshire, the East Midlands and East Anglia.

Stephen Tucker is handling Scotland, John Biggs is leading work in the South West, Sam Romaya in Wales and Michael Crilly has been dealing with Ireland but is soon to pass the baton on to Adam Morris. I hope to persuade Michael to take on the North. Peter Heath has shown us one Good Place in London but for one person to handle such a region is too much.

We are planning to include 20 places from each region. UDG members are expected to suggest the bulk of the proposed 'Good Places' but it may be worth approaching District Planning Officers and perhaps we should seek to involve our 'Alliance' colleagues in this search. The aim should be to identify about 30 places in each region selected from the overall regional submissions by a 'regional editorial group' (2 to 4 members). The group will pass them to John and me for final editing. To identify your region see the map on the right.

The overall structure of the guide is still fluid; options include a preface to the whole guide written by some notable person. This could be followed by a 'how-to-use-it' section explaining how the guide works. For each regional section there could be a 'celebrity introduction' of the type found in the old Shell Guide to England. Each region will have a simple location map of the type found at the front of the Ellipsis architectural guides.

### The next stages

To move towards the production of over 200 places in the final guide it is proposed to include 40 places as the topic pages for the July issue next year. It is then hoped that - subject to funding being available - one region's completed work can be printed as a regional document. Achieving the first regional publication of 20 places might well be the best way to encourage others to follow suit.

### The taster

How do the places included in the 'taster' match these expectations?

From Birmingham Joe Holyoak brings the freshly created Brindleyplace Square and introduces the idea of places as theatre. From the South West John Biggs and David Beardmore bring us hope from a blend of old and new in Bristol's St Augustine's Reach. Michael Crilly explores a place few of us have even heard of, let alone visited and Peter Heath's return to Leicester Square shows how a tired national landmark can be restored to health.

### Outstanding questions

Are we right in taking a regional approach?

Is the style and format of the tasters satisfactory? For example, two of the places include plans but as these take up considerable space, would it be better to describe the location in caption type text as has been done in other examples.

Are there really enough 'Good Places' or even 'Nearly Good Places' around for us to avoid including the traditional and well known examples?

Should we focus on major conurbations rather than try to spread 'nation-wide'?

Have we got the definition right?

Should we include information about local facilities?

Can you help? #

*Richard Cole*

For more information or to offer your comment or advice, please contact Richard Cole, either on 01243 839225 or by post to: 129 Cedar Drive, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 3EL



### Regions

- 1 Scotland
- 2 North
- 3 Yorkshire
- 4 E Midlands
- 5 E Anglia
- 6 London
- 7 South East
- 8 South
- 9 South West
- 10 West Midlands
- 11 North West
- 12 Wales
- 13 Ireland

## Birmingham Brindleyplace Square



In 1995 an extraordinary sight appeared in Birmingham. For years the cleared site which was to become the Brindleyplace development remained a major void, as developers merged, departed or went bust. Then behind the completed first phase of development (the canalside bars and restaurants called The Water's Edge), the completed ground surface of a new square was placed in the desert. Fountains played, water ran across immaculate curving stone steps, young maple and ginkgo trees sprang into leaf. On three sides the new square was surrounded by empty dereliction - a surrealist scene, but commercially shrewd.

The square will be enclosed by five new buildings, three of which - designed by Demetri Porphyrios, Allies and Morrison, and Sidell Gibson - are now complete. The Porphyrios building, whether one likes its classical pretensions or not, addresses the square very strongly. Like the others, its ground floor is arcaded as required by the masterplan. A glass café designed by Piers Gough sits in the centre of the square. This contradicts the advice given by Camillo Sitte that the centre of squares be left empty, but the Cafe Costa is so small and decorative that it is really just an embellishment, rather than an obstruction.

In its unified design, the space is rather theatrical, and the behaviour of people in it, strolling up and down and looking around, tends to be rather self-conscious. I suspect many of us are half imagining we are in Italy, taking our *passeggiata*, in a rather un-English way, along the chain of new or redesigned squares that now exists in Birmingham. In particular, I think it is impossible to sit at a table outside Cafe Costa without being conscious that we are playing a role - the English as new Europeans, at home in our public living rooms.

*Location:* To the north west of Symphony Hall and the International Convention Centre.

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## Bristol St Augustine's Reach

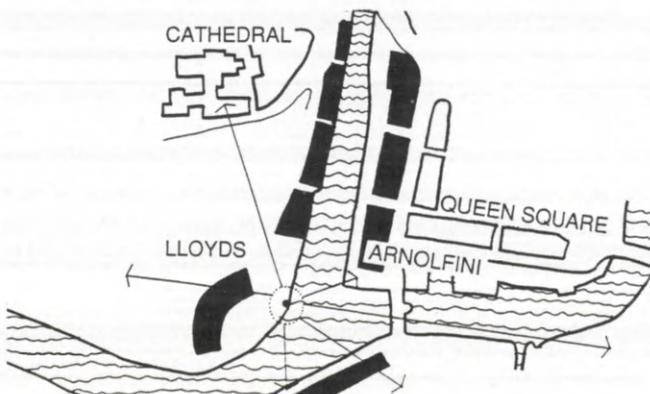


St Augustine's Reach is an area of bustling harbourside space in the centre of Bristol. Since John Cabot left from here to discover the New World, St Augustine's Reach has been at the heart of Bristol's seafaring heritage. Today that same tongue of water laps at the centre of a modern city, creating a fusion of bustling activity, tranquillity, safety and surprise. On the west a continental colonnade, and on the east a broad space with a line of trees. In the middle distance cranes and docks, and beyond the Somerset countryside. Gone is the noise of traffic. Here is the smell of joss-sticks, waterside coffee houses and flower sellers, all with the added allure of glistening water.

Walking through Watershed, on the western side of the Reach, you can look back into the city or out over the water. At the south west tip of the Reach a magnificent 360 degree view reveals the landmarks of the city. Sadly, the new space may remain rather bleak and sterile as lottery funding for an exciting new concert hall has failed to materialise.

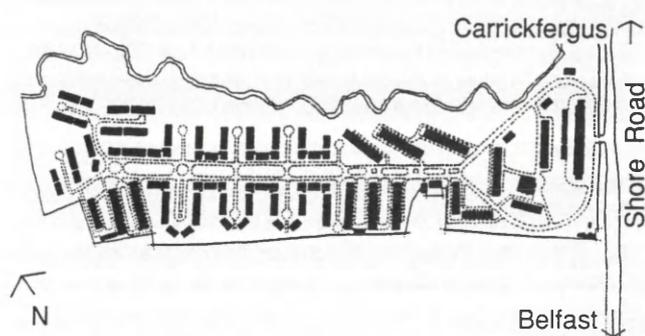
Across the water, the Arnolfini Gallery commands the south east end of the Reach. Outside eaters and drinkers invite you over. By mid-1999, a splendidly flamboyant footbridge will snake you across. But, for now, you have to walk back. The newer buildings on the eastern side are dire but saved by the trees and the burgeoning restaurants that face the water. There is a buzz at the Arnolfini: boats moor at the quay wall, knots of people throng the water's edge and there is always the expectation that something unusual could happen. And there's that view again.

St Augustine's Reach is a good place now and it's going to be so much better!



## County Antrim

### Merville Garden Village



The very existence of Merville Garden Village is testament to several peculiarities of the Northern Irish, displaying a confusing mix of parochial and provincial values. There was a time-lag between Ireland and Britain which meant that Ulster was building its first garden village in the late 1940s, completed in 1949.

The Irish suspicion of imported ideas led to the adaptation of English suburban principles to the regional context. The appearance of Merville owes as much to French as English influence. Many details echo the rural French vernacular (fenestration, shuttering, porches) admired by the developer, Thomas McGrath, and the built form and massing (regularity, simplicity, repeating forms) demonstrate the Modernist leanings of the architects (E. Prentice Mawson); with the layout being controlled by the site constraints, location and topography, Merville overlooks the Lough and is overlooked by the Belfast Hills, built on an estate of mature landscaping and bounded by the Glas-na-Bradán River.

The layout of over 400 houses, flats and local services successfully mixes housing types and tenure next to major employment locations, and possesses a well-maintained public realm dominated and enclosed by surrounding woodland. These factors provide a quality of environment which has attracted and retained long-term residents, contributing to a strong community spirit and pride of place. Locals repeatedly hold it up as an example of sustainable design principles for new developments.

*Location:* Off the Shore Road near the end of the M5 from Belfast.

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## London

### Leicester Square



Leicester Square, regenerated through its closure to traffic, has regained the status of a good place to see and be seen in. Outdoor tables and chairs in traffic free streets, a central green oasis, street entertainment, continuous active frontages of clubs, restaurants, hotels and bars around London's thriving cinema centre. A destination, a place to linger, sit or pass through. These positive features were absent prior to a comprehensive design initiative.

In 1989, after nearly three hundred years as a traffic roundabout, an historic garden square became London's largest pedestrian zone. Today the area has all the characteristics of urban vitality and economic viability still so sought after by politicians and planners in sustainable regeneration schemes. By contrast the square in the 1980s had become a shabby and squalid focus for the worst excesses of the Soho vice industry with the central gardens a gloomy, virtual no-go area of mugging, drug-taking and prostitution.

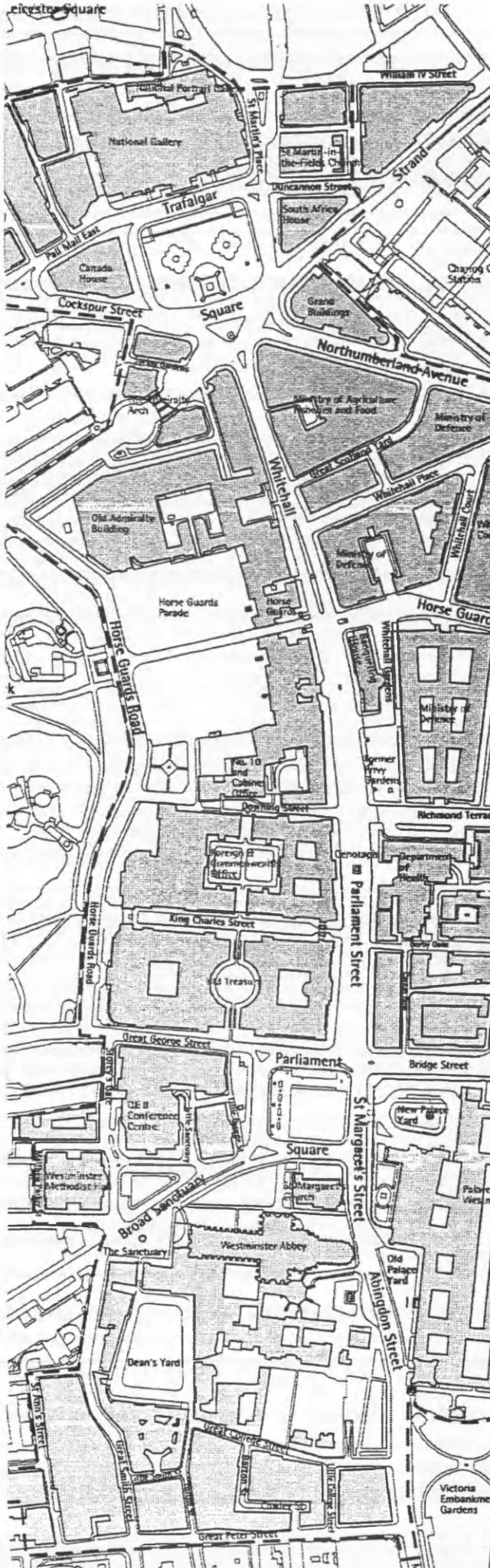
The modest landscape solutions included restoring diagonal routes through the gardens, upgrading lighting for safe 24 hour activity and uncluttered durable surfaces to cope with large volumes of pedestrians. The main innovations included the first Westminster CCTV public realm monitoring system and on-site management accommodation for square managers. All this was achieved without the traffic controversy experienced by other proposals. Existing legislation for traffic management was used for a comprehensive scheme of restrictions to the square and all approach streets.

Ironically, today's economic success has raised new local concerns over the negative effects of over-intensive use, perhaps forgetting the very serious original problems overcome by an urban design approach to creating a good place.

*Location:* East of Piccadilly Circus, west of Charing Cross Road, north of the National Gallery.

# Public Spaces, People Places

Roger Evans



The 1997 Annual Conference provided an opportunity for urban design to examine its roots and ask "what does urban design seek to achieve?". There are many goals, but for me, the central purpose of urban design is, above all else, to shape towns and cities such that people are brought together and communities established.

Society is formed, and common values affirmed, through the shared use of public spaces. When everyone turns their house to face a street or public space, they are by that act valuing community; they are making an investment in that space and it is through contact with other people in such spaces that individuals become a community. This function of the public realm is the most primitive and fundamental way that societies have been created.

Compare this to built environments where people live in private ghettos segregated from others by so called 'security' measures, spend their working days in buildings which isolate them from outside life and travel between buildings in private cars. Society is then formed through only the media and cyberspace, uninformed by personal contact with others. This nightmare vision is one which in the second half of the twentieth century we have, on balance, been working towards.

One of my favourite writers on urban design is the popular travel writer Bill Bryson who, in *Neither Here or There*, wrote: "... I just hate the way architects and city planners and everyone else responsible for urban life seems to have lost sight of what cities are for. They are for people. That seems obvious enough, but for over half a century we have been building cities that are for almost anything else: for cars, for businesses, for developers, for people with money and bold visions who refuse to see cities from ground level, as places in which people must live and function and get around. Why should I have to walk through a damp tunnel and negotiate two sets of stairs to get across a busy street? Why should cars be given priority over us? How can we be so rich and so stupid at the same time? ... We used to build civilisations. Now we build shopping malls".

If we are to regard the design of a city quarter as a 'habitat' for human activity, we have to have regard for dimensions which acknowledge human physical characteristics, senses and sensibilities. For example, at 150m we can just discern body gestures; at 25m a friend's face becomes recognisable although body language is still required to communicate; at 12m facial expressions can be made out and at 6m people are in a close relationship where subtleties of speech and gesture can be conveyed and conversation becomes possible.

It is thus clear that if urban space is to promote social contact, scale is critical. Dimensions of up to 6m can appear intimate, while 30m is probably the maximum

distance for reciprocal awareness. We walk at about 3 miles per hour, and most people are prepared to walk half a mile for routine tasks. These characteristics can determine the size of a neighbourhood. And yet urban space in the latter half of the twentieth century has increasingly been designed with reference to the characteristics of development mechanisms or free-flow traffic movement. This is not to say that we can naively ignore these aspects, quite the opposite. We have to get rather good at them so that we can design them in support of mankind rather than in domination.

Public spaces are thus our *common ground* in both a geographic and a spiritual sense. The idea of a town or city is really indistinguishable from the idea of society. If we lack a consensus on an organising structure for the city, it is mainly because we lack an organising structure for society as a whole. Shouldn't our concern be with human development of the city as a goal in itself?

This concern that physical planning cannot be undertaken in isolation from the much broader issues of the needs of the community and the individuals within it, suggests a goal for us into the next millennium: the central attention must shift from land development to human development, and changes in the physical environment will have to be planned integrally with changes which we wish to see in our social environment.

Jan Gehl changed my life in 1976 when I read his book *'Livet Mellum Huserna'*. It was then available only in Danish, but fortunately I had just acquired a girlfriend - now my wife - who could translate it for me - 'life between the houses'. It demonstrated that towns and cities were not primarily for looking at but living in. To non-architects, this may seem unremarkable, but believe me, to an architect who had studied the visual world for five years this was a painful realisation, the urban design equivalent of a bright light on the road to Damascus. Jan's observation that a good urban space should be like a good party, something that you don't want to leave, remains a neat litmus test for assessing public spaces. #

Roger Evans

# Conference Summary

John Billingham

## Public Spaces - People Places

The generating force for the UDG Conference was the *World Squares for All* proposals prepared for the Trafalgar Square/Parliament Square area which at the time, were undergoing public consultation. The object was to set those ideas against schemes or approaches that had been adopted elsewhere and which could indicate possible ways forward.

John Montgomery spoke about the 24 hour city and how the evening economy was about rediscovering urbanity. He illustrated this indicating that much of it involved local capital and individuals setting up in business and having a dramatic effect on the local economy. Characteristics included seeing and being seen and a wide range of ages enjoying an increasing number of outdoor activities. But there were many entrenched ideas and regulations that needed to change such as the hours of operation of public transport and public uses, licensing rules and environmental health.

## Copenhagen

Lars Gemzøe, joint author of a published research report on the development of public spaces in Copenhagen, spoke about the experience gained in pedestrianising streets and open spaces in the inner city. The study compares the situation in 1968, 1986 and 1995 to draw conclusions about the improvements and benefits which began with the closure of Strøget in 1962. Strøget is always full - about 80,000 people use it over a 24 hour period and it acts as a pedestrian spine linking bus and train terminals.

Copenhagen's inner city has about 6,900 residential units and 13,000 students. In comparison, Stockholm has 800 residential units and no students, and Oslo 700 residential units and 3,600 students. It therefore gains from its almost 7000 windows of light overlooking the street, making the city a richer place. In the 50s and 60s the car invaded the city but beginning with Strøget a new urban culture was generated despite there being no tradition of outdoor urban life. Streets and squares have been colonised by people: 35% cycle into the centre, 31% come by car and 31% by public transport - the remainder presumably live there and walk. Whilst the pedestrian areas have increased, the significant change has been the introduction of new activities: cafe seating has increased substantially (aided by outdoor heating) and Nyhavn, which provided parking next to the water, is now an outdoor space for people (the same numbers at 9.30 pm as at midday!). Some of the lessons from the study are that time is needed to change traffic habits, to find out what spaces can be used for and for political

decision making. The Copenhagen experience shows that more good spaces mean more good public life.

**Berlin**

Stefan Schroth, an architect who works in Berlin and was involved in the IBA, spoke about the public realm in the city. His concern is that important symbolic meanings are of no consequence to planners, and difficult to address in political debates. He cited three examples where this was an important factor, the Stadtschloss, the Brandenburg Gate and the Kulturforum.

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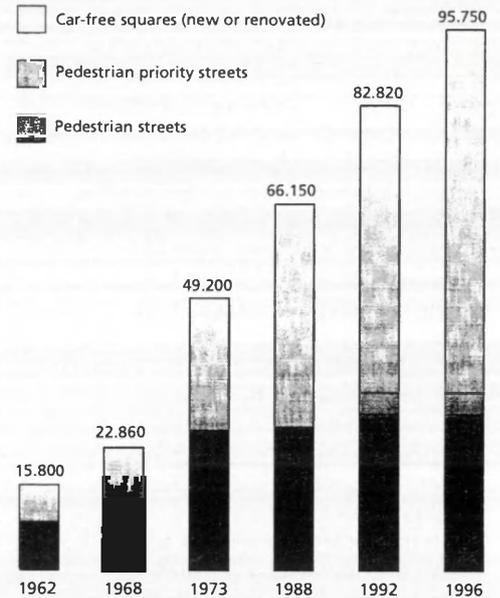
The Stadtschloss, the old palace, located in the heart of the old settlement was heavily bombed in 1945 and in 1956 was demolished by the Communist government. It was replaced by the Palace der Republik, the new seat for Parliament and the people's meeting place. After reunification what would happen to this area? Already the previous Foreign Ministry building has been removed and there has been a competition for the Palace site. In addition a canvas representation of the facades of the old Palace has been erected to remind people of what had existed previously. Feelings remain mixed about what to do and nothing has been decided.

The Brandenburg Gate was the most significant gate in Berlin's history linking the castle to the Tiergarten. Napoleon and the allies made their entrance through it. It became the centre for demonstrations and when the wall was demolished in 1989 this was where people naturally gathered. Schroth described the options for allowing traffic through the gate or around it. As there appear to be structural problems, a large detour is now proposed. Meanwhile in the Pariser Platz behind the Gate a reconstruction of earlier buildings is being built using traditional solid walling and proportions but including more storeys.

The Kulturforum designed by Hans Scharoun was placed adjacent to the boundary between West and East Berlin to enable it to serve both communities if unification occurred. Schroth made the point that the competition and proposed development for the Potsdamerplatz relegated the Kulturforum's various components to the back door instead of integrating them more strongly into the final scheme. He asked whether this was because people are alienated from the government.

The discussion raised the issue of incremental development and compared Copenhagen and Berlin; Copenhagen seemed to be more successful because of its gradual development whereas Berlin is attempting to do too much in a very limited

Right: Development of pedestrian areas in Copenhagen city centre from 1962 to 1996 (in square metres).  
Below: Berlin in 1802.  
Bottom: Panorama view of Trafalgar Square.



period. A further example of a symbol was mentioned: the public objected to the removal of the war damaged Kaiser Wilhelm church in Berlin; the tower was retained as a significant feature on the Ku'dam.

### The Wider Agenda

Michael Gwilliam's talk aimed at widening the urban agenda - to concentrate on spaces and places as generators of urban form and creating a range of spaces more usable and accessible by people. The Civic Trust published *Pride of Place* based on the following themes: People first, Sustainable Regeneration, Taming the car, Designing for Quality, Investment, Town and Country, National and Local Action. Examples such as Birmingham, Bradford and Kilmarnock showed how ordinary places could be made better and how pride in the place aided by a lightness of touch and humour could reinvigorate outworn areas.

Alan Rowley presented the results of research undertaken through the RICS with DoE backing on Better Places, Added Value. The research had four objectives: to consider the role and importance of urban design, the benefits and added value, factors that constrained urban design and incentives that could be given. The key lessons drawn from the study were: there is a margin needed to achieve quality as well as more time; today's exceptional work will eventually become the norm; leases are getting shorter and developers are holding on to developments longer; enduring quality sells but short-termism still needs to be overcome; urban design needs a language that can readily be understood.

### World Squares

Kevin Gleeson, from Westminster City Council, introduced the *World Squares for All* project initiated in November 96. Eight opportunities had been defined leading to four concepts which eventually were refined into the two strategies which were the subject of consultation.

Bill Hillier described the observation of pedestrian movements throughout the area and focused on what happens in Trafalgar Square: people do not move across the square but on the edges; office workers move on the outside whereas tourists stay within the square; the King Charles island gives the best visual feel for the area. From these observations a number of proposals emerged: to extend the pedestrian space southwards and include the King Charles island; to redesign the corner steps; to provide a central connection to the National Gallery; to capitalise on the two levels and provide some additional facilities.

Michèle Dix of Halcrow Fox presented the

traffic analysis that had been undertaken. Almost 20% of traffic in the area did not need to be in Central London; the 80,000 people per day passing through the area involved 4,000 buses and 50,000 cars and there had been a 30% growth in cars since 1987. Two strategies were proposed - Strategy 1 reduced traffic by 50% and would result in a 3% increase in congestion. Strategy 2 reduced traffic by 70% and would increase congestion by 5%.

Andy Bow gave an overview of the proposals put forward by Norman Foster's office and emphasised the importance of the area - 23 million visitors per year but inadequate cafes and toilets for that number - a world heritage site where 60% of people moving about were Londoners.

Peter Heath, once the urban designer at Westminster responsible for the redesign of Leicester Square and part of the World Squares team, put forward ways in which the detailed street elements could be integrated to provide a less cluttered scene - one instance where this had been achieved was in the Place Vendome in Paris where paving patterns were used to define crossing points.

It became clear in the discussion that followed that both strategies would need to be introduced incrementally and Strategy 2 would require wider changes outside the study area. It was felt that any incremental scheme should start where it could be shown to be successful - ie Trafalgar Square. Some felt a lot could be done with the square itself, by introducing canopies, umbrellas etc. and that the National Gallery should be open until 10pm on certain evenings. To begin with closures could be introduced for ceremonial events - many of which occurred at weekends.

### Case Studies

Terry Farrell described ideas he had for linking the Royal Parks together. His basic proposals were to open up the axis at the top of Portland Place to connect through to Regents Park and on to Primrose Hill, to use the canal to connect to Spring Street and into Hyde Park. Marble Arch needed to be rethought as it worked much better before the gyratory was introduced; similarly the links to Hyde Park Corner could be improved, connecting Green Park, St James Park and Buckingham Palace where the gardens should be available to the public.

Farshad Kamali and Richard Alvey presented ideas for the Strand and Regent Street, part of a plan for London 2020. It was recognised that the quality of the Strand had declined in visual terms, safety, and convenience for pedestrians but it was possible to close some side roads, reduce the width of the

vehicular space in the Strand, provide more pedestrian crossings and introduce traffic calming in side streets to prevent rat-runs. Some of the ideas that were being considered for Regent Street were indicated: doubling the width of the footways, closing selected side streets, introducing more cafes and planting and excluding private vehicles. An alternative would pave over the whole street and use a pedestrian friendly form of transport. Both ideas have implications outside their boundary and would involve extensive consultation.

Colin Davis described some of the ideas being included in a forthcoming London Streetscape Manual which aims to reduce the clutter of the overall environment resulting from the fact that up to twenty different agencies are involved. Nobody owns the street and no-one has the power to achieve overall improvement. In Horsham, the Chief Executive decided to make it work - a list of fourteen agencies needed to be coordinated from cleansing to traffic lights. Most individuals, such as conservation officers, just do not have the authority.

### Conclusions

The final discussion included some of the following thoughts: wiring up the whole city to provide opportunities for interactive responses; introducing experimental closures; noting what a powerful mayoral system had achieved in places such as Montpellier and Nimes; the benefits of applying the town centre management approach to part, or the whole, of the Whitehall area; looking at places like Camden Lock to see how small spaces can be managed.

A set of action points were put forward at the end of the conference:

- Listen to the people
- Make people more aware
- Democratise Urban Space
- Keep sight of the main objective
- Aim for quality of product
- Curtail the car and promote pedestrian and public transport
- Eliminate gyratories and free flow traffic
- Foster activities and the 24 hour city
- Realise that the management of urban space is as important as design. #

John Billingham

# Public Spaces, Public Life

Lars Gemzøe

Lars Gemzøe describes the changes that have occurred in Copenhagen's inner city since 1962 when Strøget was pedestrianised. The urban culture has changed dramatically confirming that more good public space can mean a better quality of public life.

As traffic into city centres grew, many cities decided to provide more roads and more parking lots, turning public spaces into parking and traffic areas, often resulting in unbearable conditions for people on foot. Copenhagen decided to limit access by car - step by step - by taking away traffic lanes and reducing parking by 2 to 3% per year in order to return public spaces to people places. Through the last 35 years this has changed the whole approach to and the use of public spaces in the Inner City. It has actually changed the inhabitants of Copenhagen.

Almost every city in the world has precise data about the number of parking lots and the traffic flow of cars. Copenhagen is probably the only city that also has systematic data on how people use the inner city and how public life has developed. Three major studies were carried out at the School of Architecture in Copenhagen in 1968, 1986 and 1995 to supply politicians, professionals and the general public with information about a remarkable change in the way people use the public spaces.

In the 1960s there was no tradition of using public outdoor spaces as is the case in Southern Europe. Over the years a fundamental change in urban life has taken place. Public spaces that used to be full of cars have gradually been changed into lively and well functioning public 'living rooms' where people stay longer and longer: length of stay has increased 3 to 4 times since the late 1960s while the number of cars entering the inner city has been kept at the same level since the 1970s, even though car ownership has been constantly growing in the region as in the rest of Europe. It all started with the 'car invasion' and the reaction against it which led to the 'new urban culture' that we experience today.

## The Changing Urban Culture

After the Second World War and especially during the booming years of the 1950s and 1960s the Inner City of Copenhagen was gradually being filled with cars. The streets and squares were turned into parking lots, new highways were planned, existing roads were made wider and more and more cars

were entering the city centre. The dream of the 1960s was a car and a single family house for everybody. But protest movements against the deterioration of the conditions for people on foot and on bicycles were growing. They resulted in a fundamental change in the way that people in Copenhagen consider traffic and public life, a change in traffic culture and a change in life in the public spaces. Back in the 1960s grassroots movements started slowly with demonstrations against the pollution and the general deterioration of the conditions for people living in the city.

Young people with slogans like 'cars out of the city' were blocking major roads in the rush hours protesting against the planning of a new highway. In the 1970s and 1980s cyclists were also demanding improvements in conditions for the 'soft traffic'.

The international oil crisis caused panic among car owners in the 1970s and attitudes began to change. At the same time new ideas for traffic integration were introduced. In the 1980s the idea of 'cars out of the city' was launched as an official policy for Traffic and Planning - led by one of the small left wing parties in the municipal government of Copenhagen. The policy was combined with suggestions for improving public spaces for people instead of improvements for cars.

Today there is a general political consensus about the idea that it is good to improve public space even at the cost of reducing parking. The policy is now strongly carried through by the new leader of Traffic and Planning who is from the right or liberal wing of the political spectrum.

## Pedestrian Streets 1962 to 1973

In 1962 the old main street ('Strøget') in the Inner City of Copenhagen was - as an experiment - turned into a pedestrian street. Before that decision was made a lot of discussions took place and there were great worries from politicians, bus companies and especially from the shopkeepers. "We are not Italians", "there is no tradition of public life", "no cars will mean no customers" and "it is raining all the time so forget about public outdoor life" were some of the arguments. But already from the beginning it was a great success. People were walking up and down in thousands from the first day and it turned out to be a great economic success for the shops and department stores. It soon became a permanent solution and two further streets were turned into pedestrian streets.

In the beginning shopping and window shopping were the main activities but these spaces with no cars, no fumes, and no noise turned out to be wonderful for other

1962 15.800 m<sup>2</sup>1968 22.860 m<sup>2</sup>1973 49.200 m<sup>2</sup>1988 66.150 m<sup>2</sup>1992 82.820 m<sup>2</sup>1996 95.750 m<sup>2</sup>

Left: Development of car-free street and squares 1962-1996 in Copenhagen centre.

Top: Copenhagen introduced a coin operated City Bike system in 1985.

Above: Outdoor life in the city centre.

activities. Shopkeepers would see them as extensions to the shop, and young people would start to play guitars and sing or sell home-made jewellery and artefacts on the streets. In the first years this was forbidden and they got arrested but later on music on the streets was legalised.

The quiet pedestrian streets and squares had many more possibilities than shopping. Parents could let small children loose and run around without being afraid of traffic accidents. One could listen to classical music on flute here, to jazz on a saxophone there or see a small puppet show around the corner. Political or religious views could be expressed and gradually the spaces developed into a cultural forum.

#### Public 'arenas' 1973 to 1997

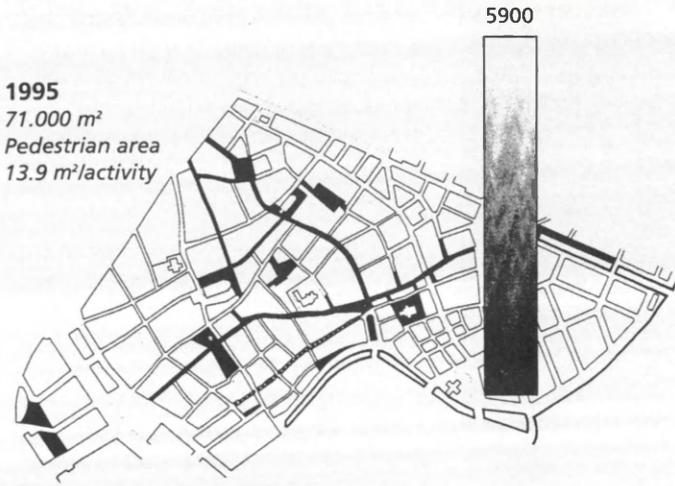
During the 70s and 80s the Inner City turned into the largest 'culture house' where one could be entertained or try to be the entertainer or just go looking at other people looking at other people. No seat reservations needed!

The Inner City turned from a place of passive consumption to an active cultural arena with a multitude of changing activities. A series of festivals have developed: the 'Copenhagen Jazz Festival', the 'Night of Culture', the 'Night of Sports', a Carnival, etc. But most exciting is that people spontaneously find new ways of using the city. Celebrations before and after soccer matches and 'polterabend' (pre-wedding celebrations) have developed and have turned into performances.

During the 1980s most of the buildings in the Inner City had been renovated but in the same period the popular, lively public spaces were run down. The need for renovation and for further extension of the areas was recognised and a higher quality of design and detail was introduced. It was not enough that the spaces were good for shopping and were lively cultural arenas - they also needed to be important architectural monuments, places with dignity, worth being in, even on a rainy day in December. So today the Inner City and its public spaces are seen as architectural spaces of great importance. The people oriented emphasis is combined with the Inner City's functions of major shopping, university location and living areas.

#### The studies

Between 1962 and 1996 six times more square metres have been set aside for pedestrians. By 1996 a total of 96,000 car free square metres were available. The main pedestrian streets were made between 1962 and 1973. After that it has been the



*Above:* Average number of people engaged in stationary activities between 12.00 and 16.00 hrs on summer days in 1995.

*Below:* Cushions and blankets are provided by the cafes to extend the outdoor season. *Bottom:* Nyhavn is particularly popular in the summer.



development of squares that has dominated. 40% of the square metres of pedestrian areas are streets for walking and 60% are squares for resting and enjoying life. Walking in the city has been remarkably stable since the first pedestrian streets were introduced and they have been full to capacity on all good summer days since then.

What has changed most dramatically is the development of new activities for people using the spaces. The number of inhabitants in the Greater Copenhagen Area (1.3 million) has been stable but the number of people spending time, staying in the public spaces, has been constantly growing. Each time 13 to 14 square metres have been added - an additional person has been able to sit down and enjoy city life. This is a constant correlation through the three main studies of 1968, 1986 and 1995. So each time the city has taken one parking lot away and changed it into a space for people two more people have taken part in stationary activities.

The rapidly growing number of outdoor cafes (from 2,900 to 4,800 seats during the last ten years) is part of the explanation of the fact that staying in the Inner City has increased 3 to 4 times since the first study in 1968. It is ironic that in 1968 when a couple of restaurants on one of the first pedestrian squares asked for permission to have outdoor seating the reaction was "it does not work in Denmark, it is raining all the time" and there was a serious discussion about covering at least part of the square with a glass roof. Fortunately it never happened and the square is packed with outdoor cafes now.

In comparison with other Scandinavian capitals, the Copenhagen city centre has a low number of parking places - about 2,500 in 1996, most of these in streets. The gradual reduction in parking spaces (about 600 have been eliminated in the last decade) and the growing cost (about 4 US dollars per hour) have gradually influenced drivers' habits. Under these conditions it is not difficult to find parking and it does not seem to be a problem as the city is working well. Cars entering the Inner City have been kept stable since 1970 whereas the numbers entering the city limits have been constantly growing.

**A slow and gradual process**

An important aspect of the development in Copenhagen is the gradual, slow process: car drivers and cyclists have had time to change traffic habits and people on foot have had time to find out ways of using the new spaces.

Politicians have had time to think and to make decisions based on the success with the first streets. They could try the next

street which also turned out to be a success and so on. There was no big plan from the beginning and in 1962 no one would have believed in a heavy reduction of parking and six times more space for pedestrians. But it has happened! So when the Danes realised the possibilities and were provided with public spaces of good quality, they enjoyed public life just as much as the Italians.

Any city can have a lot of people walking about but this does not say anything about the quality of the pedestrian areas. But if people stop walking, sit down and spend time in public spaces, that is a sign of quality. A good city has many people staying and enjoying city life. #

Lars Gemzøe

#### References

The full data is available in English in a recently published research project: *Public Life - Public Space, Copenhagen 1996* by Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe, The Danish Architectural Press and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts School of Architecture Publishers. A general outline of the development in North American city centres and the European city centres is published in English and Danish by the same authors in *Arkitektur DK - 1, 1996*, The Danish Architectural Press. It also covers the newly renovated public spaces in Copenhagen seen from the architectural point of view.

## Places as Symbols in Berlin

Stefan Schroth

Stefan Schroth is concerned that symbolic meanings are often of no consequence to planners, and not discussed in public debates. He discussed three sites in Berlin that have special meaning in the city's history.

Berlin has 3.5 million inhabitants and is losing about 40,000 per year: people move out into the countryside, which they couldn't do before the wall came down. The city is very concerned about this because taxes are then paid to other communities and not to Berlin. We have now 2 million square metres of unused office space and the housing market seems to be in a difficult position because of people moving out. The political situation is that West Berlin previously had 16 districts and now has 23, each with its local council. We want to reduce these 23 districts to 12 by the year 2000. Against that background I want to consider symbolic meanings affecting the public realm which are usually of no real concern to planners.

Goethe spoke of the power of symbols to unlock, to open up the true nature of things, to decipher messages which lie under the coded surface. We are generally not aware of the patterns of symbols and symbolic meanings in daily life, but think of roses and the colour red and then red for the kiss as symbols for love. Think also of the magic power of religious symbols and the transformation in works of art. In psychology Freud and Jung developed the symbolic language of the unconscious. Jung distinguishes between the subject, where symbols relate to the individual history of a patient, and the object which addresses the collective unconscious, the archetypal images of mankind.

In the language of film, the most modern and popular medium of art, most of the messages that touch our emotions are presented in the form of symbols. Symbol in Greek means things which at first sight are not necessarily coherent, but which together represent the essence of something in our inheritance of understanding. In that sense there are symbolic places in cities, places which become symbolic, or are just in a special way meaningful. Like palaces, churches, civic buildings, gardens and ruins, they express or symbolise power, protection, devotion, enigma, memory. Of course these places transform their meaning as time goes by, even the symbolic contents change, but they remain present in the public memory. If we destroy those places, we destroy common culture.

I would like to present three cases from Berlin which deal with that issue and to see

whether you understand them in the same way I think they should be understood. At the centre of Berlin is the old medieval city with the castle and the wall around it. The castle lies on an island of the Spree. To the west is the baroque extension. The main street in the north is Unter den Linden with the square of the Pariser Platz and the Brandenburg Gate opening out to the Tiergarten, the old animal hunting grounds which have been a public place since 1740. Pariser Platz is one of the spaces adjacent to the city gates like Leipziger Platz, with Potsdamerplatz in front of it.

### Stadtschloss

The first case is the Stadtschloss of Berlin, the city palace of the Prussian grand dukes, kings and finally the Kaiser who remained there from 1871-1918. The castle terminated the vista of the Unter den Linden and was heavily bombed in the war but was still standing in 1945. Then in 1956 the communist regime blew it up because they said there should be no more class society and no nobility. After the wall was built and the German Democratic Republic became a bit more self-conscious, they did something very strange, they built a palace, the Palace of the Republic, where parliament met two or three times a year. It also included exhibition space, restaurants and meeting rooms with a parking lot in front used for parades. To the right was the foreign ministry and in an adjacent building part of the old structure of the castle was rebuilt as a balcony from which pronouncements could be made.

The question arose, what would the new government do after unification? The East Berliners resented their old regime, but the West Berliners resented it much more. First they removed the Foreign Ministry building and then they said they wanted to demolish the Palace der Republik, but many people of the East liked it because it was a place of their own.

Then the people said "we want a castle, the real castle back", and they found a developer who made a stage set of the castle which was placed next to the Palace der Republik to demonstrate what it would be like if it was rebuilt. A competition was held to replace the Palace der Republik but so far nothing has been decided. The matter is still pending, the city prepares another competition, and it is very difficult to say what will happen.

### Brandenburg Gate

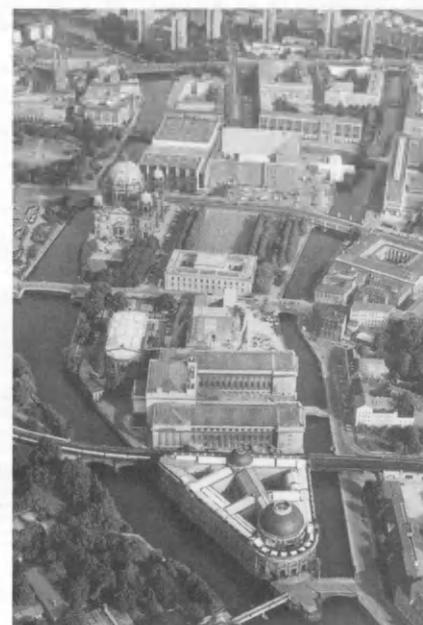
Now we turn our backs on the Palace der Republik and go to the Brandenburg Gate which lies at the end of the serene baroque Unter den Linden.

The Brandenburg Gate always played a special role. It was built in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Lanhans, one of the royal Baumeisters. In 1806 Napoleon passed through Berlin on his way to Russia and took the city. He asked to have the keys given to him at the Brandenburg Gate. In May 1945 the victorious generals of the French, British, American and Russian armies made their way through the Brandenburg Gate from the Tiergarten. At the time the Gate was completely isolated with no surrounding building remaining.

I remember being there on the night when the wall was built and it was a really terrifying experience. A typical poster during that period said 'Berlin, Hauptstadt, Deutschland, Open the Door' and the Brandenburg Gate became the hope for unification. There was a scaffold on the West side from which every important visitor was invited to look over the wall and see the Brandenburg Gate and the fortifications. In October 1989 when the wall was breached, the people met here and climbed on the wall to celebrate the possibility of unification.

Then the big planning question arose: what to do with the Platz and what to do with the Brandenburg Gate? There were three possible options regarding the traffic. The first one was to return the layout of the square to its original form with traffic going through the Brandenburg Gate again. Another option was to ban traffic through this gate as it had become a symbol which would be devalued if used for access. A third option also banned traffic through the Gate because conservationists found that shelling and vibrations had made the mortar of the gate unsound; this option, which diverts traffic a long way around the Gate, is now the reality. The street through the Tiergarten goes straight for 5 kilometres and you can see the Brandenburg Gate for long distances and then when you are there and you want to go further on Unter den Linden, you have to make a detour through something similar to a service entrance.

In terms of buildings around the Platz one of the architects in Berlin, Joseph-Paul Kleihuis put forward a project idealising the buildings which had existed before on each side of the gate, reproducing a symmetrical layout. There is one new additional storey on these new buildings as this is how historical reconstruction is often understood: squeeze more in. The city planners thought that the baroque square should be recreated by using planning regulations requiring a vertical baroque order and that the windows should have a standard oblong format with no more than 50% windows on the surface of the wall. At one end of the Platz is the hotel Adlon. It used to be one of the palace-like hotels; it was demolished and rebuilt with two additional storeys, because the new ceiling heights are lower than the old ones.





It has been built in the traditional style which reflects the era when Kaiser Wilhelm went there to take a bath every week because there was no bathroom in his huge castle! By contrast the new British embassy by Michael Wilford, which had to conform to these drab historical principles, was designed imaginatively by using something more sculptural and modern expressing its entrance and first floor elements.

The important thing is that you can't ride through the Brandenburg Gate as you were supposed to do. The idea of the monument, the memory of unification has failed and this idea of doing things as they were before has created something meaningless. One of the enlightened architects of our city said the best thing would be to place the Brandenburg Gate on a swivel!



**Kulturforum**

The final place concerns the area near the Kulturforum which includes the Philharmonie, the Chamber Music Hall, the big state library and the Mies van der Rohe National Gallery.

The Kulturforum was planned mainly by Hans Scharoun in the 50s and built in the 60s and 70s. When the Philharmonie was built in 1963, they didn't have the money for the cladding and there was not yet the chamber music hall. What was revolutionary about these buildings was that in this concert hall the music is in the middle and you sit around it, and likewise in the national library, the reading room was an enormous landscape where people sat and dealt with the knowledge of the books and the universal idea of information. Scharoun thought that these buildings should be at the meeting point between East and West and should have a cathartic meaning: after all the deep moral catastrophes of the country, it was necessary to find some continuity and the cultural heritage could be where this could begin. A new form of building was required so that this meeting point between East and West would become something very meaningful for German society.

Adjacent to this is Potsdamerplatz, a huge development by Daimler Benz for which an international competition was held and won

Left-  
Top: Berlin in 1784 showing the palace on the left and Unter den Linden linking it to the Tiergarten on the right.

Middle: The Spree island with the 'stage set' palace.  
Bottom: The Daimler Benz project for Potsdamerplatz.

This page-  
Top: The Brandenburg Gate with the proposed symmetrical buildings on either side.

Middle: Model showing the new buildings around Potsdamerplatz and the Kulturforum now a backyard.  
Above: Hilmer & Sattler's winning scheme for Potsdamerplatz.

by Hilmer & Sattler. The developers got very nervous and they asked Richard Rogers to do a feasibility study which he based on the layout of Karlsruhe, but the Kulturforum was somehow completely not taken into consideration.

Another approach by Hans Kolhoff proposed that as there is this Kulturforum with its enigmatic buildings we should, if we want a new city, do it radically, and produce an image of the modern, international city which links to the Kulturforum and creates a special place where the old and the new buildings will work together. The city working together with developers said that it wouldn't be economical with the traditional building heights so Kolhoff proposed using heights adopted in Milan.

Richard Rogers' old partner Renzo Piano was appointed to masterplan the southern part of the Potsdamerplatz site and his scheme for a sort of new city is now under construction adjacent to the old state library. He sticks the various bits back, adds a musical theatre and develops the urban grid and the result is that the Kulturforum, this supposedly very meaningful place for Berliners, has now become a backyard in this scheme with a musical theatre behind the library. Kolhoff is also developing a high-rise building there.

The images for the Kulturforum seem to say let us plant some trees, let the big street be like a pathway with many trees sharing the space with the traffic, which is the real user of this place. What I am asking is why can we not discuss the symbolic meaning of these places and invest in planning in a proper way. One reason might be that the people are alienated from the present form of public government and that the planners are alienated from the public. To behold things and to honour them in an appropriate way should be discussed openly, that is what we miss and that leads to these very erratic results for which I am only astonished and imagine you are probably also. #

*Stefan Schroth*

# The Wider Urban Agenda

Mike Gwilliam

Mike Gwilliam emphasises the opportunity that a slightly better climate creates for urban design, and explains why the Urban Design Alliance is so important.

We must see urban design in a bigger picture and I want to try and paint some of that canvas which others will fill in with colour and virility within it. We must make sure politicians and the wider public see the relevance of urban design. In this wider urban agenda we have a number of currents of both unease and positive feelings at the moment.

There is the millennium issue, for instance. What are we going to do with the new millennium? The whole unease about environmental change, climatic change, global warming. The issues related to how we are using or misusing our resources. Worries about lack of community and social fragmentation, lack of cohesion, a sense of uncertainty and the search for something that is going to provide a vision, some ways of trying to take things forward, looking over the horizon.

In the end it comes down to a quest for a more enduring, sustainable way of living than we have now and one that is relevant for our towns and cities. It is no good talking about cramming people into the cities and stopping greenfield development. We should be doing something about the pace of change and the impact on the countryside, although not primarily because of the countryside: by doing better things for people in the towns and cities we can create a more stable lifestyle. The agenda is very much to do with issues of health, security, social services, education and so on, of which the built environment is a very important dimension.

Urban design needs to flow with the tide of concern, to pick up the political dimension and to show how it can meet and assist in meeting some of those concerns. It needs to show its relevance to that political and public agenda that is slowly emerging.

## **Pride of Place**

Earlier this year, the Trust produced a manifesto, *Pride of Place*, which called for a crusade, for the renaissance of our towns and cities, marking the very real progress in the last ten to fifteen years. It emphasised that we need to do this wider and deeper, to push the message forward and to do it in the context of what it is that makes places accessible, what it is that engages local people. We believe that what can happen in

their place matters to people and that they feel a greater sense of local pride in where they are and who they are.

Pride of Place was the theme and I want to refer to two or three points which I think are of critical relevance. The different dimensions of this urban agenda need to connect and link together, to make a greater totality.

**People first**

If we are to drive forward the urban renewal and renaissance agenda, if we are to engage people in wider design matters, then we have to talk in language that relates to them. In doing so we should be looking very hard at how we convey messages, to whom we convey them and when. We help local groups with ideas such as creating community chests where groups can get support, do their own things and support ideas such as a percentage for participation in development projects. The experience of the Trust's work in the last 20 years is that if you don't engage with local people, it does not last. I think that is true of the design dimension as well.

The other message is that we should try to move up the learning curve into partnership in the sense of community management, in the community, by the community and for the community, and that is important in the context of design. It should not be seen as something that we, wonderful professionals, parachute in and deliver and then walk away from. It has to be something that people can feel and touch as theirs and I think that technology will help us do that.

**Sustainable regeneration**

The most vital aspect of a more sustainable approach to our towns and cities are the people and housing, because so much of what we do in towns and cities links back to where people are, where they live and how they act. The brownfield/greenfield debate is important: the development of a goods yard in Camden illustrates a successful approach involving a housing association and a mixed community with a lot of good facilities. We do need to see the housing agenda as an opportunity to get some of the design messages across, to show how we can create quality and choice and in doing so make better use of resources like under-used buildings and brownfield sites.

**Transport**

The third dimension is transport. I can't stress how important this is in relation to urban design and how vital it is that the flagship opportunities such as the World Squares are seized, not because they are

the most important but because of the message that implementing such projects will convey about our wider standards and attitudes.

**Design**

Now I want to move on to design itself. We consider that design quality is very important, a vital catalyst, but that is not the view of many lay people and many influential people. So how can we carry that message forward? One initiative we introduced recently is to have an Urban Design Award in our Civic Trust Award programme. John Gummer backed it when he was in power and I am pleased to say John Prescott has carried on backing it. That is a little way in which we can start to convey the message, although it is talking largely to the converted.

The Trust's regeneration unit has dealt with over 300 regeneration projects across the country, large, small, city, small town, right across the range. We are trying to convey some of these messages at the local level in places such as Brixton, Doncaster, Eastbourne and many others. There are plenty of places where work is going on, but we haven't enough political priority in carrying those ideas forward. It isn't ideas we are short of, it is political will.

**Better Places**

The theme that the Trust uses nowadays on its logo is Better Places, but I still find that when I am talking to people about Trust work, they think we mean better special places. In fact we mean making the ordinary places better.

Standards and expectations for the everyday are essential. Birmingham is one example which shows how you can use design to bring together some of the other themes I have mentioned and convey the wider message of pride, and in doing so regenerate the whole cycle of local involvement and community commitment. Birmingham's image a few years ago was pretty awful. The City Council has single-mindedly sought to transform the central area and create a new standard that is enjoyed by local people. It has created a cultural climate, a sense of expectation amongst people in Birmingham and a feeling that things are improving and can get better. Other places like Glasgow have done the same through a considerable element of urban design quality.

Another example is Kilmarnock, a town which has had high unemployment, a lot of problems and is short of money. The local authority said, we are not satisfied with our run-down town centre, we are going to set a new standard for ourselves and create a



*Top: Victoria Square, Birmingham.*

*Middle: Kilmarnock town centre before.*

*Above: Kilmarnock town centre after.*

*Below: Princes Square, Glasgow.*



sense of local pride and attract investment on that basis. They have done that and they have brought the elements together not only with quality but with a sense of fun and purpose. They are very proud of what they have done, investors are beginning to respond and the local people are saying that was a good use of precious resources. This is an example of design having a very considerable effect, which is why Kilmarnock got the main Civic Trust award in 1997.

We know that in doing this we can use design as one of the spokes in the wheel of pride. It is not the only spoke, but if it can be put alongside some of the others, the cycle starts to reinforce and strengthen itself. Our message is that it does matter if you talk about that sense of pride and it does matter if you use that design spoke to the full.

I started by talking about challenge and opportunity. I think the Urban Design Alliance has been formed in an ideal period to respond to these issues and I very much look forward to working together in the new alliance with the UDG, because together we can make a difference. But I hope you will also feel that what I have said about that wider urban agenda is something that some of you will want to help the Civic Trust push, promote and take forward, because it is only if we can get the other spokes of the wheel in place that we will really start to make the impact that we should for the 21st century. #

*Mike Gwilliam*

# World Squares for All

The following text summarises the key constituents of the consultants' study for the World Squares project and their two strategies. It concludes by describing the final proposals put forward in August this year.

The study was commissioned by Westminster City Council, the Government Office for London, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Parliamentary Works Directorate, the Traffic Director for London, the Royal Parks Agency, English Heritage and London Transport.

The study area covers the heart of Westminster, including Trafalgar Square, Parliament Square and Whitehall and runs from St James's Park to the River Thames. This area is home to many architectural treasures, including a World Heritage Site (the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey) and over 170 listed buildings, homes, offices and shops. The effect the scheme will have on traffic over a much wider area of central London has also been considered.

The aims of the study are to:

- improve pedestrian access to, in and around the Squares, the Whitehall Conservation Area and the Westminster World Heritage Site
- provide a high standard of urban design in the public realm including, for example, lighting, signage, pavements and roads. New design must reflect the international importance of the existing historic townscape and complement and enhance the historic street furniture that is to remain.
- improve the reliability of, and reduce journey times for, London Transport bus services
- improve opportunities for visitor enjoyment and appreciation of the Squares and the Whitehall Conservation Area.

Consultants started the study in November 1996. Traffic and pedestrian surveys were carried out, analysed and discussed with the main property owners, occupiers, residents' groups and other interested parties (see next article).

It is hoped to introduce changes that will make the area better to work in, live in and visit, by shifting the balance away from vehicles in favour of pedestrians. Changes can be made which will have no direct effect on traffic such as:

- improving surfaces of roads and pavements
- providing better facilities for visitors, including refreshments and information

- ensuring there is a consistently high standard of design for street furniture, such as signs, lighting and railings
- making sculptures and statues more accessible and enjoyable and adding new ones
- improving the management of Trafalgar Square.

Road closures will have an impact on traffic volumes, speeds and delays over a wide area of London and the impact of the two strategies proposed has been examined. The predictions do not take account of car drivers deciding to use public transport or travel at another time. The predictions also don't take into account how the Government's new approach to transport will affect future traffic levels in central London. All of these will feature in the final plan, to be prepared after consultation is completed.

In addition to possible funding from the study partners, funding will be sought from the private sector and from the National Lottery. It is likely that the final plan will take several years to carry out. Two strategies were put out to public consultation.

### Strategy 1 Proposals

(See top map)

For pedestrians it will provide new paved space around the Squares, equal to twice the present pedestrianised area of Trafalgar Square, better access to buildings and public spaces and more direct routes, reduced walking times and fewer delays.

It will give improved settings for the Cenotaph and many listed buildings in the area and more pleasant areas between buildings in places such as Old Palace Yard.

Traffic in general will be reduced in the immediate study area. Traffic restrictions will be introduced in and around the squares, including a complete ban on the north side of Trafalgar Square and the south side of Parliament Square and buses and cycles only southbound on the east side of Trafalgar Square. Some of the traffic will divert to alternative routes in central London resulting in an increase in traffic using routes in the surrounding areas, including some streets in the South Bank, Marylebone, Mayfair and Knightsbridge areas. There will be an increase in congestion and journey times across central London. Essential services and all emergency access will be retained throughout the study area.

Buses will have new bus lanes, traffic signals and bus-only permitted turns and overall bus journey times across central London will be unaffected. Cyclist routes will be more direct with less conflict with other traffic and cyclists can use new bus lanes and advanced stop lines at traffic lights. Taxis will

be able to use all the new bus lanes except the southbound lane on the east side of Trafalgar Square. Elsewhere, taxis will be subject to the changes affecting general traffic.

Residents and visitors will benefit from a safer and less polluted environment. To avoid an increase in traffic in the Smith Square area, restrictions are proposed which will make access by car to some homes less direct. Some residents outside the study area may be affected by possible increases in traffic.

### Strategy 2 Proposals

(See bottom map)

More road space will be given over to pedestrians with more direct routes into and throughout the study area and further reduction in walking times and delays.

Closing Duncannon Street to traffic will further enhance the setting of St Martin's in the Fields; closing the road between Trafalgar Square and Charles I statue will improve the setting of the statue. Closing Horse Guards Avenue to general traffic will give a more direct and pleasant link for pedestrians between St James's Park and the River. There will be less traffic outside Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament, enabling visitors to enjoy the area more.

Traffic in general will be further reduced in the study area. There will be no through traffic on the east side of Parliament Square and Abingdon Street. Other notable traffic restrictions include Duncannon Street, Horse Guards Avenue, and the west side of Trafalgar Square. Traffic that normally uses the area will choose various alternative routes and the effect will be felt over a wider area than for Strategy 1. A further increase in traffic will occur in the surrounding areas, including some streets in the South Bank, Marylebone, Mayfair and Knightsbridge areas.

A further increase in traffic congestion and journey times across central London will arise but essential services and all emergency access will be retained throughout the study area. Buses will have significant increases in journey times in central London. Cycling will be safer in the study area because of the further restrictions on private vehicles. Taxi journey times will be reduced within the study area but overall, central London journey times will increase.

As for Strategy 1, residents and visitors will benefit from a safer environment. But more residents outside the area will be affected by increases in central London traffic and congestion.



**Masterplan**

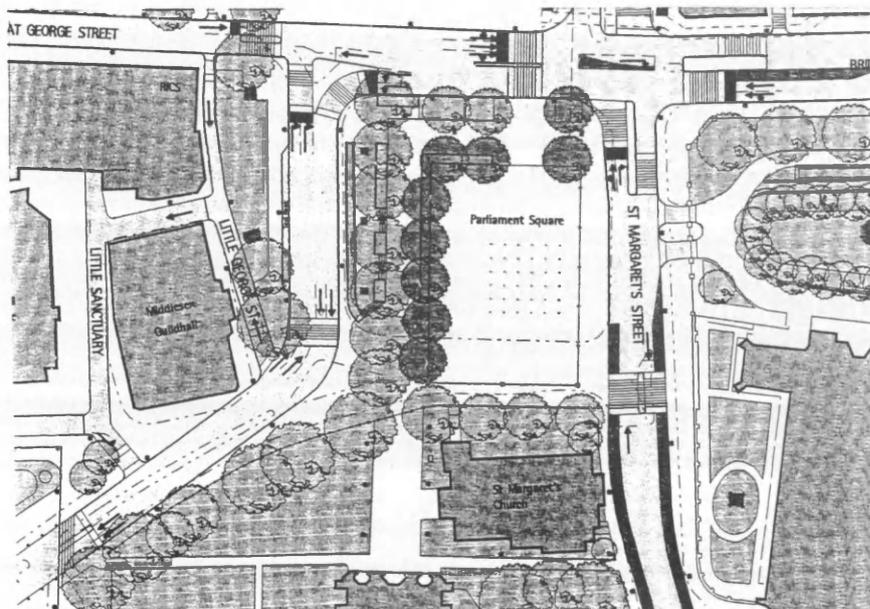
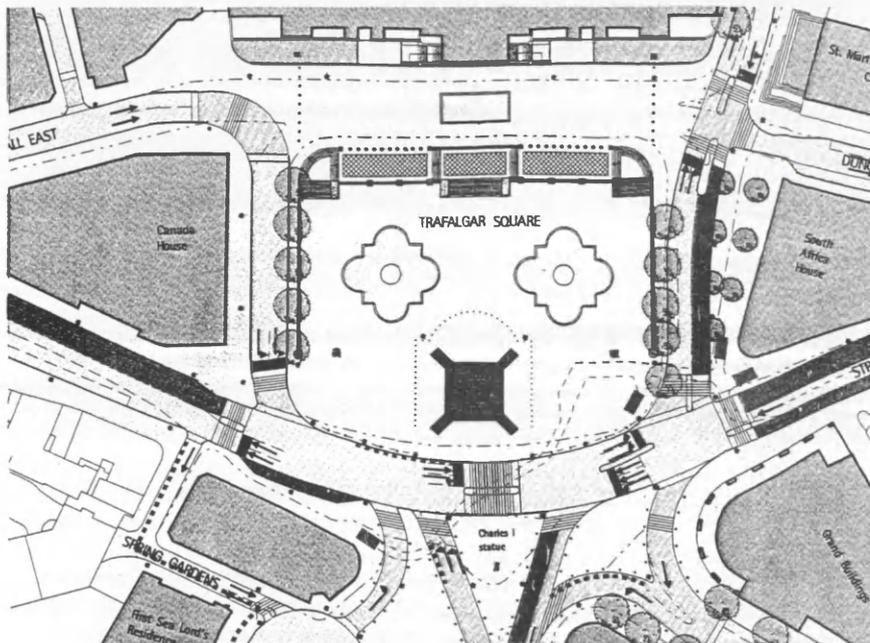
Following the public consultation, the consultant team refined its proposals to achieve an overall vision for the study area. These combined the best traffic solution for buses with the best urban design solution for people, addressing the four key aims of the brief.

The six main key features of the masterplan are:

- New gateway between World Squares and the West End: Creation of an improved pedestrian space in St Martin's Place.
- Traffic removed in front of the National Gallery: Pedestrianisation of the north side of Trafalgar Square.
- Better access to Trafalgar Square: New central staircase and improved corner steps.
- Whitehall transformed and the Cenotaph respected: Carriageway reduced to two lanes in each direction, one dedicated to buses. Pavements widened, ceremonial route improved. Enhanced setting for the Cenotaph.
- Parliament Square transformed: South side of the Square closed to traffic, creating a focus for the World Heritage Site.
- Old Palace Yard reinforced as a public space: Traffic routes and bus lanes maintained, with new paving to define the space on both sides of the road as a square. Long-term objective to remove cars parked outside the House of Lords. #

*The consultants team involved: Foster and Partners, Architects and Master Planners (Project Manager). Halcrow Fox, Transport Planning. Space Syntax Laboratory, UCL, Movement and Spatial Analysis. Civic Design Partnership, Urban Space and Historic Context.*

*The team also includes: Davis Langdon and Everest, Costs. Richard Burdett, LSE. Peter Walker and Partners, Landscape Architects. WET Design, Water Technology,*



Top: Masterplan detail: Trafalgar Square.  
 Middle: Masterplan detail: Parliament Square.  
 Above: Parliament Square after improvements.  
 Right: Two views of Trafalgar Square after improvements.



The Space Syntax Laboratory UCL describes how their team analysed and modelled the existing pattern of space use and movement in and around Trafalgar Square, and from this evolved proposals for design modifications which would lead to a richer pattern of use there.

## **Aims of the team in Trafalgar Square**

The aims of the team in Trafalgar Square have been:

- to make sure the space is accessible and intelligible to all pedestrians, including people living and working in London, people visiting the National Gallery, and tourist visitors
- to make sure that all the space in the Square is used to some degree, since large, empty spaces always detract from the 'feelgood' factor in a public square
- to ensure everyday use of the Square throughout the year by Londoners and visitors, as well as ensuring it is safe for special occasions
- to make sure there is enough space in the Square for all those who would in future benefit from using it.

## **The current pattern of space use and movement in the square**

As part of its work on the World Squares for All project, the Space Syntax Laboratory has undertaken the most detailed survey ever of pedestrian movement and space use in central London. The objective in making this survey has been to establish the current pattern of pedestrian activity in the study area, identify the specific problems faced by pedestrians and, from this analysis, generate design ideas which address these problems and satisfy the overall aims of the project.

In making the survey we have sent teams of trained observers onto the streets of London. They have counted levels of pedestrian movement in over 300 locations at different times of the day, on different days of the week, and in different seasons of the year. The results of our survey provide a comprehensive picture of pedestrian activity and show that the key features of space use in Trafalgar Square are:

- the heart of the Square is used almost exclusively by visitors (the black dots in Figure 1)
- visitors are concentrated mainly in the south-east corner of the Square, leaving large, relatively empty areas to the north and west
- there is virtually no movement across the heart of the Square (the thin grey lines in Figure 1). Instead we see Londoners moving around the outside pavements of the Square (with some movement across the inside, southern pavement) and visitors meandering slowly within the Square
- there is much 'informal' road crossing by visitors, especially from the south side of Trafalgar Square in order to get to the best views from the King Charles traffic island (the thick grey lines in Figure 1)
- there is almost no stationary use of the Square by Londoners. Instead, more Londoners walk around the edges of the Square than across it. In doing so they face major delays at pedestrian crossings. Many cross illegally when faced with the choice of waiting
- the upper level space on the north side of the Square is virtually unused, either for movement or stationary activity.

## **Why the square works this way**

At first sight, the main problem of Trafalgar Square appears to be that it is cut off from its surroundings by dense traffic. In fact, this is only a part of the story. Simply removing the traffic would not in itself lead to significant improvements in pedestrian use. Space Syntax analysis of Trafalgar Square shows that - while the effects of traffic are important - they are not nearly as important as the influence of design.

Recent research has shown, and experience confirmed, that design can make the difference between well and poorly used urban spaces, and that design means first and foremost spatial design. Merely adding landscaping and facilities to poorly designed spaces will not make those spaces work. Good spatial design involves three key elements:

- simple, direct routes for pedestrian movement which pass through the middle of the space and not just around its edges
- positions within the space from which people can see out in several directions, and therefore understand the way in which the Square fits into its wider urban context

- facilities for eating, drinking or resting which are located close to - but not in the way of - the main pedestrian movement routes.

Our analysis shows that each of these elements is missing from the current design of Trafalgar Square. Instead, the current design of the space is directly responsible for the uneven pattern of use which we have observed. In particular:

- detailed analysis of the visual 'fields' available from Trafalgar Square shows that the views available from the geometric centre of the Square are very constricted, and nowhere near as strategic as those from the King Charles traffic island. This is why visitors gravitate towards the traffic island to gain their bearings and take photographs

- the existing stairs in the north-west and north-east corners of the Square inhibit the kind of criss-crossing movement through the body of the space which other studies have shown to be an essential characteristic of well-used squares. As a result, Londoners find it easier to walk around the edges of the space than to cross diagonally.

Computer modelling of the spatial layout of the Square allows the precise relationship between spatial design and pedestrian



TRAFALGAR SQUARE  
EXISTING  
pedestrian activity

WORLD SQUARES FOR ALL  
JUNE 1998

Space Syntax  
LABORATORY

Fig. 1

EXPLANATORY NOTES:

1. The space syntax computer model calculates levels of accessibility in the pedestrian movement network and represents these in colour as:

— = high accessibility  
through — to:  
- - - - = low accessibility

# Bangalore - India's Silicon

Since the opening up of India's economy in the early 1990s, one city has leapt to the forefront of development, attracting a myriad of high-tech multinationals: it is Bangalore, capital of the southern state of Karnataka. This once sleepy ex-Cantonment settlement has undergone a startling transformation in recent years. Once a genteel 'Pensioners' Paradise', midway between a British Military Station and a hill-station, Bangalore now aims to be the 'Silicon Valley of India'. Its pleasant climate (1000 metres above sea level) and reputation as a 'Garden City' have attracted dozens of new companies and provided the model for its relaxed, suburban layout. However this imported model is stretched to breaking point and the now sprawling city is becoming a victim of its own success.

## Planning history

The foundation of Bangalore was firmly rooted in Indian tradition. In 1537 the area was given as a *jagir*, grant of land, by the ruler of South India's powerful Vijayanagara Empire to a local vasal, Kempe Gowda. Gowda is said to have laid out the town in the customary manner, by harnessing four pairs of white bullocks to decorated ploughs and driving them off in the cardinal directions. Their starting point became the hub of the new city and the furrows its main streets. The areas between these wide



Top: Map of India

changes and evaluating the effects of these in terms of pedestrian activity.

Our experience from the World Squares for All project shows that Space Syntax analysis is also a design generator, highlighting areas which are either problematic (such as the change in level between the upper and lower parts of the Square) or which offer significant design potential (such as the area to the south of the Square around the statue of King Charles). When the spatial characteristics of an area have been pinned down, ideas for solutions begin to emerge in a process we term 'evidence based design'.

### From research to design: re-engineering the Square

The findings of the Space Syntax analysis have generated a number of key redesign ideas for Trafalgar Square. These have been tabled within the team and evaluated alongside others over the course of the project. They include:

- The southward extension of the Square and creation of new, direct pedestrian crossings to the north-west corner of Whitehall and the north side of Northumberland Avenue. The main effects/benefits of this will be:
  - to expand the area of the Square which will be naturally used by visitors, decreasing the current congestion in the south-east corner;
  - to create an area in the Square with stunning all round views (in contrast to the current restricted views) from which visitors will take pictures both back into the Square and outwards into the surrounding urban area - to make important views available for Londoners and visitors alike to assist in orientation and movement. These include: Whitehall towards the Palace of Westminster; the Mall towards Buckingham Palace; Northumberland Street towards Hungerford Bridge and Cockspur Street towards St James';
  - to make the 'centre of London' a natural and safe destination for visitors to London, thus increasing the prestige, significance and reputation of the whole Square.
- Opening up the north-east and north-west corner steps into the Square by the creation of two new flights of steps on diagonal alignments. The main effects/benefits of the 'diagonal' steps will be:
  - to facilitate movement across the Square for people living and working in the area, so that the Square becomes a natural part of their everyday journeys rather than the obstacle it is at present (currently the orientation of the steps is a key factor in eliminating natural movement through the Square),

creating naturally used routes which are more pleasant, quicker and less hazardous than the current difficult routes around the outside;

- to facilitate movement by visitors to and from the southern parts of the Square, allowing movement into these areas to approach from different directions;
- improving the feel of the Square by creating background movement across the Square in several directions - this being crucial to the sense that a space is well and naturally used. This will help generate stationary use within the Square by Londoners as well as visitors.
- Renovation of the upper level space (between the National Gallery and the existing Square) as an intrinsic part of Trafalgar Square. The renovation of this space with its wonderful viewing potential will require:
  - the elimination of all everyday traffic (allowing occasional access for special visitors to the main entrance of the National Gallery) from the north side of the Square. However, this on its own, while essential, will not in itself realise the potential of the upper level space. This will also require the careful design of this space and its relation to the main body of the Square, since:
  - movement will continue to be primarily on the National Gallery side of this space, and more generous provision will therefore have to be made for this movement on the north side of the upper level space;
  - the south side of the upper level space will not (even with the corner steps) be a significant movement space, but will offer wonderful opportunities for stationary uses, for people wishing to relax and spend some time in the Square.
- A direct link between the lower level body of the Square and upper level part of the space via a new, centrally located stairway. At present the north, lower level part of the Square and the upper level space directly above it are the least used areas of the Square. While the corner steps will create diagonal movement across the Square, they will not by themselves animate either of these spaces. Nor will pedestrianisation of the upper north level alone animate the south side of the upper space. The central link between these two potentially poorly used spaces will therefore be critical to their mutual animation by:
  - providing a direct route into the lower level body of the Square from the National Gallery via the least used part of Trafalgar Square. Visitors to the Gallery will use this stair whereas they would not necessarily go into the

Square if they had to use the corner steps. These steps will create a more localised link which will allow 'drift' from one space to the other, as well as providing a convenient route for people going directly to and from the Gallery

- creating a natural east-west division in the upper level space, with more Londoner-focused facilities provided on the west side upper level space (where people working in the area would naturally stop) and more popular facilities on the east side of the upper level space (where there will be a higher and more mixed local movement population).

- and, in general, the creation of new, well used diagonal routes across the Square for Londoners which are more pleasant, less time consuming and less hazardous than the current tortuous routes around the edge of Square.

Each of these design characteristics has emerged following numerous 'runs' of the pedestrian computer model. Since processing times are very short (a matter of seconds) it has been possible to use the computer as a sketchpad for testing, rejecting and refining design ideas. Analysis of the redesign proposals indicates the extent to which pedestrian linkages in and around the Square might be considerably improved (Figure 3). The Space Syntax model shows a significant increase in overall levels of pedestrian accessibility. In particular, new diagonal routes can be seen passing from one corner of the space to the other, making use of the new corner stairs and bringing a significantly greater degree of pedestrian activity to the heart of the space than exists at present.

### Summary

Space Syntax techniques have been used by the World Squares team to generate and evaluate a range of design proposals throughout the Study Area. In each case the needs of pedestrians have been carefully evaluated through detailed observations of existing activity and spatial modelling of design possibilities. In this way a masterplan for the area has been developed which is firmly founded on the results of robust, evidence-based techniques. #

*The research team included Professor Bill Hillier, Tim Stonor, Mark David Major and Natasa Spende.*

# Govent Garden - How does the Garden Fair? Peter Heath

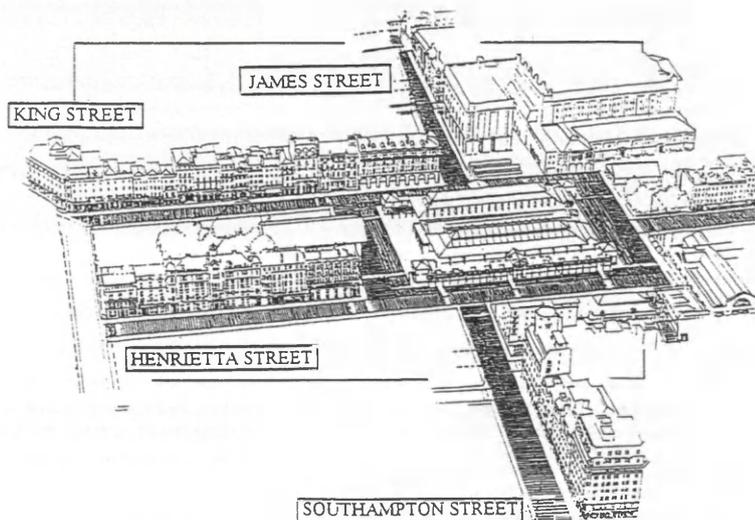
Peter Heath, architect and town planner, describes the value of a recently published new type of study on central Covent Garden, commissioned by the Covent Garden Area Trust and researched and produced by Civic Design Partnership.

Covent Garden remains one of the top international examples for urban designers of economic regeneration by conservation of historic buildings. The local community action, the listing of buildings by the Secretary of State and the GLC's Action Area Plan of 1978 that generated this success story has been well documented with periodic reviews. However, according to the Covent Garden Area Trust, a body established at the abolition of the GLC in 1986, all is still not well in the Garden. The Trust was intended to fulfil a part of the special planning controls of the GLC's landlord role to maintain the special character of the principal buildings around the Piazza. Their recently launched study of central Covent Garden challenges some important aspects of the apparent success in conservation terms and attempts to set out a model format for improving control and guidance.

This review therefore aims to illustrate what is involved in understanding and acting upon some of the lessons of Covent Garden's success and the continuing challenges. Although it is an essential professional activity underpinned by Conservation Area legislation and local authority responsibility even in the highest profile locations, existing systems do not seem to be working.

Studies and commentators over the last decade have highlighted a variety of negative aspects of the transformation since the 1970s and suggested that success has brought about other serious local problems. In particular, an increase in the intensity of use has created conflicts between the needs of visitors and those of the local residential and business community.

The concept of environmental capacity of historic areas has been addressed recently by studies of Chester and some of the work of the English Historic Towns Forum. These studies have ranged from sustainable development and transportation planning issues to topic based detail design recommendations aimed at preventing decay or stimulating regeneration, rather than the management of economic success. In Covent Garden, the departure of the GLC Covent Garden Team approach left a void in which controls, monitoring and review have

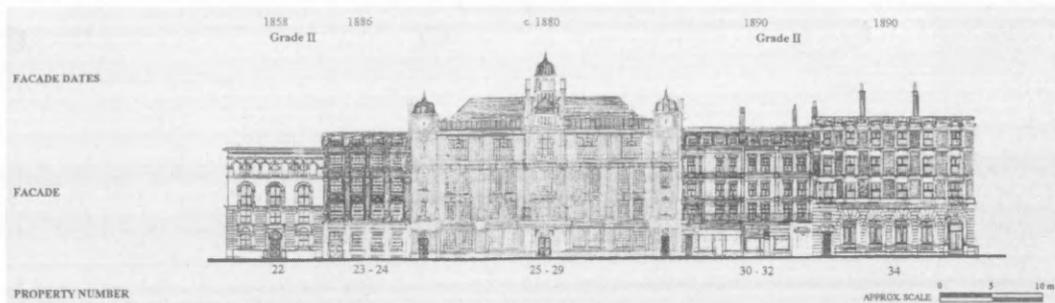


Top: Sketch view of the area covered by the study showing the recommended consistency of traffic management and parking.

Middle: The new Royal Opera House's shopping arcade.

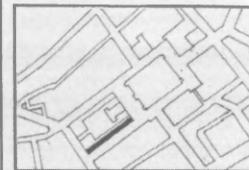
Bottom: Garish advertising does little to enhance the Conservation Area.

Right: Example of report's page: Henrietta Street.



Buildings Street & Des

MAP IDENTIFICATION OF STREET



HENRIETTA STREET - North Side

From the first, Henrietta Street had the character of a good class shopping street, with residential quarters above. In the 18th century coffee houses and taverns opened here, the latter suppressed by the Bedford estate a century later, when there was an influx of publishers into the street. On its northern side the street is dominated by the former St. Peter's Hospital building erected in the 'Queen Anne' style in 1882, while on the opposite side, Nos. 3-10 are attractively preserved houses of the 18th century on the original plots, at its western end, the majority of buildings date from the nineteenth century.

22 Henrietta Street

The stucco and joinery are well-painted. The dark blue backgrounds to the decorative tympana at ground floor level are a particularly good touch. The projecting ledges beneath the first floor windows were designed for reinstating such traditional floral decorations if required.



23 - 24 Henrietta Street

The red brickwork has been well cleaned and the ground floor is smartly painted cream. The brass sign plates and hanging baskets are also well proportioned.

25 - 29 Henrietta Street :  
The former St. Peter's Hospital

No longer in hospital use, a planning application for converting this building into an hotel has recently been refused. It is hoped that any new signs associated with a new occupier will make use of the handsome old stone cartouches on either side of the main entrance and perpetuate the character of the former lettered signs on these. The brickwork needs to be carefully cleaned and repointed. There is scope for some sensitive lighting of decorative forms and details of this facade.



30 - 32 Henrietta Street :  
Bella-Pasta Restaurant, Covent Garden News and Salad Bowl Cafe

The latter rather lets the side down here with its plastic Dutch blind and cluttered sign. The blind should be replaced with a canvas finish 'tent' roller blind like the other two shops in the block. An individual painted sign on the facade would also be better than the existing standard sign. The red brickwork of the upper part of the elevation would benefit from cleaning. The wrought iron balcony at first floor level provides an appropriate location for a traditional display of flowerpots and boxes which should be encouraged here. The pavement accessories add to the street level clutter on the narrow footway and should be kept clear and tidy.



34 Henrietta Street :  
National Westminster Bank

This important corner building is well-maintained, but the signs are poorly designed and sited. The black acrylic fascia signs crudely cut across Clutton's architectural frieze and should be taken down. Signs in this location should comprise individual gilt or bronze letters of a good classic type fitted to the dimensions of the stonework. The lower stainless steel plate signs are also cut across the stone joints of the architecture and introduce an incongruous modern material. They should be replaced by brass or bronze or bronze plates adapted to the dimensions of one of the single blocks of the rusticated Portland stonework. The new projecting logo sign is reasonable.



weakened. Some of the piazza problems are easy to identify. Imbalances in circulation and distribution of intensity was always likely with only two of the five approach streets partially pedestrianised, and Covent Garden Tube Station overloaded. Others are an accumulation of small organic commercial changes. Tables and chairs areas have grown in size and visual dominance and are virtually permanent covered structures with advertising masquerading as umbrellas, inside the Market Buildings as well as out. These often look tatty and block out many of the historic views and details visitor have come to see! Historic building facade alterations have become brasher with accretions of often unauthorised signage, rarely the subject of planning enforcement action. Most significantly, the increase in larger units, particularly restaurants and high street multiples has eroded the original intentions of retaining the fine grain of small, speciality uses. Towering over all this is the increased bulk of the Royal Opera House development and its long running design and commercial controversies.

The following case study therefore can only set out an outline of the process of commissioning the Central Covent Garden Environmental Study, together with a brief evaluation of its initial value in achieving improvements.

**Initiation**

The project was proposed following the success of a similar handbook for the historic Seven Dials Area of Covent Garden which related guidance and improvement proposals to specific buildings and spaces, using a street-by-street analysis of facades and an audit of street furnishings. In Seven Dials, demonstration projects followed the study with over £2 million of private investment generating high quality building and street restorations.

In view of the success of the Seven Dials study it is perhaps surprising that the subcommittee decided on the time consuming and costly process of an invited tender and methodology proposal. This exercise took nearly 18 months of selection and concluded in the appointment of the original team that conceived the Seven Dials Study at a lump sum fee of £26,000! Funding and administration was set up by the Covent Garden Area Trust as an equal partnership with Guardian Properties, the City of Westminster and English Heritage, representatives of each body comprising a project subcommittee.

**Data collection and consultations**

Data collection for the central piazza area included a photographic and drawn elevation study, audit and plot of all street furniture

and paved surfaces, annotating quantities, condition and types. The facade study included preparation of historical notes and observations on detail and condition for every individual building within the study area. Detailed historical research included collating old drawings, photographs and maps for comparative analysis. A questionnaire seeking views about problems and priorities was published in the local free magazine with wide distribution which also promoted an open invitation to a public meeting. One to one interviews were also arranged with the major interest group representatives including the Royal opera House, Guardian Properties, the local police and key businesses in the area.

**Achieving support**

The most important study recommendation sought formal approval by the local authority as a form of Supplementary Planning Guidance, and therefore cross referenced to the Unitary Development Plan. This approach and the detailed recommendations of the Study in full, was agreed and supported by the two most important local community groups. The City of Westminster were reluctant to make this commitment citing concerns about the form and level of public consultation on the Study at the time of publication and that many aspects of the document made recommendations beyond its powers as the planning and highway



Top: An attempt to improve on the quality of café seating.

Above: Bedford Chambers and recently laid pavement.

authority to implement. The compromise wording was finally agreed as follows:

"... Subject to necessary periodic amendments and monitoring, Westminster City Council supports the relevant planning advice and recommendations of the Environmental Study of Central Covent Garden and will have regard to the Study as a material and consideration when considering proposals affecting the central part of the Covent Garden Conservation Area and in seeking to secure the effective preservation and enhancement of its character and appearance..."

#### Launch after long delays

The final version of the Study was launched by Sir Jocelyn Stephens, Chairman of English Heritage in 1997, four years after tenders were first sought and two years after the completion of the final draft. This long delay was largely due to the usual difficulties of funding negotiations to increase the size of the publication run from the original proposal for members of the Trust's Subcommittee to hundreds, capable of sale to local building owners and occupiers for more widespread use.

#### Achieving Results

The most encouraging aspect of the Study has been that it has already achieved a range of positive results:

- As a reference document all parties now use and quote relevant aspects in planning reports in assessing local applications and development proposals.
- Guardian Properties, Tuttons and Doc Martins have adopted some or all of the advice information about historic building maintenance, paint colours, materials and improvements to their buildings.
- Outdoor tables and chairs have generally adopted the recommended improved standard of furniture, replacing cheap plastic or brash garden furniture designs.
- Paving materials and street furniture of improvements implemented in Southampton Street, Russell Street, James Street (north) improvements and around the Royal Opera House perimeter have broadly adopted the specifications recommended with some notable exceptions.
- Some street clutter has been improved with co-ordinated repainting under City

Council maintenance programmes, although little clutter has been removed. BT has at last replaced modern telephone boxes with restored red K6 types.

- The Inigo Jones second gateway beside St Paul's Church has been restored by the City of Westminster and English Heritage, although sadly limited in the scope of upgrading adjacent paving areas to comparable quality standards.
- The Study as a whole was used successfully as an important element of evidence in a landmark arbitration case testing the powers of the Trust to insist on special standards for the Covent Garden Protected Lands.

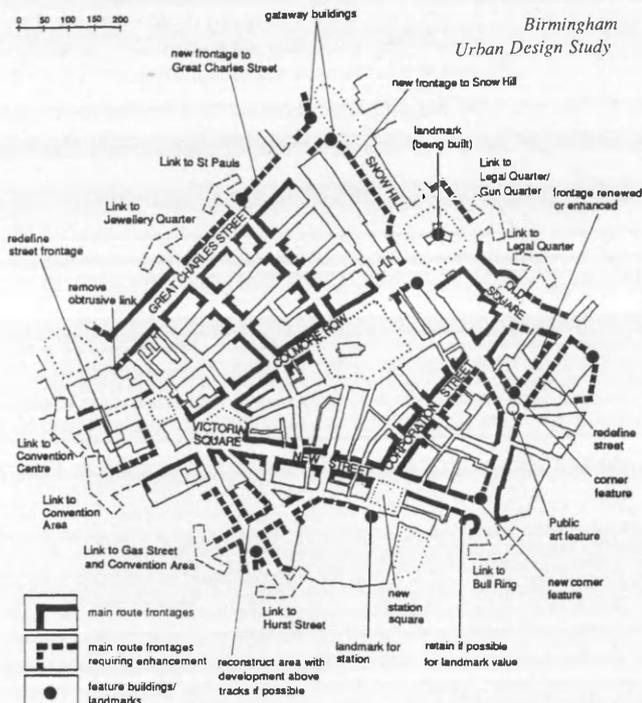
#### Demonstration Projects

An important set of recommendations were aimed at implementing quality projects for certain key buildings and street improvements, following the specifications explained in the Study. In addition a rigorous programme of street clutter reduction was sought based on the audit action plan as well as training council staff in improved standards and inspection procedures. These proposals required new separate funding for capital works and a redefinition of existing revenue budgets for maintenance by the local authority, ideally in combination with the study partners. This has not as yet happened as a new initiative, although some existing planned projects have been carried out with the improved level of guidance. Regrettably, the consultants' proposal to mount a Heritage Lottery Grant application for funding has not been pursued by any of the study partners. Indeed the recent failure of a similar basis of bid for the Seven Dials area of Covent Garden suggests such an application would not succeed under current lottery conditions.

#### Monitoring results

No formal reviews have yet taken place, although this was a stated aim of the Trust in negotiating for the document to be considered and adopted in principle by the City of Westminster at a meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee in 1997. The inspection check system has not been adopted as proposed, although the City Council has recently put in place an improved approach to better borough-wide street management across departments. #

Peter Heath



**The Design Dimension of Planning Theory: content and best practice for design policies**

John Punter and Matthew Carmona  
E & FN Spon London 1997  
£49.50

John Punter and Matthew Carmona initially obtained support for the research covered in this book from the ESRC and shortly afterwards were appointed by the DoE to carry out research on a Good Practice Guide on Design Policies in Development Plans. The conclusions of the DoE study were not widely circulated and they were overtaken by the 'Quality in Town and Country' initiative. Following that, Urban Initiatives were commissioned to produce a document on Good Practice which should be appearing shortly.

The Punter and Carmona research was completed through the ESRC funding and this major publication is the result which will act as an important reference to the design dimension of planning and be particularly useful to people drafting policy statements in the design field. The publication covers the development of design policy in England, central government advice, the background of urban design theories, the concept of

policies and the use of appraisal and consultation. It then embarks on a series of chapters identifying the approach to policies in areas of urban design, architecture, landscape and conservation. Following this it examines the issues of process and procedure, supplementary guidance and the effectiveness of design policies with a final summary of conclusions. Chapters on appraisal, design policy, process and supplementary guidance also contain a list of recommendations.

The research examined a wide range of plans covering the whole country and then selected 18 authorities as case studies to analyse plans and policies in detail, supplemented by a further 11 where innovative ideas had been introduced. This detailed examination has enabled the policy and the process chapters to refer to specific examples of good practice. Both the chapters on central government guidance and supplementary guidance provide information about central government (or regional offices) views about what could be included in a Local Plan. A particularly useful table on the hierarchy of design guidance (p. 318) indicated the different types available and suggestions about best practice documents.

John Punter has researched North American approaches: by comparison the pro-active design guidance in the UK, in terms of strategies, is much more primitive. Government support for in-depth studies of a range of communities, such as those for historic cities in the 1960s, would be one way to push the urban design boundaries forward.

It is not easy to make a book like this visually interesting, particularly when the subject is covered so fully, although many extracts from policies appear as illustrations, which do lighten the readability. The book is long and detailed which as a one-off read is a challenge, but it will no doubt be generally used for reference. It would have been shorter if it had merely presented a series of recommended procedures and policies but its strength undoubtedly lies in the depth of the research and the reference to particular examples; the alternative approach may well be found in the Urban Initiatives commission mentioned above.

The book should be essential reading for all authorities and consultants whose staff are involved in the drafting of design policies and it will be useful for students in understanding the background of design control and how it can be effectively organised. #

John Billingham

**Action Planning for Cities A Guide to Community Practice**

Nabeel Hamdi and Reinhard Goethert  
John Wiley & Sons, £34.95

The title led me to think this was a book about action planning in communities in the UK and I wondered: what's new? I was pleasantly surprised to find that the selected case studies were of communities in Kingston (Jamaica), New Delhi, Lima, Lublin (Poland), Colombo, Boston and Schweizer-Reneke (a township in South Africa) as well as Belfast.

These case studies all illustrate a brand of 'action planning'

pioneered by the authors known as 'Community Action Planning'. Nabeel Hamdi of Oxford Brookes and Reinhard Goethert of MIT (USA) have collaborated on numerous such cases over the past 15 years. They see their brand as being similar to, but distinct from, three other brands in use, namely Planning for Real developed by Tony Gibson and the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation; GOPP (or in German ZOPP) which is the Goal Oriented Project Planning championed by the German Agency for Technical Co-operation; and UCATs (Urban Community Assistance Teams) which are in effect the same as the UDATs that are well known to all of us in the UDG. The most interesting chapter in the book compares these four brands of action planning. They all involve workshops where an outsider interacts with the community in identifying problems and prioritising them, developing strategies and planning a programme of implementation. They have all been used worldwide. In short, Community Action Planning has the advantages of low cost and short preparation time but relies upon the community already being cohesive, while Planning for Real requires a long preparation time (a model has to be built), GOPP is for more seasoned and sophisticated participants and UDATs have a high cost attached but are best suited for communities that are not cohesive.

The chapters on Community Action Planning and its case studies – which are the meat of the book – are preceded by chapters on the failures of orthodox top-down strategic planning and the need for bottom-up action planning to complement it. The opening chapter on orthodox planning contains rich rhetoric against the type of planning that is promoted by international funding agencies; for example "their approach to planning is grounded in the high ground of monumental civic design borrowed from the colonial planners and modernists alike with their rewards measured in civic design awards and more jobs, and their prestige in the acclamations of fellow

professionals, public lectures and professional journals". Such planning does little to resolve the problems of slum areas which continue to escalate and require a different form of planning approach.

This book has much to recommend it. Any reader who is already at the coal face of action planning will find it a useful reference work. Any reader who works in an ivory tower for international funding agencies will find it an invaluable introduction to the alternative approach. The case studies make very interesting reading and the book is peppered throughout with photographic illustrations of community workshops in session, exhibition materials, visual aids, etc. #

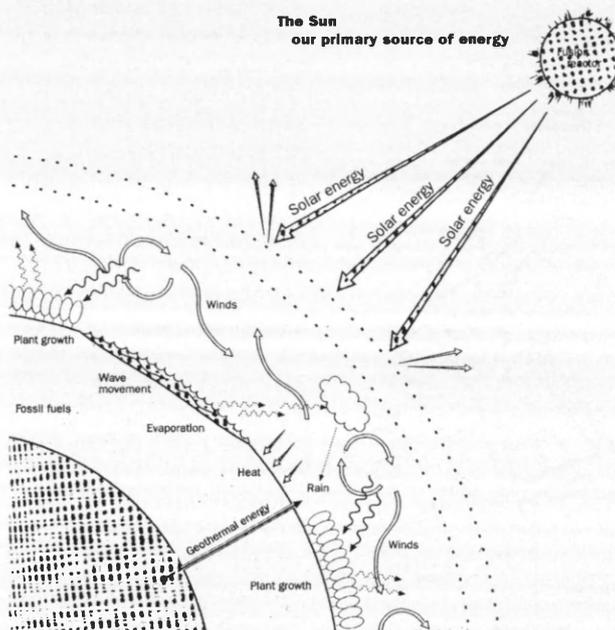
*Tim Catchpole.*

**Cities for a Small Planet**

Richard Rogers  
Faber & Faber £9.99

A radio programme is an intriguing medium for communicating ideas on architecture and urban design, since by definition it is without images. Lord Rogers's Reith Lectures were broadcast in 1995 and have now been edited by Philip Gumuchdjian and published with the addition of black and white illustrations. However, the book retains the feel of the lectures; it is more like a manifesto or perhaps a series of sermons, a profession of faith. It covers some of the same ground as the author's combined effort with Mark Fisher - *A New London* - and it is utterly New Labour.

The first two of the five chapters, corresponding to the five Reith lectures, cover general ground. The social and environmental problems that affect the world are clearly explained. Nothing said here is very new but the possible consequences of carrying on wasting resources, increasing the gap between rich and poor, allowing free rein to the motor car, ignoring the wishes of vast parts of the population or failing to harness new technologies for the benefit of the majority, are all



passionately argued. Examples of good practice are given to indicate that the solutions to the global problems exist and are not utopian. Perhaps because the examples are well known and are exceptions, this reader at least has difficulties in sharing Rogers' optimism: if Curitiba is such a success, why is it unique?

The next two chapters are more specific, one dealing with sustainable architecture and by implication with urban design. Here Rogers is on his own territory and when he mentions the applications of technology to buildings he is convincing. In the next chapter London is used as a case study "to demonstrate that the transformation of British cities is possible". To achieve this transformation, suggestions well known today but perhaps less so in 1995, are put forward: higher residential densities, the use of flats over shops, mixed uses and a move away from market-led decision making towards master planning: "Strategic planning and specific masterplan studies provide the key to capitalising on the availability of so many redevelopment sites, and making a concerted renaissance of the city" (p. 116). In the wake of the abandonment by the Arts Council of his own South Bank project, the postponement (though final reinstatement) of the World Squares scheme and the failure of the river bus to attract private finance, the QED is missing from the argument,

but Lord Rogers has great expectations for the future government of London. Finally the last chapter attempts to bring all the strands together. On p. 169 the "seven commandments" of the sustainable city are listed and nobody would want to disagree with them. What is missing here is a series of examples of how the objectives could be achieved, "the radical new blueprint for the future of our cities" promised on the book's back cover. In particular it is hard to see how the anglo-saxon suburban dream can be replaced by a more continental urban one.

As Reith lectures addressed to the general public and attempting to make it reflect, Lord Rogers's message can only be welcomed. Now as head of the Urban Task Force he has the opportunity of showing how these ideas can be turned into realities. If he succeeds, it will all have been worthwhile. #

*Sebastian Loew*

**Planning Applications: The RMJM Guide**

Third Edition 1998  
Henry Brown & Adrian Salt  
Blackwell Science £37.50

There is a story, probably apocryphal, about Buckminster Fuller. He, at the start of a lecture at the RIBA headquarters, asked his audience: "does anyone know what this building weighs?" Having read Brown and Salt's *Planning Applications*, I now know what it weighs (780 g) but would like to ask: "who is this book for?" Since it has gone into three editions since 1987, it must answer some needs but it is hard to know what is its target audience. The book sets out all 22 (!) types of applications for approvals, determinations and notifications covered by the 1990-1997 Planning Acts in England, Scotland and Wales. By my reckoning, at least nine such applications cover arcane matters of little concern to general practitioners in architecture and planning. In my own career spanning four decades, I have rarely seen an environmental assessment or a scheduled monument consent application; I do wonder how many non-specialists will ever need to make such applications?

What most practitioners want and need is a simple step by step guide to making everyday planning, listed building and conservation area consent applications. A guide must cover background policy research, application form completion, choice of supporting drawings, documents and photographs and also the writing of a covering letter to the local planning authority (LPA). The authors could have done a lot worse than copy the style of the old AJ Information Sheets of the 1950s or the flowcharts produced by the Consumers Association for the *Which* series on Planning about ten years ago. As it is, the excessively wide topic coverage is tellingly illustrated in a fearsome A3 format flowchart of fiendish complexity, which indeed covers all 22 application categories but needs over 20 pages of A4 text and notes to explain it.

In a book dealing with planning applications, the prime needs are to tell practitioners (a) how to read a structure or local plan (or UDP), (b) how to fill in an application form and (c) how to prepare and select all the relevant plans, documents and photographs. This may seem simplistic but my own experience in local and central government is that many applications are either obscure, inadvertently misleading or just plain incomplete. Practitioners, especially less experienced ones, would surely welcome copybook examples on how to complete forms and how to prepare the necessary plans, select suitable photographs and include all other relevant documents. We are now in the age of personal computers, accessible colour copying and document scanning and indeed of the advent of the dreaded Internet to both development planning and planning applications (see Building Design 1359).

Having been critical of the book's excessive breadth and lack of detail, may I say that it is wonderful to find coverage of a vital planning field written by fellow architects, rather than the usual dry as dust lawyers. Perhaps Brown and Salt will take the next edition of this very valuable work as an opportunity to review its appeal to the general practitioner audience it probably needs to address. If they do this (and revision will sooner or later be necessary because of changes to both primary and delegated legislation) they may wish to focus their coverage on the key aspects of planning, listed building and conservation area law and practice. Their existing work is a masterly overview of all the applications relevant to a very wide field: the next edition might well wish to cover a narrower but deeper range of everyday planning procedures. #

John MacBryde

**City Architecture Guides**

Various Authors  
Ellipsis

This series of pocket-sized guides on architecture in major cities is now in its fifth year. It was launched with Samantha Hardingham's guide to contemporary architecture in London which was reviewed in UDQ 50 (April 1994) and published by Artemis, the predecessor to Ellipsis. This book was followed by other guides to Prague, Chicago and Los Angeles and, more recently, Paris, Berlin, Madrid, Vienna, Budapest, Istanbul, Tokyo, Sydney, San Francisco and New York among others. Some of these guides have focused on contemporary architecture while others cover all eras.

Due to constraints of space in the UDQ it has not been possible to review each book individually. Let me say, however, that collectively they make a good impression, they are neatly produced, they have a style of commentary that is fresh, the photographs (albeit in black and white) are crisp, and the prices are very agreeable. My only criticisms are to do with the size of the script which requires a magnifying glass, and the quality of the guide map which gives too little information.

One guide recently published and another which is about to appear deserve special mention because they have been written by UDQ members who are regular book reviewers for this journal. They are:

**Sydney: A Guide to recent Architecture**

Francesca Morrison  
1998 £6.95

Francesca Morrison, formerly of the LDDC and now with Terry Farrell, was the correct choice of author for the guide to Sydney. She comes from Sydney, was Principal Urban Designer at the Sydney City Council from 1981 to 87 and was Guest Editor of the UDQ 39 issue on Sydney (July 1991).

Her book sets out to show that there is more to Sydney than just the Harbour, Harbour Bridge

and Opera House. These are of course the icons that provide Sydney with its image and spectacular setting. But overlooking the Harbour and lost in the hinterland are many other developments which, because Sydney is so isolated at the other end of the globe, have been little known to us. The author brings these to light, describing over 100 projects, all completed since 1985.

Some of these projects were inspired by the bicentenary celebrations of 1988 - the equivalent of the Grands Projets in Paris. They include the 'people places' at Darling Harbour and Circular Quay. The author is concerned that such projects add immediately to the vitality of the Harbour while the hinterland, including the traditional centre, has been neglected. She notes that the siting of the Olympic venue away from the harbour will go some way to redressing this problem.

At the other end of the spectrum the projects include small housing developments, restaurants and even bus shelters.

The author is very knowledgeable about these projects, how they came to be commissioned, and the constraints and pitfalls that the architects had to work within. The story about each project is well told and the photographs have class. There is a

particularly good photo of the author on the inside of the first page.

This is a neat little guide but ideally it should have gone back a little further in time. It would have been useful to have included for example the Opera House.

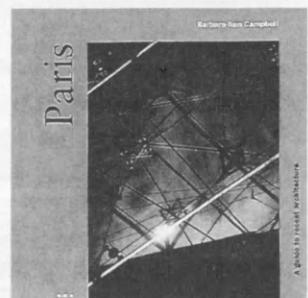
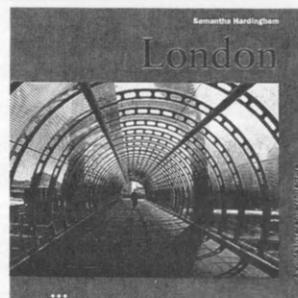
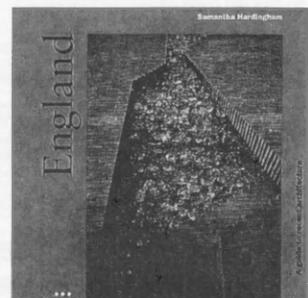
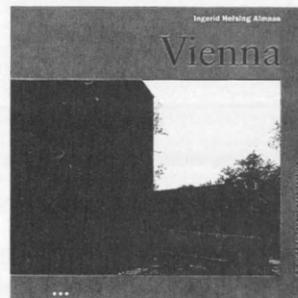
**Oxford: An Architectural Guide**

Peter Howard and Helena Webster 1998 £8.00

Peter Howard and Helena Webster were similarly the correct choice of authors for the guide to Oxford. Peter is an architect based in the city and Helena teaches architecture at Oxford Brookes. At the time of going to press the book, due out in June, had still not yet emerged. This write-up therefore is a pre-view, not a re-view.

Unlike the Sydney book which covers only post 1985 architecture, the Oxford guide goes back four centuries. It includes works of bygone eras by Wren, Hawksmoor, the Pelseys and Gilbert Scott as well as the modern era by Leslie Martin, Rick Mather and Hodder Associates. It shows how the modern era architects have mixed the concepts and techniques of today with the ideals and materials of the past to create a new and exciting architecture. #

Tim Catchpole



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202 Old Brompton Rd  
London SW5 0BU  
Tel: 0171 259 2223 Fax: 0171 259 2242  
Also at Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, LA, Melbourne, Paris, Singapore, Vietnam  
Contact: Peter Verity MArch MCP (Penn) RIBA

Architectural, Urban Design, Planning, Landscaping services internationally. Development Planning, Urban Regeneration, New Communities, Waterfront Regeneration, Tourism Planning and Design.

**NJBA Architects & Urban Designers**

16 Lissenfield  
Rathmines  
Dublin 6  
Tel & Fax: 00 353 1 496 2181  
Contact: Noel J Brady Dip Arch SMArchS MRIBAI

Design guidelines, environmental urban design, integrated landscapes, masterplans and strategic urban design.

**NOVO Architects**

Buchanan House, 24-30 Holborn  
London EC1N 2HS  
Tel: 0171 404 5060 Fax: 0171 404 4999  
Contact: Kathy Gal

In addition to urban design and masterplanning, NOVO provides creative and innovative design solutions for brownfield and other complex sites to realise single or mixed use development opportunities.

**Terence O'Rourke pic**

Everdene House  
Wessex Fields, Deansleigh Road  
Bournemouth BH7 7DU  
Tel: 01202 421142  
Fax: 01202 430055  
Contact: Terence O'Rourke DipArch (Oxford) DipTP RIBA MRTPI

Planning and Design Consultancy specialising in land use planning, landscape architecture, ecology, environmental assessment and urban design. Development Briefs, Master Plans, Urban Regeneration, Town Studies, Conservation and Public Realm Strategies.

**PRP Architects**

82 Bridge Road Hampton Court  
East Molesey Surrey KT8 9HF  
Tel: 0181 481 8100  
Fax: 0181 481 8111  
Contact: Peter Phippen OBE DipArch (RWA) RIBA

Social and private housing development, special needs housing, including housing for elderly people, mentally handicapped and single people, healthcare, urban redevelopment.

**Anthony Reddy Associates**

The Malt House  
Grand Canal Quay  
Dublin 2 Ireland  
Tel: 00 353 1 670 4800  
Fax: 00 353 1 670 4801  
Contact: Anthony Reddy BArch FRIBAI RIBA DipPM MAPM / Paul Duignan BArch FRIBAI

Architecture, planning, urban design, project management. Project types: Masterplanning, Development Frameworks, Urban Regeneration Projects, Town Centre Renewal, Residential, Business Parks.

**Rothermel Thomas**

14-16 Cowcross Street  
London EC1M 6DR  
Tel: 0171 490 4255  
Fax: 0171 490 1251  
Contact: James Thomas BA (Arch) DipTP FRIBA FRTPA FRSA FIMgt

Urban design, conservation, historic buildings, planning, architecture. Expert witness at planning inquiries.

**Jon Rowland Urban Design**

65 Hurst Rise Road  
Oxford OX2 9HE  
Tel: 01865 863642  
Fax: 01865 863099  
Contact: Jon Rowland

Urban design, urban regeneration, development frameworks, site appraisals, town centre studies, design guidance, public participation and master planning.

**Shepherd Epstein and Hunter**

14-22 Ganton Street  
London W1V 1LB  
Tel: 0171 734 0111  
Fax: 0171 434 2690  
Contact: George Georgiou

The provision of services related to architecture, planning, landscape architecture and the CDM regulations.

**Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Inc.**

46 Berkeley Street, London W1X 6NT  
Tel: 0171 930 9711  
Fax: 0171 930 9108  
Also Chicago, New York, Washington, San Francisco, LA, Hong Kong  
Contact: Roger Kallman

International multi-disciplinary practice. Master Planning, Landscape Architecture, Civil Engineering and Urban Design. Project types: urban regeneration schemes, business park master plans, university campus design, transportation planning. Associated services: environmental impact assessments, design guidelines, infrastructure strategies.

**Taylor Young Urban Design**

The Studio, 51 Brookfield  
Cheadle Cheshire SK8 1DQ  
Tel: 0161 491 4530  
Fax: 0161 491 0972  
Contact: Stephen Gleave MA DipTP (Dist) DipUD MRTPI

Urban Design, Planning and Development. Public and Private Sectors. Town studies, housing, commercial, distribution, health and transportation are current projects. Specialist in Urban Design Training.

**John Thompson and Partners**

77 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6BP  
Tel: 0171 251 5135  
Fax: 0171 251 5136  
Contact: John Thompson MA DipArch RIBA

Multidisciplinary practice, working throughout the UK and Europe, specialising in architecture, urban design and masterplanning, urban regeneration, new settlements and community consultation; addressing the problems of physical, social and economic regeneration through collaborative interdisciplinary community based planning.

**Tibbalds Monro Ltd**

31 Earl Street, London EC2A 2HR  
Tel: 0171 377 6688  
Fax: 0171 247 9377  
Contact: Andrew Karski BA (Hons) MSc (Econ) FRTPA

Multi-disciplinary practice of architects, planners, urban designers, landscape designers, tourism specialists and interior architects. The firm provides consultancy services to institutional, public sector and corporate clients.

**Town Planning Consultancy Ltd**

118 Southwark St  
London SE1 0SW  
Tel: 0171 928 1400  
Fax: 0171 928 5631  
Contact: Colin Pullan BA (Hons) Dip UD.

One of the largest independent planning consultancies. Professional leaders in retail, leisure and commercial planning for the public and private sector. Masterplanning, urban design, GIS, design strategies, urban regeneration, new settlements.

**Tweed Nuttall Warburton**

Chapel House City Road  
Chester CH1 3AE  
Tel: 01244 310388  
Fax: 01244 325643  
Contact: John Tweed B Arch RIBA FRSA

Architecture and Urban Design Masterplanning. Urban waterside environments. Community teamwork enablers. Design guidance and support for rural village appraisals. Visual impact assessments and design solutions within delicate conservation environments.

**Urban Design Futures**

97c West Bow  
Edinburgh EH1 2JP, Scotland  
Tel: 0131 226 4505  
Fax: 0131 226 4515  
Contact: Selby Richardson DipArch DipTP MSc ARIAS

Land use planning, development feasibility and site layout studies, urban design strategies and appraisal, town centre and village studies, environmental improvements, traffic calming, design guidelines.

**The Urban and Economic Development Group (URBED)**

41 Old Birley Street  
Manchester M15 5 RF  
Tel: 0161 226 5078  
Fax: 0161 226 7307  
Contact: David Rudlin BA MTP

Urban regeneration / town centres / housing including health checks, environmental audits, urban design, master planning, analysis and strategy development.

**Urban Initiatives**

35 Heddon Street  
London W1R 7LL  
Tel: 0171 287 3644  
Fax: 0171 287 9489  
Contact: Kelvin Campbell BArch RIBA MRTPI MCIT: FRSA

Urban design, transport planning, infrastructure and development planning to include master planning, town centre studies, conservation, environmental improvements, traffic calming and design guidelines.

**White Consultants**

35 Severn Grove  
Cardiff  
Tel: 01222 640971  
Fax: 01222 664362  
Contact: Simon White MAUD Dip UD (Dist) Dip LA MLI

A qualified urban design, environmental planning and landscape architecture practice working throughout the UK. Specialising in multi-disciplinary urban regeneration, design briefing, public realm improvements, town centre and village studies for public and private sector clients.

**University of the West of England,  
Bristol****Faculty of the Built Environment**

Frenchay Campus  
Coldharbour Lane Bristol BS16 1QY  
Tel: 0117 965 6261  
Fax: 0117 976 3895  
Contact: Richard Guise  
MA/Postgraduate Diploma course in Urban Design. Part time 2 days per fortnight for 2 years, or individual programme of study. Project based course addressing urban design issues, abilities and environments.

**University College Dublin  
School of Architecture and  
Department of Regional and Urban  
Planning**

Richview Clonskeagh  
Dublin 14 Ireland  
Tel: 00 353 1 706 2757  
Fax: 00 353 1 283 7778  
Contact: Philip Geoghegan, Course Director  
MSc in Urban Design is an Interdepartmental Postgraduate Programme in Irish and European Design offering study within the framework of developing urban design policy at European level.  
1 year full-time or 2 years part-time.

**Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot  
Watt University**

**School of Architecture**  
Lauriston Place Edinburgh EH3 9DF  
Tel: 0131 221 6071/6072  
Fax: 0131 221 6606/6157  
Contact: Leslie Forsyth  
Diploma in Urban Design: 1 year full time or 3 years part time. MSc in Urban Design: 1 year full time or 3 years part time plus 1 year part time. Recognised by the RIBA for the RIBA Urban Design Diploma.

**University of Greenwich  
School of Architecture and  
Landscape**

Oakfield Lane Dartford DA1 2SZ  
Tel: 0181 316 9100  
Fax: 0181 316 9105  
Contact: Philip Stringer  
MA in Urban Design for postgraduate architecture and landscape students, full time and part time with credit accumulation transfer system.

**Leeds Metropolitan University  
School of Art, Architecture and  
Design**

Brunswick Terrace Leeds LS2 8BU  
Tel: 0113 283 2600  
Fax: 0113 283 3190  
Contact: Edwin Knighton  
Master of Arts in Urban Design consists of 1 year full time or 2 years part time or individual programme of study. Shorter programmes lead to Post Graduate Diploma/Certificate. Project based course focusing on the creation of sustainable environments through interdisciplinary design.

**University College London  
Development Planning Unit,  
The Bartlett**

9 Endsleigh Gardens, London WC1H 0ED  
Tel: 0171 388 7581  
Fax: 0171 387 4541  
Contact: Babar Mumtaz  
M Sc in Building and Urban Design in Development. Innovative, participatory and responsive development and upgrading of urban areas through socially and culturally acceptable, economically viable and environmentally sustainable interventions.

**University of Newcastle upon Tyne  
Department of Architecture**

Claremont Tower  
University of Newcastle  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU  
Tel: 0191 222 6024  
Fax: 0191 222 6008  
Contact: Dr Peter Kellett or  
Dr Ali Madani-Pour  
MA/Diploma in Urban Design. Joint programme in Dept of Architecture and Dept of Town and Country Planning. 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 483403  
Fax: 01865 483298  
Contact: Dr Georgia Butina  
or Ian Bentley  
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**

**Urban Design Studies Unit**  
131 Rottenrow  
Glasgow G4 0NG  
Tel: 0141 552 4400 ext 3011  
Fax: 0141 552 3997  
Contact: Dr Hildebrand W Frey  
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.

**University of Westminster**

35 Marylebone Road  
London NW1 5LS  
Tel: 0171 911 5000  
Fax: 0171 911 5171  
Contact: Tony Lloyd-Jones  
or Bill Erickson  
MA or Diploma Course in Urban Design for postgraduate architects, town planners, landscape architects and related disciplines. 1 year full time or 2 years part time.

# The School of Rhetoric

As an undergraduate student I was often told that I'd never get anywhere if I continued to write like *that*, if I didn't master the style (as if it were cast for ever in tablets of stone rather than being a convenient convention) of the technical report, as I handed in yet another pop art poem-piece.

My post-graduate tutor however encouraged us to try and achieve pure neutrality in the way we wrote about places and our experiences of them. To avoid the jargon and those unthinking conventions I'd just about mastered by then, though enlivened by Andrew Mahaddie's tutoring in freehand rapidograph sketching and storyboard construction, we were encouraged by David Thomas to constantly check the way we used words against their 'normal' usage with the use of The Penguin Paperback Dictionary. What his reaction would have been to discover that in parallel with his ascetic regime I was also taking poetry workshops first with Tony Harrison and then with Alistair Elliot I never found out. But it is perhaps no coincidence that they too forced us to look closely at every word, to scrutinise its possibilities and its resonances, to work over drafts and revisions, to weigh effect and intention.

Local authority practice was different. Words were squandered unthinkingly as blunt and uncouth implements of policy and action, checked only against legal interpretation and an overwhelming desire to make sure that nothing committed 'The Council' to anything. Reports were savaged, neutralised, made to toe the line. Authorship, individual expression and response to place was suppressed and excised from anything that might in any way become public. This we were told again and again was what 'Professionalism' was about. This was how we kept the world at arm's length.

Except in our notes and our jokes, our conversations and our reading, in our ordinary language where we knew of richer, more varied, more striking and more effective possibilities. Sometimes when these slipped through the Snopake curtain of emasculation they sparked a response, touched a nerve: a building might get listed, an Inspector decide in our favour at a Public Inquiry, a Councillor recognise poetry in a Conservation Area description. Textual analysis and rhetoric are not part of our professional education. Meanings are taken as read and messages as understood. The conventions of what is expected have changed little. How we use language is not questioned. Recently most of my tutorials with a student on her dissertation were less to do with the content than challenging her preconceptions of what was allowed, with the ways in which she might write about the poignancy of dealing with conservation in Macau in its last days as a Portuguese island city.<sup>1</sup>

Her situation was perhaps extreme, a place and a time so emotionally loaded to have challenged a poet let alone an undergraduate planning student, but it serves as a reminder not to take for granted the words we use to analyse, simulate, imagine and create the places we claim to care for. #

Bob Jarvis

1. de-Assis Ho, G, *Macau- the last teardrop* unpublished BA dissertation, Faculty of the Built Environment, South Bank University, London.

Wednesday 14 October

6.00 for 6.30 **The Richness of Cities**

Ken Worpole & Liz Greenhaigh from Demos/Comedia. Ken Worpole will present some of the principal findings of this major study on the future of urban design to be published in October 1998.

Venue: The Gallery 77 Cowcross Street EC1.  
All tickets purchased at the door.  
£3 non UDG members / £2 members / £1 concessions.

Friday/Saturday 16-17 October

**Urban Design Group Annual Conference**

Living in the City  
Speakers include Stephen Batey, Ian Bentley, Kelvin Campbell, John Punter.  
Venue: Oxford Brookes University, Oxford.  
From 1.00 pm on Friday 16 October.

Friday 30 October - Monday 2 November

**4 day trip to Barcelona**

Friday 6 November

**Joint RTPI / UDG Conference**

Urban Design Tools: Methods and Processes.  
Details: Jas Atwal tel: 0171 837 2688.

Wednesday 18 November

**The Urban Design Group: The Next 20 Years**

A panel discussion by the Patrons of the UDG on the future of the Group.  
Venue & tickets: as for October.

Wednesday 13 January

6.00 for 6.30 **Urban Regeneration: A Debate**

Speakers will include a GOL representative, a Consultant, a Politician and an Academic.

**Other Events**

Wednesday/Thursday 11/12 November

**The 24 Hour City - Fact or Fiction?**

Venue: London.  
Details: Urban Cultures tel: 0171 289 7208.

**RTPI / Urban Design Regional Conferences**

29 October Preston  
19 November Bristol  
25 November Coventry  
1 December York  
Details: Marie Lawlor tel: 0171 837 2688.

For further details about any of the above events, please contact Susie Turnbull at the UDG Office.  
Tel: 01235 851415 Fax: 01235 851410  
Email: admin@udg.org.uk

**Urban Design Week 1998**

Running from 10-17 October, Urban Design Week will consider the complex issues of urban design and focus on ways and means of delivering better urban environments. UDAL members will gather throughout Great Britain, widening the debate concerning urban design and increasing awareness of its potential.

A full programme of events is available from the Secretariat and will include:

**Hidden Assets** – 12.10.98

The outcome of a joint study by the Landscape Institute and the Institution of Civil Engineers into urban watercourses. What practical measures can be used to improve our urban environment?

**Urban Design Makes Better Cities** – 15.10.98

This first UDAL conference explores urban design as a collaborative process to make better towns and cities. Who led the process? Where did the concept originate? What were the logistical problems? Was the community voice heard? What were the financial implications? The day hopes to answer some of these questions through an analysis of completed and evolving projects and an examination of future projects and current UDAL initiatives.

**The Netherlands Experience** – 15.10.98

The inaugural UDAL lecture takes place after the conference. Maarten Hajer provides a different perspective on urban design.

**London 2028** – 16.10.98

The country's leading thinkers on urban issues gather round the table to brainstorm a scenario for London 30 years from now. Discussions will be followed by an audience participation workshop producing an urban design plan for its implementation.

**Urban Design on the Ground**

Including a tour of the Broadgate Estate, a visit to the Greenwich Peninsula hosted by English Partnerships and a guided walk along the South Bank.

The diversity of the programme of events during the week endorses UDAL's belief that successful urban design is as much about the design process as the buildings and spaces which result. The best urban design solutions are often the result of intense collaborations between the environmental design professions, government agencies and local communities.

UDAL is hoping to commemorate the first ever Urban Design Week with a special publication focusing on the events and outcomes of the week and implications for the future of urban design.