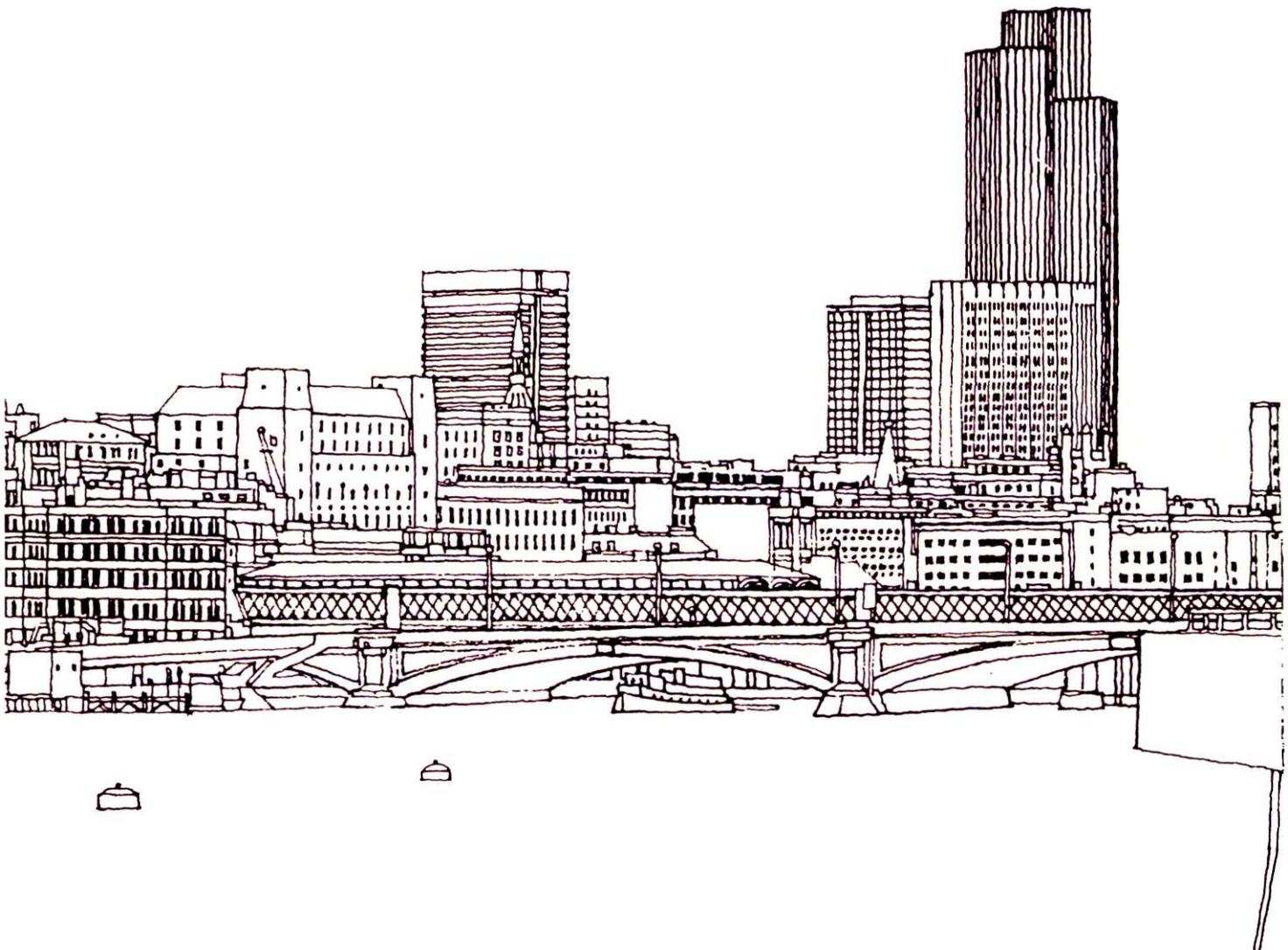


URBAN DESIGN GROUP QUARTERLY

July, 1982 50p.



Thameside Conference Afterthoughts

In the four years of our existence, the Thameside London Conference, held at Glaziers' Hall on June 9, has been by far the most ambitious event taken on by the Urban Design Group. We decided to play safe and join forces with the RIBA London Environment Group, which has been organising such large-scale meetings for several years now. We experienced a fair range of the familiar problems associated with such events - uncertainty about booking demand and

availability of sponsorship funds, the awful logistics of mounting a one day exhibition, the booking of speakers and dealing with last minute cancellations, the sometimes slender relationship between a speaker's brief and what he said, a tight programme aggravated by early over-runs and a couple of hecklers while the Chairman, Colin Amery, tried vainly to open the proceedings.

However the day produced over 200 delegates from a wide range of backgrounds, several excellent contributions, a few ideas on what to do next, a very impressive exhibition and a most enjoyable boat trip down to the Thames Barrier and beyond. The organisers, despite all the worry and hard work were on balance well pleased - the Urban Design Group particularly so.

The founding objectives of the Urban Design Group - to promote greater interprofessional collaboration and a higher quality in what we see around us - were motivated by our dismay at what was happening all around us 4 or 5 years ago: a lot of interprofessional squabbling and mediocre development with which the public was less than happy. The Conference did manage to keep "quality" more or less in the forefront - not only what it is, in connection with a rather special part of London (of national and even international importance) but also considered how to achieve it, how to finance it and what to do next. The dialogue needs to continue. The "Brief" is still not clear, as many delegates pointedly stated. We took the view that for the Conference to be worthwhile, delegates should leave feeling that they'd learned something they could put into practice: "talking shops" are relatively easy, new ideas and practical suggestions which can be put to good effect come a little harder! And the degree to which interprofessional collaboration (our other objective) permeated the Conference must have been unparalleled. Not only did it receive the organisational support of the RIBA, RTPI and Landscape Institute, but they respectively supplied two Immediate Past Presidents and a current President for the notable concluding addresses.

Ideas are welcome for next time, when it is hoped also to take on board our engineer colleagues - dare we suggest that if this welcome spirit of 'working together' continues, the Urban Design Group will be less in need in future?

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine	Secretary of State for the Environment
George Nicholson	Chairman: Central Area Planning Board, GLC
Geoffrey Holland	Head of Technical Co-Ordination Group, Transportation and Development, GLC
Lord Birkett	Director of Recreation & Arts, GLC
Councillor Prendergast	Westminster City Council
Rodney Carran	Chapman Taylor Partners
Nicholas Lacey	Architect
Jay Brodie	Commissioner for Housing & Community Development, Baltimore, USA
Walter Sondheim	Chairman, Charles Center, Inner Harbour Management Inc., Baltimore, USA
Harold Couch	Hillier Parker May & Rowden
John Parry	Commercial Union Properties Limited
Reginald Ward	Chief Executive, London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC)
Edward Hollamby	Chief Architect-Planner, LDCC
Brian Clouston	President: Landscape Institute
John Collins	Immediate Past President: Town Planning Institute
Bryan Jefferson	Immediate Past President: Royal Institute of British Architects
Colin Amery	Chairman; Architectural Correspondent to the Financial Times

CONFERENCE QUOTES

Such a concentrated programme and wide array of speakers defies summary. The following verbatim quotations give a flavour of the opening and closing parts of the day's proceedings:

"Some of these people have taken two hours to come here. I have only taken five minutes!" Local Resident (at opening of Conference).

"....some of those of us who know you were more than somewhat dismayed to hear you recently say of the Thames that 'It's too late. The battle has been lost, and for visionaries the time is past.' If I may so, Sir, this shows an uncharacteristic pessimism! Today we shall, in our challenge to you, be looking for a rekindling of that energy and enthusiasm for high environmental goals, for which you have become so well known." Bryan Jefferson (introducing Michael Heseltine).

"I am delighted to have this opportunity to speak to you today about Thameside. It is a unique asset both to our capital city and to our nation. I commend the initiative shown by the London branches of the RIBA and RTPI, and also the Urban Design Group, in bringing together many of those closely involved in influencing its future development...

"Today I want to concentrate on two main themes:

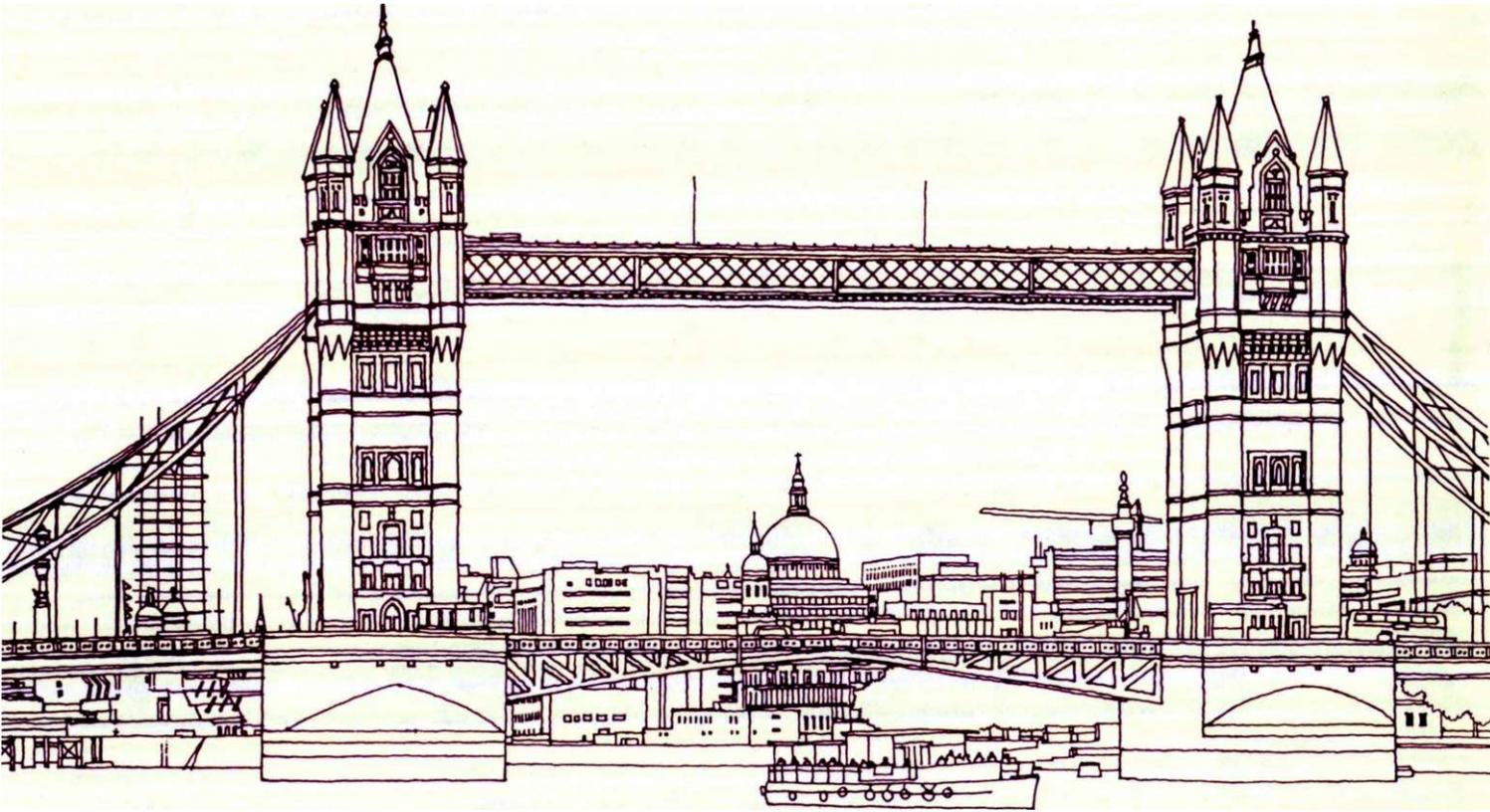
- First, the need to bring vacant land back into use. This calls for imaginative co-operation between the public and private sectors.
- Second, the need to ensure quality: preserving the best of our heritage and seeing that new development is worthy of its location.

"As you will know, I have recently announced a new initiative to promote the reclamation of derelict land for industrial, commercial, housing and other forms of development. I believe that the derelict land programme should play a bigger role in urban policy and backed that belief by increasing the programme by 5 million for 1982-83 from £40 to £45 million

"I intend to build on that initiative (derelict land programme) by introducing within the Urban Programme a new Urban Development Grant scheme based on the UDAG model (US Federal Government's Urban Development Action Grant system)..... Bids will be competitive against each other for a share of the resources available - up to £70 million in 1983/84 for UDAG and DLG projects involving private sector participation. I am asking for bids to be sent to my Department by the end of September. I intend to announce decisions 3 months later

"We cannot have a detailed planning brief for Thameside as a whole. Rather we must promulgate attitudes, policies - a philosophy if you like - which ensures that development besides the Thames is worthy of its exceptional position and opportunities. We need a coherent approach towards achieving the best of the river and the riverside rather than a single 'grand design'." Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine.

"....surely if the students of my own profession (referring to a model by Thames Polytechnic landscape students) can get that far in a matter of 10 or 12 weeks, with Michael Heseltine's money, within 2 or 3 years we can make an enormous impact on Docklands and create an environment, within time, to be developed by others once the planning debate has progressed a little further. But if you want a strategy, I respectfully suggest to this Conference that it ought to be a Landscape strategy, and I hope, indeed, Reg (Ward), you hear what I say!" Brian Clouston (closing address).



"....There's a thing called the President's Committee for the Urban Environment - PCUE. Now when that was started it was supposed to be for the Urban Environment, that was its title. But in my Presidential time at the RTPI as a member of that I was very disturbed to find that really it appeared to have been taken over by the builders, the developers and the service engineers. . . . And I was even more horrified to find that the President of the Landscape Institute is not even a member of PCUE. Absolute sheer madness! I think that if there's a good resolution from this meeting, it could be one demanding that the President of the Landscape Institute has membership of PCUE. Otherwise, we've got to look at some other grouping of environmental teams." John Collins (closing address).

"I think anyone who came here today not expecting this to be a highly charged political type Conference, must have had his illusions made total in the first 10 seconds. (Heseltine being heckled by local residents). Believe it or not, the Conference organisers, beforehand, had hoped that sufficient consensus would exist and develop during the day to enable some firm determination and commitment by way of a resolution to go out. And, as I've listened today, I've become steadily more concerned at the Impossibility of such a thing. . . . but let's try. . . . let me offer you two or three points on which I think all of us here today are totally agreed:

"First, as to the importance of what we're talking about today. That is manifest, if only in the fact that you've been sitting here for something like 9 hours and you're still here! A fear in my mind, and it may exist in many other minds, whichever side of the fence we may sit on, that the political stances that are being taken in looking at Thameside are mainly about the ways and means and could frustrate the ends. We're going to be left, if we're not careful, with a terrible constipation and as we enjoin our battlefield, the River Thames in many places is getting on to look just like that. Somehow we've got to recognise that other

points of view to our own exist on the political and social front and even if we don't accept them, we must recognise that some form of partnership is more likely to produce results than conflict.

"Second, Thameside is uniquely important in environmental terms, that neither social need as we've heard expressed today nor commercial viability can call for the sacrifice of the absolute best in architectural and environmental quality. I'm quite sure that within this country we've got the skills....

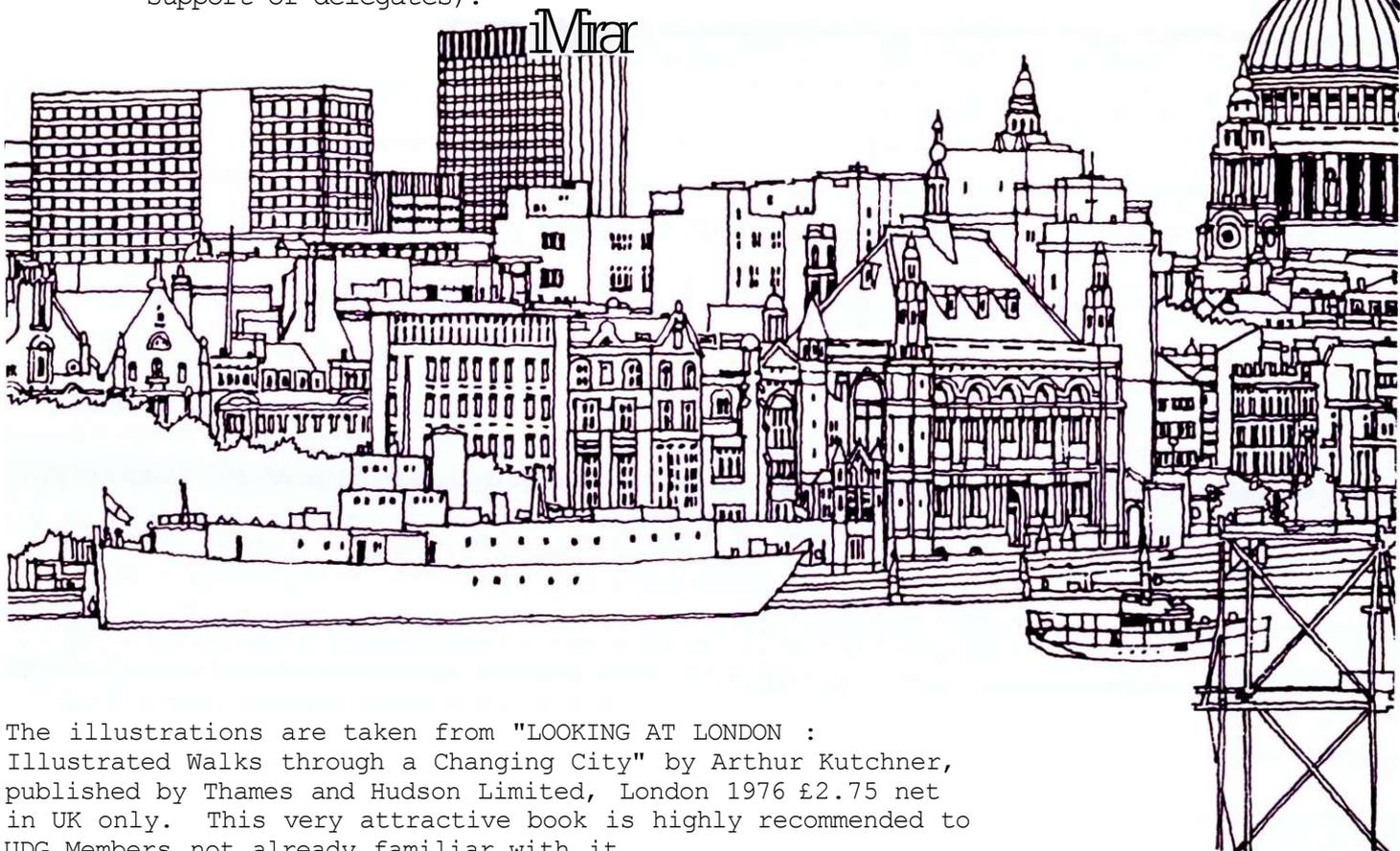
"So I'm going to offer two final points on which again I hope you will agree with me: first, disappointment that the Secretary of State apparently can see no value in a strategic analysis and planning procedure for the River Thames as a whole. I find it unacceptable that he says that we have missed the boat - all we can do now is look at independant sites and say 'yes' or 'no' or 'maybe'. . . . Secondly, what were my satisfactions? Well, that the GLC is really deeply involved in a strategic study of the Thames.

"I want to offer a sort of resolution, in closing, and it is in two parts:

The first: That the Conference wishes all success to the GLC's strategic study and urges full participation by all those with something to contribute.

The second: That this Conference urges the Secretary of State to see Thameside as of unique importance and to devise a planning framework to ensure the highest standards of development."

Bryan Jefferson (in a closing address that appeared to carry the warm support of delegates).



The illustrations are taken from "LOOKING AT LONDON : Illustrated Walks through a Changing City" by Arthur Kutchner, published by Thames and Hudson Limited, London 1976 £2.75 net in UK only. This very attractive book is highly recommended to UDG Members not already familiar with it.

Process and Product

THE RELEVANCE OF INTERIOR SPACE PLANNING TO URBAN DESIGN BY FRANK DUFFY AND SHEENA WILSON

On the face of it, this seemed a somewhat unlikely talk for the Urban Design Group. However, with all fields of planning and design being inter-related as reflectors and modifiers of human behaviour, it proved no less relevant than other perhaps more narrow interpretations of Urban Design.

Frank Duffy began by explaining to the uninitiated, the purpose of Space Planning, and its particular application to commercial and industrial enterprises, thus distinguishing the Space Planner from his Interior Designer counterpart as cosmetician. In effect, the Space Planner is an architect who provides a planning and design service for a client who already has a building and building means, but wishes to upgrade the physical working conditions, at the same time as making more efficient use of available space and equating this with improved productivity. However, as a professional designer, the Space Planner is in a vulnerable position being subject to unpredictable business changes (eg. suddenly being faced with a new client/manager and not having the backing of the architects' 'Conditions of Engagement'.

Nonetheless, as Frank Duffy pointed out, this definition was obviously an over simplification which disguised the real 'shop-floor' decisions which the Space Planner must make in the face of a multi-headed and sometimes hostile client, particularly where management and workers were separately represented. Yet he had also to provide a counselling service comparable perhaps with the American concept of Advocacy Planning. In this area, the lessons learned were applicable to Urban Design situations and project implementation. For a Bank client with an office complex accommodating 700 personnel, the design scheme proposed had to be negotiated with the different unions, and then ratified by management.

Apart from surmounting the problem of user prejudice, the designer's primary objective must be to evaluate the future expansion (or contraction) requirements of a company and to incorporate this in the design solution by allowing the greatest reasonable degree of flexibility of the building in use, without precluding loss of worker comfort efficiency. Of arguably greater significance still, is the rapidly increasing application of micro electronics in industry, the effect of which is not easy to predict with any accuracy. The designer, therefore, was in a precarious position, depending largely on his imagination to produce a scheme and a will to carry it through without adulteration.

Sheena Wilson of B.U.S. (Building Use Studies) followed, speaking of her experience in Space Planning from the sociological standpoint, and the application of user behaviour research to interior design, thus complementing the more pragmatic physical planning approach. The principal difficulty she found was in working with architects who did not know who they were designing for, especially where large institutions were concerned. This was equally true whether the client was a local authority housing department, or a commercial company, where the actual individual user remained unconsulted. However, there remained the problem for the client too, of being unable to 'find' the user, but this was partly the result of a prejudicial belief of the client/manager that the user is in any case too ignorant to contribute constructively to the formation of a brief. As a consequence, inappropriate design decisions lead to increased expense, which plainly had been the case of post-war housing programmes.

As a client consultant, Sheena Wilson therefore sought to reach the 'consumer' and to give direction to design decisions by locating key figures in existing situations, similar to that being investigated. At a Unipart Distribution Depot (for client British Leyland) discussions were held directly with the workforce, as well as with section heads, and on completion of the building interior, a post occupancy evaluation study provided useful feedback as they tend to have too narrow a viewpoint.

A common fear of designers was that their role was in danger of being relegated to providing merely the popular consumer view. Ideally, the user should feed in the specific requirements only, and not become involved with the actual design process, although they can add a creative element - perhaps inspiring the designer. There were two main design criteria she concluded, describing them as 'Instrumental' and 'Symbolic'. The former, where planning is determined by actual worker activity, including the amount of time spent at the workstation and the latter which concerned the extent to which the worker attitude to management (and vice versa) would influence design decisions.

At B.L., Frank Duffy noted that certain conflicts of interest had arisen principally because of the three levels of management that existed, each of which would not co-operate or share decision making with either the workforce or themselves. Moreover, worker distrust of management was exacerbated by the division of the workforce into union and non union labour. Antagonism towards the designers came mostly from the foreman level, presumably because they felt their authority was under threat in anticipation of changes. Thus in presenting proposals, the designer must be careful not to alienate workers further from management, while maintaining the validity of the proposals.

Returning to office planning, Frank Duffy informed us that a five year study in Germany had revealed a shift of emphasis away from the Bureaulandschaft to the cellular office, which had emerged partly as a result of the energy crisis and consequent conservation, and the move to the use of electronics in the dispersal and retrieval of information. This he considered would be the model of the office of the future. However, in parts of the world where labour costs were low and energy plentiful, eg. Mexico, the open plan office predominated. Even here, he regarded change in office planning thinking was inevitable in the long term, and that the politically disruptive effect on a labour force could only be overcome by user education.

Rounding off the evening's talk and discussion, Sheena Wilson concluded that in planning generally and therefore Urban Design, it was important to gauge user opinion by submitting questions, which by offering reflectable options, did not preclude any specific course of action. Although the designer was at risk in providing a palliative to alleviate immediate problems, the trend was now towards decentralisation of the design decision making process, through direct user consultation. Introducing the concept 'User Friendly', she said that this might well be applied to Urban Design as to Space Planning and that the criteria of legibility, navigability, territoriality, diversity and human scale were just as relevant. The final scheme, however, must still depend on the designer to initiate new ideas by imaginative interpretation of the brief.

As a post-script, the writer quotes J. Irwin Miller of the American Communities Engine Company in his interview with the Architectural Review (February 1982) which surely has a wider application:

"One thing we've learned is you don't ask the worker what kind of factory he would like to have. He can't tell you; he can only speak out of his experience. But, if you ask him what he does not like about his present work situation, he can tell you in great detail. Where the designer comes in is, to the degree that he is really sensitive and innovative, he shows people a world that they never imagined".

Annual General Meeting

APRIL 20, 1982, AT 6.15PM IN ROOMS 604/5, THE POLYTECHNIC OF CENTRAL LONDON, MARYLEBONE ROAD.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received from Alexi Marmot, Robert Meadows and Arnold Linden.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Francis Tibbalds reported briefly on the Urban Design Group's activities and achievements in the past year:

- (i) Constitution ratified at Special General Meeting (October 13, 1981) and formal application made to Charity Commissioners.
- (ii) Meetings in London, with talks by Hugh Cannings, Ted Hollamby, Walter Bor, Frank Duffy, Sheena Wilson and Dr. Peter Smith.
- (iii) First regional event organised by John Billingham: a weekend conference in Bath (September 19 and 20, 1981).
- (iv) Participation in Joint Branch Meetings of RTPi and RIBA on urban design at Winchester (December 2, 1981).
- (v) Framework of regional convenors established.
- (vi) Liaison with US Institute of Urban Design.
- (vii) Evidence to Working Party looking at RIBA Urban Design Diploma.
- (viii) Keith Ingham promoting idea of 'Urban Design Award'.
- (ix) Continuation of publication of 'Quarterly'. Now sought by libraries. Experimenting with loose advertising inserts to help defray growing printing and postage costs.
- (x) Francis Tibbalds elected to RTPi Council. Similar involvement and/or representation to be sought in RIBA and other Institutes as soon as practicable.
- (xi) Future programme: June 9 Conference; talk at PTRC Conference, Warwick University, (July 12): "Urban Design - common ground between the environmental disciplines".
- (xii) Regularisation of membership and subscription collection.

The Committee had been generally pleased with the steady progress being made and hoped that the Group would continue to develop and explore new initiatives and strengthen its value and status. The Bath Forum, a seat on the RTPi Council and the mounting, with the RIBA, of the Thameside Conference were all significant steps forward in the last session. The Committee's single most strong regret was that it did not hear enough from UDG members about what they want of the Group and how they saw its future growth or otherwise.

The Chairman recorded warm thanks to all members, to guest speakers, to the PCL for the use of their accommodation and for printing the Quarterly, to the press for advertising and reporting our events and to the outgoing Committee for their patience, stamina and unpaid hard work.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

There has been a considerable improvement in membership numbers of the Urban Design Group since the last AGM in April 1981, with 63 new members joining during the year from all parts of the country. Particularly noteworthy was the strong contingent who joined from Scotland. The total membership now stands at just over two hundred.

The opening balance at June 1, 1981 was nearly £60. Income during the year included subscriptions of about £550, contributions of £100 from publishers for inserting their leaflets in the Quarterly, and Seminar fees of £210 from those attending the Bath Forum. Outgoings during the year included postage and stationery of about £160, printing costs of £255, the Bath Forum expenses of £210 and bank charges of £5, leaving a closing balance of £290.

It may be of interest to know that of the £4 membership fee, approximately £3.40 is used for printing and mailing the Quarterly, leaving 60p for other work such as posters, seminars, recruitment and contingencies.

Nevertheless, with contributions from publishers helping to boost the income of the Group, and with the need to keep membership fees down to the minimum, it was recommended to the AGM that the annual membership fee should remain at £4 for the next year.

Only with a larger membership, however, will the finances of the Group be placed on a more secure footing and be able to support an extended programme of activities. With this in mind, the Steering Committee is launching a programme to increase membership and any help that can be given by individual members to encourage others who are interested to join the Group, would be very welcome.

When renewing your annual subscription, it would simplify administration of the Group's finances, if members feel able to complete a Standing Order Mandate, and send it to their bank.

4. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

The outgoing Committee offered itself for re-election and was elected together with two new members - Alan Rowley and Philip Cave. It was agreed that Francis Tibbalds would continue as Chairman, leaving the Committee to agree other roles and functions amongst itself. The Meeting was advised that the Constitution permitted the Group to choose a President and Vice-President(s) (in addition to 'working' Committee Members) and suggestions were invited in the coming months for suitably distinguished persons who might be approached to hold the post for a discreet term of two years.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

None. The meeting closed at approximately 6.45pm and Roy Worskett was invited to give his talk "New Buildings in Old Settings - the People like Walt Disney!" (reported on pages 12 and 13 of this issue).

Urban Design and Environmental Education: A Common-Law Marriage?

When I sat down to prepare a framework for this short article, I asked myself the questions "What have these two areas got to learn from each other? Would a marriage be profitable to both parties?" I then realised that, to all intents and purposes, the marriage had already happened - though by default rather than 'legitimately'. The reason for this strange statement is that a very large part of the environmental work which currently takes place in British primary and secondary schools concerns itself with an agenda of issues which is more like urban design than it is like architecture or planning alone. It is difficult for schools to concern themselves with aspects of the detail of building design, (this is difficult without getting inside many buildings), and it is equally difficult to get both teachers and pupils interested in strategic planning issues (at least at the start of projects or courses). The end result is a study of the school neighbourhood or town centre, evaluating the townscape, the future of the area, suggesting uses for vacant land, even designing some infill for gap sites. The unfortunate side of this is that urban designers as such (unless they are hiding their lights) have had very little to do with these activities. Perhaps it is time to recognise that something has happened and to argue more forcibly for an involvement of urban designers in environmental education which recognises, builds upon and develops the available concepts and expertise? As my own personal answer to this is 'yes', I shall proceed to outline some reasons why and ways forward.

To those unfamiliar with environmental education generally, I shall, however, start with some idea of what might happen nowadays in some typical school work. The first point to make is that environmental education can vary from studies of the ecology of Norfolk farmland and waterways, to studies of the financial and political constraints on policy for housing the elderly, to appraisals of architectural details in old Wiltshire barns, to projects on nuclear energy. Not surprisingly, many of these approaches are subject-related; to biology, geography, economics, history, social studies or art. It is with art and geography that the urban design issues usually find an entree, although in primary schools such artificial boundaries are, thankfully, of much less (and occasionally no) relevance. It is quite common for primary schools to study their neighbourhood and equally common for them to do so in large lumps of time such as several afternoons or even a whole week. At these ages, work is definitely 'basic' but can nevertheless touch upon important themes of planning processes, design, infill, movement and traffic. There are now many places around the country where architects and planners are involved in such work and where it focusses on current issues in the local environment. Once one moves to secondary school, the subjects can take over but some quite challenging work happens - for example on local plans, appeals, contentious development control issues or even building design. At this stage the children can be seen as being major contributors in their own right to the planning process instead of just learners. Children have produced plans for areas which have been implemented, but I must now qualify all that I have just said by insisting that even basic work on issues close to urban design is by no means usual, while challenging work is rare. Perhaps the best example of all is the Art and Built Environment project, set up nationally to develop critical awareness amongst sixth-form students of environmental issues. The materials for this cover the work of Lynch, Cullen, Norberg-Schulz, Halprin and others and have been contributed to by several architects, planners and even urban designers (eg. Brian Goodey and myself).



A local architect extols
Bristol's virtues



A ten year old tackles
the problems of a housing
layout

The current difficulties - which cry out for more input from experienced designers - are the visual focus of much work (ignoring the political, social and economic dynamics of urban issues) the lack of knowledge of even the most motivated teachers and the problems of finding space in an increasingly overcrowded curriculum. The focus on sources such as Cullen can devalue the meaning of environments and stresses the products of planning and design rather than the process. This is perhaps inevitable because many architects and planners are themselves unaware of the dynamic behind environmental change, making it even more difficult to argue for all the other sorts of learning which comes from good environmental work and which can enable us to argue that we are not calling for less 'basic skills' but a better establishment of them through topics meaningful to the child. All this came out just recently in Bristol with an attempt to encourage schools to develop their playgrounds. The teachers only wanted to see the finished designs and then to see them implemented. They did not see the value of the process of moving towards a solution either for themselves or for their pupils, while the architectural students involved were similarly only interested in the final outcome. It seems to me that, if we are to break out of this narrow view of the environment towards a more developmental model, then urban design concepts and methods are one of the keys. The process is not easy but I can at least record one recent success in Bristol with a sixth-form group who are now seeing through the 'facade' of final solutions and are becoming critically aware of processes - in this case thanks partly to an explicitly urban design issue in the centre of Bristol.

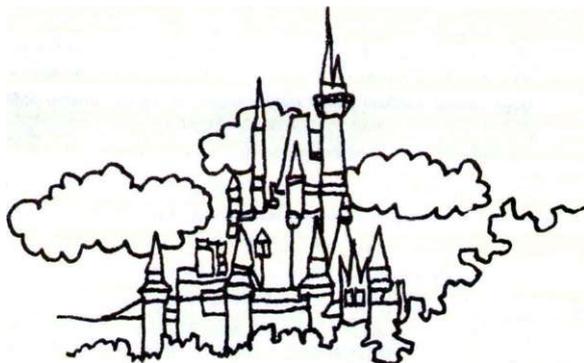
How can one achieve this move forward? The sad answer is only by demonstration - rather time-consuming examples. This means a commitment of time and effort, but such effort can be extremely rewarding in terms of vital local information or renewed awareness of another important set of views. We were probably all trained in a way that developed problem-solving abilities through project work and this, to my mind, puts urban designers in a powerful position because such work is rare in schools. The difficulty up to now has been that each person has had to reinvent his/her own techniques, but there are currently some approaches - all well tested - which can be used effectively by others. There are some role-play games, some broad design games (eg. for housing design), tricks for tackling infill design, and methods for introducing even quite young children to local plan issues or even building design work. I cannot cover these here but most have been described in the pages of the Bulletin for Environmental Education (from TCPA). Of course, the final comment must be to those involved in professional training.

Unless the basic stance and philosophy is established in college then all attempts from there are remedial.

So to return to my opening analogy, urban designers should be trying to legitimise their relationships with environmental education - the place is rightfully yours.

Jeff Bishop
School for Advanced Urban Studies
University of Bristol

How to Stop Walt Disney



In the often acrimonious debate between architects and planners on the rights and wrongs of what has become known as 'aesthetic control', there is probably no more articulate a voice than that belonging to Roy Worskett, consultant/planner to the cities of Bath and Salisbury. The theme of his talk to UDG members on April 20 was the need for an ethical basis for the practice of aesthetic control, particularly as it relates to the design of new buildings in historic towns. It is the lack of such a basis, Worskett believes, that leads to so much of what he calls 'Mickey Mouse architecture', inspired by the 'appalling' notion that forgery is the sincerest form of flattery. In Worskett's view the opposite is in fact true - pastiche only devalues the real thing.

So how can an ethical basis be established? The problem for Worskett, as his audience discovered, is that a contradiction lies at the heart of his argument. Aesthetic control, as practised by planning authorities in Britain, is only legitimised by the belief that it reflects the public view. But it is the public who, as a reaction to 'concrete jungles' and other popular cliches, are demanding the very 'Mickey Mouse' buildings that Worskett deplors. Not only do they want new buildings to look old, they are not entirely averse to making old buildings look new as well. This is the heart of the ethical morass that the poor old aesthetic policeman finds himself in these days.

Worskett believes that the way out of this muddle is for urban designers to take the lead in educating the public in understanding what makes a place special or interesting, promoting good modern architecture as a valid and exciting alternative to the 'stage set hoax'. This educative process needs to be carried through on the widest possible front - not just in Planning Applications Sub-Committee or Conservation Advisory Committees, but in schools and in meeting with local amenity societies.

Worskett sees the first step as being the production by the local authority of a concise statement of design policy for their areas. Out of the broad range of design policies that already exist, from the detailed Design Guides to the bland statement of policy in a Development Plan, Worskett's ideal is somewhere in the middle - a good statement of the character of the area with guidelines on how that character can be improved or enhanced.

Worskett illustrated this approach by the guidelines that he has produced for Bath, where different parts of the city with different character have been identified, with appropriate design policies being developed for each area: the 'Grade 1' areas where no new building would be allowed; some adjoining

areas where only a replica would be appropriate; further areas where new buildings ought to be designed on a 'hole-in-the-wall' basis rather than with large areas of glass; mews areas where a more 'rural' approach could be adopted; prominent sites in the landscapes around the city where contemporary architecture would be acceptable; the medieval core where modern infill would be encouraged in order to continue the rich mix of buildings that are found there. In this way Worskett believes that the special character of each area can be protected or improved instead of being constantly devalued by tame pastiches on every new development site.

Nobody doubts that aesthetic control is a very tricky business, yet at the same time nobody can doubt that the public demands it. It is the job of the urban designer to ensure that it is carried out with sensitivity and imagination. Worskett's message to those of us who are working at the front line in the battle to maintain and improve standards of design in our towns is that we must constantly re-examine the ethical basis of our work, and constantly engage both the public and the professions in discussion about what we are doing and how and why we are doing it. It is good to know that while there are people like Roy Worskett around, this will be an immensely enjoyable and stimulating activity.

Peter Studdert

Architecture and Historic Norms

Dr. Peter Smith, lecturer at Sheffield University, researcher and practitioner, gave his views on Design Criteria when he spoke to the Group in March. His talk aimed to identify ways in which quality in the built environment could be achieved and whether any objective standards can be applied to design or whether it is purely a subjective issue.

His own research in examining the working of the human mind sees its role in design terms as trying to reduce complexity and uncertainty and extract some overriding pattern which evokes an emotional response or aesthetic satisfaction.

His theory is that there is a fundamental law of aesthetics which is connected with common features of human behaviour and he gave various examples of the way in which this can be understood.

The first characteristic he instanced was the binary ordering of information for example in a typical street scene containing a vertical element such as a church tower or spire, where the mind initially assesses the form in terms of both contrast and symbolic meaning.

Other characteristics which help to reduce complexity and allow understanding are those of harmony and symmetry. Harmonic relationships occurred particularly through proportional systems such as the golden section which he considered made a facade aesthetically satisfying. This was reinforced by the 'informational weight' given to a building by such aspects as colour, detailed treatment, innovatory forms and symbolism.

Various examples were illustrated including a number of projects located in Germany where the overall form related to traditional gables or pitched roofs and within which contemporary details were used.

His conclusion was that it is possible for aesthetics to be evaluated but this should be seen as a framework to enable professionals to be more analytical about design issues "in an attempt to improve articulacy within a subject buried under words but impoverished as regards meaning".

He emphasised that his talk only covered a few aspects of the way buildings are perceived and naturally his views raised queries about the analysis of aesthetics in themselves and whether quality could be defined in such objective terms. Whatever one's views are about the thesis that was presented no-one can deny the need to try and understand people's reactions to spaces and places and to deplore the fact that so little research is being undertaken into the surroundings that shape or are shaped by people's lives.

John Billingham

News

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Except in the case of recent new members, annual subscriptions were due on June 1, 1982. May we remind those of our members concerned not using Bank Standing Orders to send their cheques for £4 to our Hon. Treasurer (address on page 16) as soon as possible. May we also ask that you consider using the Standing Order procedure in future to cut down the administrative effort to the Group and yourself in collecting what is a relatively small sum.

UDG POSTER

Our new poster is enclosed. Please display this on your office noticeboard. Additional copies are available if required.

RTPI/RIBA

The RTPI Council, on March 17, 1982, discussed a proposal for the elaboration of the joint RIBA/RTPI policy statement. Francis Tibbalds spoke positively in favour of strengthening the accord between the two Institutes, while deploring the public pronouncements of a few who seemed to want to keep up the bickering between architects and planners about design control. The RTPI Professional Practice Board was asked to develop the proposal further with the RIBA. Andrew Thorburn, RTPI President, also urged branches to strengthen their links with the architectural profession at local level. John Finney, Senior Vice-President RTPI, will be monitoring action and progress in this matter.

GLASGOW URBAN STUDIES

In November 1981 a report advocating the establishment of an Urban Studies Centre in Glasgow was prepared by Tim Mitchell (planner) and David Wilson (landscape architect), following discussions with Jean Forbes (planning lecturer at Glasgow University). Similar discussions had also taken place between other interested individuals, notably amongst officers of Strathclyde Education Department. These have resulted in the opening of a resource centre at Bellarmine High School, and steps have been taken to set up another in Possil.

The idea of environmental education for Glasgow is not new. In the past decade many attempts have been made to establish a Studies Centre, but they have all failed due to one reason or another. This most recent attempt is therefore, determined to use these past experiences, and come together to provide a co-ordinated, joint effort. It also recognises the importance of the involvement of all the professions principally engaged in the design and management of the urban environment, and, therefore, of enlisting the help of the four major representative bodies.

To this end, the RTPI (Scottish Branch), the RIAS (the RIBA in Scotland), the Landscape Institute (Scottish Chapter) and the UDG (Scottish Region) were all consulted on their initial reaction to the proposal. If favourable, they were asked to nominate a representative on to a Steering Committee, which could then discuss organisational details. Positive replies have been received from the RTPI and RIAS, as well as the UDG. As yet, however, the Landscape Institute feel that, while they generally encourage environmental education, they cannot lend their support to the idea of an Urban Studies Centre for Glasgow.

Despite receiving this disappointing reply from the Landscape Institute, the organisers are going ahead with the project, and are now in the process of contacting as many of the people involved in the previous attempts as possible. Once again, many favourable replies are being received, and the Mitchell Library have confirmed their offer of premises for the Urban Studies Centre.

Hopefully, in the near future, the Steering Committee can begin to meet and discuss the more operational matters of staffing, funding etc. Nevertheless it would appear that, despite problems, the Glasgow Urban Studies Centre project will confidently take-off, and I would appreciate any views on the role which UDG should play in its organisation.

Mike Galloway (UDG Representative on Steering Committee)

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Each major region where there are a sufficient body of members now has a nominated individual who it is hoped together with the membership in that area will be able to arrange joint meetings on a topic which will interest Architects and Planners and hopefully professionals from a wider spectrum. If you are interested in helping to organise such an event, why not get in touch with the member in your part of the country listed below with the office telephone number.

Allan Stones	Chelmsford	0245 67222	Ext. 2545
John Billingham	Oxford	0865 49811	Ext. 486
Joe Holyoak	Birmingham	021 3566911	
Keith Eastham	Preston	0722 54868	
Bob Jarvis	Newcastle on Tyne	0632 816144	Ext. 258
Mike Galloway	Glasgow	041 221 9855	

In the last 12 months there have been a limited number of joint meetings organised, two occurring in the Southern Region at Winchester and Oxford and it is hoped that others will be arranged over the next year.

It is planned to organise a Week-End Forum, similar in format to that arranged at Bath last year, to be held on a Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning in April 1983. The possible venue is somewhere on the York to Liverpool axis and approaches are being made to Urban Design courses to see if there would be support for a topic related to education.

Diary

Arrangements are in hand for the following meetings to be held in the 1982-83 session. The meetings will be at 6.00pm at the Polytechnic of Central London, 35 Marylebone Road, London NW1, unless otherwise indicated. Details and reminders will as usual be published in future issues of the UDG Quarterly and the professional press.

October 12, 1982	Jeff Bishop and Brian Goodey on Environmental Education (see article pages 10-12).
November 16, 1982	John Parker and Walter Bor on Urban Design in London.
January 18, 1983	Landscape Design: case studies
March 8, 1983	Terence Bendixson and others on Walking in the City.
Easter 1983	Weekend Conference in northern location on Education for Urban Design.
May 10, 1983	Annual General Meeting and Seminar on Financing Quality in Urban Design.
June 14, 1983	Franklin Stafford, Iain MacDonald and others on Managing the Urban Fabric.
June/July 1983	Summer Conference (details to be announced).

In addition, Regional Convenors are asked to arrange local meetings, details of which will be advertised in the Quarterly as they become known.

UDG COMMITTEE MEMBERS 1982-83

John Billingham (Regional Affairs)
Philip Cave
Richard Ellis
John Evans
Keith Ingham
Arnold Linden
Alexandra Marmot

Robert Meadows
Tony Meats
John Peverley (Hon. Treasurer)
Alan Rowley
Peter Studdert
Francis Tibbalds (Chairman)
Tony Tugnutt (Committee Secretary)

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URBAN DESIGN GROUP

A Forum for Architects .Town Planners,
Engineers & Landscape Architects

ADDITIONAL MEETING :

Tuesday, 22nd June 1982 at 6.15 pm, Polytechnic of Central London,
Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5LS.

"DESIGN GAMES" by Henry Sanoff

Design Games are practical tools for making consensus - no loser - design decisions. Henry Sanoff will describe how these techniques are used in helping design professionals, planners, teachers, students and community leaders to make decisions about the quality of the natural and built environment.

Henry Sanoff is Professor of Architecture at the North Carolina State University School of Design. He has also taught at the University of California, Berkeley and lectured at many universities. He has published extensively and his books include Design Games, Designing with Community Participation, Methods of Architectural Programming and Seeing the Environment.

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