

# urban design

**Urban Design  
Quarterly**

The Journal of the  
Urban Design Group

Issue **72** October 1999

Topic:  
**Glasgow 1999**

Case study:  
**Darlason Town Centre**

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### Urban Design Alliance

UDAL has grown in stature and gained a great deal of respect in the urban design field. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), for example is keen to undertake joint projects to promote urban design. UDAL now responds rapidly as issues arise, recently making its position clear in areas such as the Urban Task Force Report and the new Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. As UDAL's standing progresses, the need for core funding becomes ever more urgent and UDAL will be pursuing this over the coming year.

### UDAL Projects

#### Placechecks Initiatives

One of UDAL's key projects has been the Placechecks Initiative. The methodology is described by Rob Cowan on pp 13-14 of this issue. UDAL is currently seeking financial and technical support from central government agencies and local authorities. We would be interested to hear from any organisation with an interest in running the methodology. *Contact: Robert Cowan on rcowan2@aol.com*

#### Urban Task Force

The seminar "Urban Task Force: What Does it Mean for Urban Design" held on 19 July 1999 at the Institution of Civil Engineers, was attended by over 240 people. It is reported on page 6.

#### Urban Design Week: 20-26 September 1999

This year's Urban Design Week built on last year's very successful Week. There were many more events around the country, media interest was significant, and the Week has

attracted two sponsors, Railtrack and P&O Events. The one-day conference "Making Places Work", with key note speakers Chris Smith MP, Secretary of State for Culture and Sir Alan Cockshaw, Chairman, English Partnerships will be reported in the next issue of UDQ.

### Micro-initiatives

Various UDAL subgroups have been considering how to improve the often overlooked elements of urban design, considering the micro-elements of the urban environment.

#### Designing Streets for People

This group is currently adopting a select-committee-style approach to consider how to improve the quality of streets for people and to challenge current views on highway design, with a report by the end of the year.

#### Returning Roads to Residents

This group aims to produce a good practice guide on improving the quality of urban parking. It is looking at ways to reduce the impact of off-street parking.

#### Industrial Areas

This group is producing a good practice guide covering all aspects of industrial/business areas from landscaping through the colour of buildings to checklists of essential considerations. The group is collecting case studies (including the Trafford Park Regeneration Statement).

#### Liquid Assets

This considers how to improve the quality of urban water courses, to make them attractive, useful places. After the successful launch of its English report, a Scottish version of this document is currently being drawn up. *Contact: Robert Huxford, Institution of Civil Engineers (huxford\_r@ice.org.uk).*

#### Education

UDAL's education sub-group has been working to bring the professions closer together in the urban design training they

provide. It is considering ways to promote cross-professional CPD and has reviewed the level of urban design in undergraduate courses.

*Contact: Helen Woolley, Landscape Institute (h.woolley@sheffield.ac.uk).*

### Website

Information about UDAL manifesto, contact details, newsletter can be found at <http://rudi.herts.ac.uk/> along with a vast quantity of information on urban design issues. UDAL's own website is at [www.udal.org.uk](http://www.udal.org.uk)

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**Websites**

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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Glasgow: aerial view

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Subscriptions: The Quarterly is free to Urban Design Group Members who also receive newsletters and the biennial Source Book at the time of printing.

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Local Authorities £75 (2 copies of UDQ) Overseas members pay a supplement of £3 for Europe and £8 for other locations. Individual issues of the journal cost £4.

The subscription charge for Practice and Education Index entries is £100 per year covering an inclusion in four issues with a reduction for early payment.

Those wishing to be included in future issues should contact 01235 851415.

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from the main routes, by opening up overgrown paths. The visitor experience can start at either end, approaching from the west under the mediaeval gatehouse, with the Abbey backed by the hidden valley, or from the east along 18th century vistas with canals, cascades, grottoes and temples, culminating in the final vista of the romantic ruined abbey. The disadvantages relate to the sensation of being processed through a major new complex instead of stumbling upon a hidden gem, (or conversely seeing the top of the tower poking surprisingly out of the valley, could be viewed as a true 20th century perception from a place where one from previous centuries would not expect to be) and considerable public controversy at a local level, but the modern facilities have been kept out of the valley.

Chester's success in keeping and defining its character results from an intelligent conservation plan of 25 years ago. This was worked on with a thorough survey (eyes), followed by an analysis of the problems and opportunities (minds), and a good dose of plans (imagination), followed by a conservation programme, continuous use of consultants, regular meetings, links and networking, public involvement and encouragement, award schemes, pilot schemes, city lighting and a decennial review.

Hadrian's Wall is another phenomenon in being 70 miles long, approximately 5m high, running through very different landscapes and in widely varying states of preservation, with largely uncontrollable access. It is a major tourist attraction with 1.25 million visitors annually, mainly but not exclusively concentrated in one small length of it, where there are signs of pressure. The wall and its associated sites are in multiple ownership, and subject to multiple agencies (12 local authorities and 3 National parks!) and the industries of agriculture and tourism. The management plan, a 1996 product of a coalition of interests was led by English Heritage. Partnerships of various sorts, committed to the

development of sustainable tourism, have been invaluable for convincing funders of the strength of their bids. Lessons learned include the need for clear objectives and the need for an appointed leader for each initiative.

This joint meeting provided a stimulating and valuable discussion balancing aesthetic appreciation, price of entry and cultural inheritance. It drew out valuable common experience: difficulties of stewardship, different ownership interests, mitigating traffic and visitors, and assessing and comparing the management issues to be resolved. Appointing the right calibre of people, and an agreed management plan of action are key items of success. #

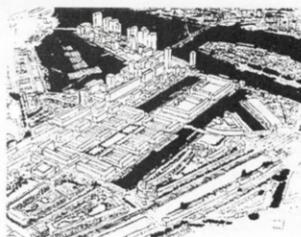
*Peter Eley*

#### **Kevin Lynch Memorial Lecture**

16 June at the Gallery  
Teun Koolhaas

This year's speaker, who described himself as an architect and urbanist, was a particularly appropriate choice: he had been a postgraduate student on courses given by Kevin Lynch in Boston and the concept of the memorable mental map of the city has influenced much of his work.

His talk mainly described work on proposals for the Kop van Zuid area of Rotterdam on which his office has been involved for many years. The Director of Planning for the city had identified areas of potential change and Koolhaas persuaded her to invite him to work on an area involving a waterfront, oddly enough a place from which he had left Holland as a child.



The Kop van Zuid.

A major input to the renewal of the area was the provision of the new Erasmus bridge which was such a clear idea that the mayor asked why it hadn't been done years ago! It gave a psychological boost to the area and importantly from a political point of view gave unemployed workers who lived to the south of the river better physical and psychological connections throughout the city.

The initial idea was for the scheme to include 70% social housing and 30% other housing but this has now changed to a mix of housing, leisure and offices. Koolhaas emphasised at various points how important studies of parcelisation had been in the development of proposals including the impact of a range of density ratios. There were some existing warehouses which he proposed should be kept but they have been removed. Conversely the old Holland-America Line building on Wilhelmina Pier has been converted and operates as a popular hotel and dining location. He believed that the success of the scheme and all quay-side regeneration projects should be judged on how much activity was being brought back to the waterfront by boats, barges for living and cruise ships, all of which was happening in this part of Rotterdam.

He felt that urban design and politics were very closely related and clearly demonstrated it in the way in which the proposals for Kop van Zuid had been developed. #

*John Billingham*

#### **Research in Urban Design - What's Going On?**

As urban design matures as both an academic and practice based subject, the diversity and quality of related research and scholarship increases year on year. For both academics and practitioners alike, keeping tabs on this important body of work has become increasingly difficult, although - arguably - more and more necessary as interest in the discipline and therefore its perceived legitimacy grows.

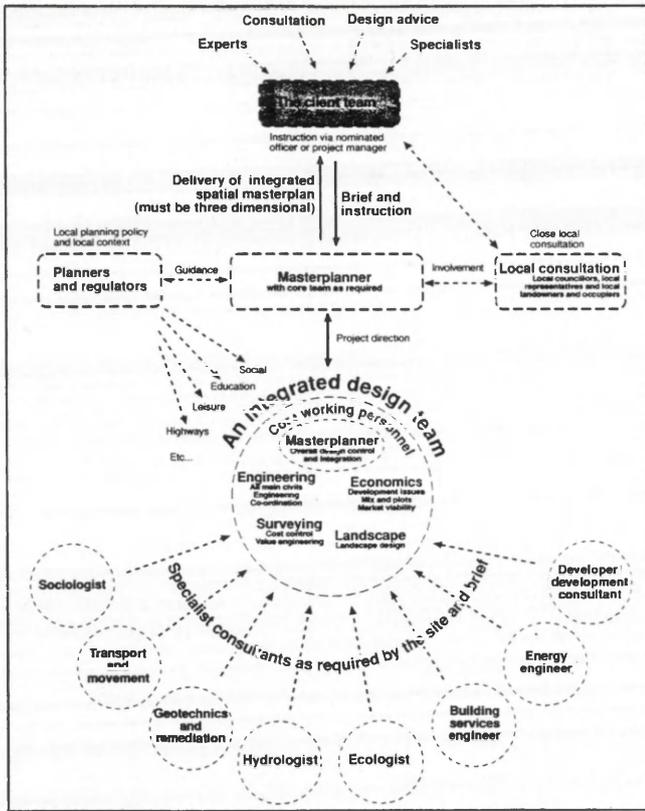
As what - it is hoped - will become the first of a reoccurring topic in UDQ, the April 2000 issue will focus on research in urban design. The intention is to try and outline in one place as much as possible of the urban design and urban design related research and scholarship currently being undertaken in the UK.

#### **What are you doing?**

Matthew Carmona will be topic editing the issue and needs to hear from any practice, institution or individual actively engaged in research. Initially, all that is required is a list of the research projects/activities being undertaken. Contributors will subsequently be asked to prepare a short outline of their work for inclusion in the issue.

So, if you are serious about research, don't miss this opportunity to share your work with others and in turn find out what is going on. Work can be in its infancy, well developed or recently completed. In the first instance write or e-mail Matthew Carmona at:

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**Urban Task Force Report Launch**

29 June 1999, Queen Elizabeth Hall

and

**The Urban Renaissance: What Happens Next?**

Annual Urban Design Group Lecture  
7 July at the Gallery

The eagerly expected Urban Task Force (UTF) report

*Towards an Urban*

*Renaissance* was finally

launched with a big event

attended by the Secretary of

State John Prescott and

Minister Richard Caborn, the

great, the good and the

media.

Ten days later, UTF's Secretary, Jon Rouse gave a stimulating and thought provoking Annual UDG Lecture to a packed audience of eager urban designers. The two events could not have been more different

and undoubtedly the UDG had the best deal.

As Lord Rogers lectured looking at his slides and not at his audience, one could not avoid wondering if he was aware of the irony of choosing to launch his report on the site of one of his majors failures, the aborted glass roof on the South Bank. Not much of what he said ("from Masaccio onwards...") was new, and since he was preaching to the converted, the purpose of his talk must have been the production of sound bites to be picked up by the media. The mere presence of John Prescott and his supportive speech gave an indication of the status of the UTF, but significantly he left before the presentation of the meat of the report by the next two speakers, Anthony Mayer, Chief Executive of the Housing Corporation and Tony Burton from the Council for the Protection of Rural England. After the speeches, a panel answered questions from the floor, which reflected general support towards the ideas of the UTF but also doubts of the government's commitment to implement them.

This was the theme picked up by Jon Rouse in his talk which he subtitled "The politics of

urban design". Having witnessed the media razzamatazz surrounding the launch and how quickly the subject disappeared from public view, he wondered whether it was possible in the UK today to have a long-term agenda in the public interest, as is needed to achieve the desired urban renaissance. Whilst vigorously subscribing to and advocating the 105 UTF recommendations, he is under no illusion concerning their effectiveness in reaching the desired objectives. But he is clear that if these are not achieved, the government targets of building 60% of new housing on brownfield sites will not be met and this already very congested country will become more so. And although he was addressing urban designers and the UTF have a major design component he was in no doubt that the solutions to the country's problems need to be holistic and design only one of many issues to be tackled. Excellence in leadership and management, joined up thinking, improved public transport were some of the priorities that he listed; and, in order to keep people in cities or attract them back, "schools, schools, schools", "safety, safety, safety" and "jobs, jobs, jobs" were necessary mantras.

The report and its recommendations which were outlined by Rouse in his lecture, are reviewed on page 39. His message came in the last half-hour when through three examples he wondered about the future. The first example, the Greenwich Millennium Village, showed how a potentially good idea was losing its way because of lack of public sector control. Rouse contrasted this failure with regeneration schemes in Rotterdam where the city keeps control at every stage. The UTF was proposing the creation of Urban Regeneration Companies where risks and rewards would be shared by both the public and the private sector. In his second example, Rouse contrasted the potential of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) with the reality of being marginalised by its position in the government hierarchy. Finally he worried about the lack of

institutional capacity at every level, not only in local and national government but in the development industry and in the community.

The clarity of Rouse's analysis and his honesty in discussing the obstacles on the way were so refreshing that in spite of his pessimism, the effect was enlightening and encouraging. A great number of questions from the very large audience followed his talk. The subjects varied from new settlements in the South-East to the role and attitude of architects, and from sustainability to the weakness of local government. The stimulated audience seemed to be prepared to go on for ever, a sure measure of a successful evening. And Jon Rouse made it clear that it was now up to this same audience to go out and spread the word in order to ensure that the UTF's report did not gather dust on a shelf. #

*Sebastian Loew*

*Sebastian Loew*

**Urban Task Force Seminar**

(What does it mean for urban design?)  
19 July

UDAL arranged an evening

seminar at the ICE in

London on the implications

of the UTF report for urban

design. The principal

speakers were Jon Rouse

and David Lunts with

contributions from Terry

Farrell and Michael Gwilliam

and a panel of UDAL

representatives.

Jon Rouse spoke about achieving high quality urban design, emphasising that successful urban regeneration is design led. He postulated a number of principles:

- Recognise context and setting



- Provide a hierarchy of centres
- Local traditions should influence proposals
- Give priority needed to the design of the public realm
- Provide permeability through a connected structure
- Optimise land use and densities
- Mix uses, tenures and household sizes
- Build to last
- Build sustainably
- Consider environmental issues within the framework of capital and revenue costs.

These principles could be translated into action through the review of major PPGs on transport, conservation and retail policy, PPG 1 should be split into two with urban design and urban renaissance as a separate PPG. He surprisingly felt that the urban design process should be client led, not architectural or planning led. The term 'spatial master plan', which is used a number of times in the Task Force's report, he defined as a 3D process. He emphasised the need for inter-disciplinary work, and for more architect-planners. Professional institutes should work together to produce the right skills. He stressed the importance of public involvement and of civic responsibility.

David Lunts spoke about housing preferences and described research work undertaken for the UTF using focus groups which significantly excluded families with young children.

Factors affecting housing preferences included:

- The size of future households
- The lack of innovation available
- Changes already occurring in cities such as Manchester and Glasgow
- The failure of cities to market city living

The respondents to the research were generally pro-urban, wanted good access to services, disliked noise but liked diversity; only a small number were impressed by modern design. It was clear that age affected the characteristics considered attractive but marketing of urban life lacked a shared language, consumers were more sophisticated, real places were needed as examples and there was an aversion to risk.

Terry Farrell referred to the need for architecture centres to be more broadly based, the importance of the management of public space and the benefits of having an urban design council. Michael Gwilliam was concerned about what happens next; he believed many of the Urban Task Force report's recommendations could be carried out now as demonstration projects.

The discussion raised a number of issues: the need to improve public safety to enable families to remain or return; the possibility of reviewing proposals for new housing outside cities; the weakness of the regional planning system.

Each panel member was asked in conclusion to which single initiative would they give priority.

Suggestions included: the dissemination of the main principles to all professions; a Renaissance Fund, similar to the Lottery Funds, to drive forward ideas; Tony Blair to give priority to Urban Renaissance and the need for an Urban Policy Board and a Special Parliamentary Committee. #

John Billingham

### Waiting for the Spin Doctors

Report of Urban Design Strategies in Practice Conference, Tate Gallery Liverpool 27 April 1999

Any conference that sends out to its delegates an

eleven point list of "what we can expect from the

speakers" and which opens

with a review of them, as

Urban Design Strategies in Practice organised by Mike

Biddulph and John Punter

for the RTPI North West

Region and the Urban

Design group did, is setting

a demanding agenda,

whatever its subject.

Perhaps that is why waiting for the starting gun of the DETR's long awaited Good Practice Guide and the Urban Task Force's Final Report, seventy nine practitioners from Sefton to Southampton and Dublin to Doncaster were there, ready to get the latest technical updates that would make their dull old small print Supplementary Planning Guidance into the ad man's dream that urban design is fast becoming – creating confidence, sharing a vision, co-ordinating achievement, making funding bids, a framework for investment . . . this is sexier than a review of a Unitary Development Plan any day.

Did they get it? Lindsay Smailes and Mark Burgess brought a clear message from Leeds of the importance of sound and thorough analysis of area character. Jon Rowland spoke of the "urban design" which had been called in to Bracknell to offer a rationale for arbitration between competing development proposals and through a series of public workshops helped identify civic focus. Geoff Wright outlined the way Birmingham had reinvented itself through urban design principles being applied at all levels of planning and how with a copywriter's ear they could grasp the public imagination. From Brian Evans of Gillespies they got the craft of urban design, the kerb details and the paving discipline.

But the real message that came strongest in David Rudlin's account of the genesis of the now celebrated Hulme Development Guide, with its false starts and sackings, and in Riccardo Marini's disarmingly straightforward belief in those wonderful nineteenth century ideas that a city's government should control the form and shape of the city that he was attempting to revive in the Glasgow City Design Strategy, was that there is still scope and opportunity for the committed individual to shape the design of cities – at least until the ad men move in and urban design strategies are written by spin doctors. #

Bob Jarvis

### 'Landscape Design' European Issue

In December, a special European edition of *Landscape Design* will be published which will highlight the most innovative landscape designs and projects with particular emphasis on Eastern Europe. Readers of *Urban Design Quarterly* can receive a *FREE* copy of this issue, by contacting Landscape Design Trust, 13a West Street, Reigate, Surrey RH2 9BL UK Tel: +44 (0)1737 223294 Fax: +44 (0)1737 224206 Email LDT@landscape.co.uk #

**UDG Study Tour of Silesian and Spiš Towns**

22-30 May 1999

The May 1999 study tour focused on two groups of thirteenth century towns in central Europe, some planned, some unplanned. Both groups were to a large extent settled by Germans, though the political impetus to their foundation was Polish in the one case and Hungarian in the other.

The thirty seven participants in the tour had the bonus of a day in Berlin, a day in Cracow and an afternoon in Brussels. The upheaval and dramatic changes of the Berlin urban scene were the perfect counterpoint to the lush rural landscape of Lower Silesia in what is now south-west Poland. The foundation of thirty one towns by the Polish Duke Henry the Bearded between 1220 and 1250 led to increasing German settlement of the whole of Silesia and its eventual absorption first by Bohemia and later by Prussia. Only in 1945 did the territory revert to Poland with the expulsion of the Germans.

Our first acquaintance with a Silesian town was with Wolow, founded at the end of the 13th century. A central square (Rynek) accommodated a Renaissance town hall and is enclosed by 3 x 3 unequal blocks of development, originally within an oval walled circuit. The historic architecture is largely 18th century Hapsburg, but wartime destruction has resulted in much infill dating from the 1950s. Silesia was heavily fought over in the concluding weeks of the Second World War, and it is hard to find undamaged towns. Perhaps the least destroyed was Paczków, which retains its original oval walled circuit, though its epithet of 'the Polish Carcassonne' is certainly

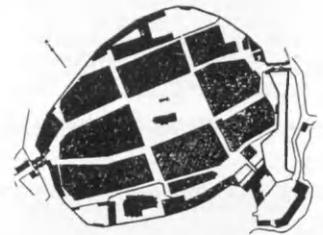
undeserved. Consisting of 4x3 blocks, the town focused on a Rynek containing a Renaissance town hall and a block of commercial buildings, and retains no fewer than 19 towers built into the wall, most dilapidated. Perhaps the saddest example was Nysa, at one time a bastion of the Counter-Reformation with a cathedral and many large churches. Today the original plan form of the town with its Rynek is still apparent, but rebuilt in monstrous two-storey flats from the 1950s. Only one side of the square retains its 16th century houses, and the massive churches and town weigh-house survive as hulks in the urban desert.

The biggest planned town in Silesia is Wroclaw, dating from about 1200. Laid waste by the Tartars in 1241, it was soon re-settled, mainly by Germans. Like Cracow and Poznan, the planned town, with its grid layout, post-dates an original urban settlement, marked by the presence of a cathedral, on an island in the river (Ostrow Tumski). The vast Rynek of four blocks square contains the massive Renaissance town hall and four ranges of market buildings. The substantial six-storey or more merchants' houses of all periods that surround the square have been impressively rebuilt after wartime destruction, unlike much of the rest of the city centre, which has been infilled with humdrum 1950s three-storey flats. However, the scale of the Rynek and of the medieval churches, each of them big enough to be a cathedral, testify to the agricultural and trading wealth of Silesia in the Middle Ages. The variety of architectural styles of the houses facing Wroclaw's Rynek is more satisfying than the 18th century unity of those of Cracow's market square, despite the fact that the latter conceal much older structures behind, which have not, as in the case of Wroclaw, suffered war damage.

The Spiš, Zips, towns of Eastern Slovakia form a group of, again, 31 towns largely settled by Germans, but which were not fought over during the Second World War. They originated in a



move by the Hungarian King Geza II to encourage German colonists, and by 1249 the two largest towns, Kezmarok and Levoca, had already been granted the privilege of royal free towns. These privileges were retained until 1876, and from then on the number of German speakers declined until 1945, when all those who remained in the region had to leave.



Kezmarok, although unplanned, is an attractive town situated against the backdrop of the High Tatras and dominated by the Renaissance castle of the local Hungarian lord. The local brand of renaissance detailing also graces the top of the church tower, as it does the spectacular town hall at Levoca. Another characteristic of both towns is the streets of gabled burghers' houses with 18th century façades.



Levoca and Spišska Nova Ves are both planned towns, Levoca focussing on a main square containing an amazing collection of carved altar pieces by the local Master Paul of Levoca, easily the equal of any in Europe. Levoca's layout is based on four parallel streets, Spišska Nova Ves's on one main street which widens to form a market place, again containing public buildings, a typical feature of both planned and unplanned towns in the region. These towns must look very different today from how they did historically, as the public buildings now sit in a lush green setting of mature trees, giving the atmosphere of a spa town.



Our visit terminated at the dramatic 13th century Spiš castle, the original seat of government, and, below, the capitular seat of ecclesiastical administration, today an attractive walled village. #

Alan Stones

- From the top:
1. Wroclaw's Rynek: satisfying variety of styles.
  2. Wolow: the walled enclosure and entrance bridges have gone.
  3. Wroclaw: planned town and original urban nucleus.
  4. Nysa: the Weighhouse and massive churches.
  5. Levoca: main square with public buildings.

## New Housing: Back to the Future?

Dorchester, June 1999

The idea for this Regional Conference of the Urban Design Group emerged from a discussion in a South West UDG Forum.

There can be no doubt that the Duchy of Cornwall's development at Poundbury is controversial. It is hailed by its supporters as producing the quality of housing design that people want. Its detractors question the validity of using vernacular domestic architecture in housing of the late 20th century. Thus the question posed for the day: "Are there modern approaches to architecture and urban design that can produce good quality housing developments?"

### The story of Poundbury

Des Derrien, Director of Planning and Environment at West Dorset, explained that, by 1987, local consultation on development strategies had chosen Poundbury as the most likely place for the expansion of Dorchester. In 1989, further consultation saw the unveiling of the Masterplan by Leon Krier, a development of around 2,000 dwellings based on the concept of the urban village: mixed uses and tenancies, finite quarters and phased development. Andrew Martin, Principal Planning Officer at West Dorset, described the density of 40 dwellings per hectare, as high for this part of Dorchester. 20% of all property is in social housing, interspersed with market housing. Some employment uses have already moved in and the pub and three shops are currently reaching completion.

### Walking tour of Poundbury, Phase 1

Innovatory features needed an enlightened and flexible approach from the County's

Traffic Engineers. In place of the usual open plan front gardens with cars in drives of barely detached houses, here are terraces at the back edge of pavement, a variety of house types, all of vernacular style, a restrained palette of materials and colours and the occasional car parked on streets without yellow lines. The variety of spaces and the interrelationship of buildings creates an ever changing visual experience which is a sheer delight.

### The Debate on Housing Design

Robert Adam reminded us that the style of Poundbury is not classical, rather the revival of a revival, in the tradition of British house design. As professionals we are too hung up on the image and theory of housing which is essentially only an "industry which provides shelter". Adam explained that the dominant issue is the shortage of land: it accounts for 40% of total cost, construction 35%, design 1%. Therefore the most creative person is the land buyer, and design is simply not seen as being important!

At Poundbury control has been exercised through land ownership. All too often developers surrender to the highway engineers leading to a dreadfully familiar layout. Typically schemes maximise the unit amenity rather than the estate - a mistake. New technology is used in the product simply because it enables it to do it better and cheaper. Then it looks to sell on the basis of "Individuality"!

Adam referred to research undertaken by the Popular Housing Forum. He outlined some key points:

- When buying a house, external appearance featured somewhere below the provision of a garage!
- Popular house design included mock Tudor; the architect - designed section scored badly, described as "unique" in a negative way.
- "Modern" was seen as recent and the critical thing was the lack of pitched roofs.



Poundbury - Photograph by Roger Turnbull.

- Popular words to describe an ideal estate included: safe, quiet, leafy, smart, varied. Urban came very low.

Martin Richardson subtitled his talk "Britain: The Trabant House Builders of Europe". He considered that what had gone wrong was a result of our settling into a dullness and a sentimental nostalgia. We are not flattering our heritage, we are degrading it. We should ensure that we understand the past, not try to copy it. Housing should be compact, of simple form and make best use of contemporary resources whilst exploiting repetition by technology. New housing should be sustainable, socially effective, and able to accommodate social change. Like the historic places we love we should build in 'the language of our time' to give future generations something worth looking at and living in.

John Thompson began by emphasising his enthusiasm for public consultation and Community Architecture which is about finding out what people need, not what the professionals think they need. For Thompson it was not the buildings that came first, but the social expectations of the people. The professionals and the users of any scheme have to be involved in a partnership.

### Conclusion

Poundbury has certainly challenged the previously accepted approach of volume housebuilders. Three things emerge as elements that should be celebrated and exported to

other housing developments: the quality of spaces and the intricate relationship between them in forming a network of serial views and routeways; the way in which the motor car and its storage is made secondary to the architecture and spaces; and the mixing of tenures with little or no obvious external difference.

On the down side, the public consultation method recommended by John Thompson seems infinitely more conducive to the design of most projects than the method employed on Poundbury. I would still question the virtue of applying such strict design criteria to the architecture of such a wide area of a town: Poundbury will cover around one quarter of the area of Dorchester with the resultant heavy influence on its overall character and appearance. The quality of building will undoubtedly be high but the area has a feeling of unreal, constrained tidiness and correctness that might become overpoweringly pedantic as the development grows. Does it always have to be vernacular? Or would people choose modern architecture if it were available with the level of care and design skill that is evident at Poundbury?

For now it is a place that must be visited to see how some of the worst excesses of housing estate design can be overcome by a strong urban design vision and the will to build quality spaces on an intimate scale. #

John Biggs

# Novoastrian Urbanism

Michael Crilly

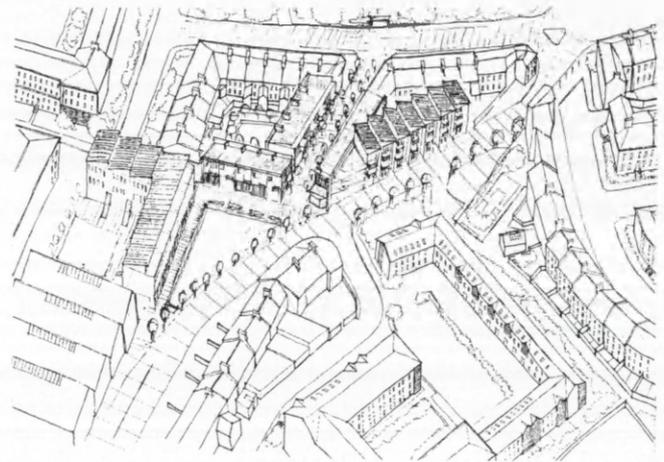
## The Challenges of Sustainable Urban Living for the North East

The slightly subversive agenda behind this half day conference in April and its 'play on words' title was to bring New Urbanism to Newcastle.

There was added relevance due to the recent publication of PPG3 (draft) on housing, which addresses the same urbanity issues.

John Montgomery (Urban Cultures) advocated a strong case for principles of urbanity, achieved through understanding the interconnections between activities, built form and physiological meaning within a city. His conceptual model of the city is not one of segregation and zoning but of multiple layers, where overlapping activities and social meaning resulted in variety and diversity. Central to successful urbanity is *street life* apparent in levels of animation, cultural diversity, mixed uses, temporal variations and the 'number of cake shops'. The multi-layered street should be a venue where opportunities are available for people watching, cafe culture and social interaction, adding to a network of cultural attractors within the city. The built form, particularly housing, should support these principles of urbanity through good detailing, adaptability, contextualisation and most importantly higher densities. He warned of the dangers of over-regulation, rigid standards and over-management of public spaces; especially in relation to restrictive opening times. There should be blurred edges and some aspects of unpredictability and chaos to urbanity - all of which are anathema to suburban culture.

Patrick Clarke and Paul Drew (Llewelyn Davies) presented their research work on 'sustainable residential quality' (SRQ) - where housing is considered a major contribution to principles of urbanism and linked to a street life based on pedestrian movement and activities. This work is driven by national household projections and the potential for smaller urban in-fill sites to contribute to this figure while helping to regenerate cities. The specific constraints and opportunities of smaller brownfield sites has given rise to a design-led approach, recognising the positive role that new housing can play in reurbanising and improving residential choice and quality. In identified sites within 'pedsheds' (400m walking distance of town/district centres), the approach tests "... alternative assumptions about density, car parking provision and road layouts, to explore whether a more flexible and creative approach would enable more housing to be accommodated within urban areas in a way



Comparative study on infill site in Newcastle city centre.

*Top:* Current UDP standards provide 12 residential units and one corner retail unit.  
*Above:* Car-free urbanism provides 45 residential units and improved environment.

which maintains urban quality" (DETR *Planning for Communities of the Future* white paper 1998 p9).

High quality is achieved via good design and not based on the application of inflexible standards. Urban design when released from density and parking standards has a significant role in estimating the hidden capacity of urban brownfield sites and reclaiming the city back from the car.

The strength of the SRQ approach is in the qualitative comparative evaluation of schemes working within different policy contexts - one with existing UDP standards, with a relaxation of these standards and the car-free urbanism option raised as an aspiration within PPG3. This evaluation is strengthened by being visual, consistent (so not dependent upon illustrative variations) and contextual, based upon real sites. A fine grained understanding of specific sites does allow for assumptions underlying standards to be challenged. In practice it is resulting in efficiency of land use, a different understanding of land value and a related rise in the interest in brown field developments.

For the sceptics who say it cannot be done within the constraints of the market, particularly outside London, reality is proving otherwise. Alister Hackland (Hackland & Dore Architects, Edinburgh) presented his current 'live' scheme for the UK's first car-free development, based on a 4 storey traditional tenement building form and communal entrances and spaces, situated at Stateford Green in central Edinburgh. Sustainable principles are evident in the physical presence of a district heating link, passive solar gain, embodied energy and construction detailing together with operational considerations dealing with adaptability and flexibility. Avoiding on-site cars is written into tenancy agreements and a condition of sale for purchasers. Delivery and speed of implementation is backed by pro-active support from principal officers and members of Edinburgh City Council and the extension of on-street residents' parking schemes in the wider area.

The challenges posed were to public perceptions of quality and city living; to the planners' and engineers' use of standards; and to housebuilders' role in facilitating brownfield development. However, I'm left with a niggling thought that the first challenge is to the designer to have the courage to become involved in articulating these arguments. #

Michael Crilly

# Making the Connections

Rob MacDonald

The North West Development Agency has been commissioned to deliver the Government's regeneration agenda and aims to report by July 1999.

Consultative meetings have been held in the region and the eleventh NWDA Panel meeting was held recently at the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool. It was chaired by Lord Thomas and the theme was making the connections between cities, tourism, arts and culture.

Increasingly, the issue of sustainable urban tourism is becoming of interest to the development professionals and the panel received presentations from a number of regional experts.

## Regional promotion and tourism

Victoria Gregory, from Marketing Manchester, highlighted the importance of the issue of the image of the North West region. Stephen Hetherington, Chief Executive of the new Lowry Gallery, echoed this by asking how to draw people to the North West who have not been before. He referred to flagship architectural attractions in Bilbao and St Ives, and he saw The Lowry as an example of excellent architecture that would also attract the tourists. He wondered how what is excellent regionally can become a national asset? Merseyside and Liverpool are not an automatic choice for tourists, but Brian Edgerton, the Director of Business Development at the Mersey Partnership, saw tourism as a significant catalyst if Liverpool is to become a competing and collaborating city. Both Manchester and Liverpool recently sent out exhibitions to the Cannes Film Festival, and significantly, they shared adjacent stands. Tourism as an industry sector has created 18,000 jobs in Liverpool generating £500,000,000 in income. Objective One, stage one, has had impact but there is still considerable work to be done in the area of quality of life.

When questioned about what are the key world-beating assets of Merseyside, the answer came back: football, Grand National, performing arts, maritime waterfront heritage, music (The Beatles), natural heritage, night life (birth place of Cream) and the warmth and humour of the people. But there is a



Urban Design Project  
for Liverpool City Core.  
© Gary Brown, Philip  
Lo, Maads Gaard Boe,  
Rob MacDonald.  
Centre for  
Architecture, Liverpool  
John Moores  
University.

need for a multi-event conference centre and Merseyside should be doing much more to support the Commonwealth Games in Manchester 2002. It was suggested that there should be less investment in bricks and mortar and much more in events and festivals.

Andrew Sugden, Director of Marketing Manchester, suggested that business tourism was a neglected area and that there was a vast international conference market in which the North West was under performing. There was a need for a world class exhibition and conference venue and for an EXPO facility for multi use. He proposed a World Fair for 2007 (which also happens to be the year of Liverpool's 800 year charter). He discussed the viability of various locations and favoured a site near Warrington, between Manchester and Liverpool, with well established connections to airports, railways and motorways.

### Tourism accommodation

Visitors to the region need places to stay and Gregor Adreewitch, General Manager of the Hilton Hotels Group, spoke about how to improve the region's image of hospitality. Hilton Hotels find it very difficult to get staff in the North West. There is a need for new training facilities in the hospitality industry. Many of the visitors to the Manchester Hilton were football related, and there is a need for more identity and event packages to hold visitors longer in the region. Recently, Liverpool has seen a growth in new hotels

and a proposal for a new back-packers' hotel is being discussed.

### Media and creative industries

Traditionally, the North West had a power base in the television industry (Granada's Coronation Street and Mersey Television's Brookside) but increasingly BBC decisions are made in London. Wayne Garvie, head of Entertainment Features BBC North West, suggested that there was a need for a talent forum to keep the region's creative talent in the region. A resource base needs to be established with investment in post-production facilities in Manchester and Liverpool.

### Sustainability, property and investment

Alan Melrose, a consultant to Manchester Airport, thought that the tourism industry should establish a sustainable energy strategy which would include performance measures, environmental 'kite' marks and architectural standards. Tim Bloxham, Chairman of Urban Splash, suggested that there were two ways to encourage tourism: firstly, make nice places for people to visit, and secondly tell people about it. He illustrated his approach to property investment with the work of Urban Splash in Liverpool and Manchester. He is interested in exciting new architecture: Oldham Street in Manchester can now be compared with Temple Bar in Dublin. Concert Square in Liverpool has created a modern new public space in the city. More seed bed funding is needed and more architectural competitions will improve the standards of architecture. The property industry in the North West needs to encourage risk taking, and accept that some mistakes will be made. Bloxham called for projects on the 'gateways' to the regional cities and work along the 'arterial' routes. Success, in his view, will depend on having the right ideas.

### Sport, arts and culture

Peter Stybelski from Bolton Council spoke about the leisure and sports industry: the combined areas of retail, distribution, hotels and catering represents 40% with 25% of all employment. He saw this sector increasingly being used as a catalyst for change in the region. Bolton had numerous small scale attractions but no single flagship. The Middlebrook Initiative involves a 200 acre site in an area of declining industries. A partnership project has developed to create the Reebok Stadium, including an exhibition centre and a high quality hotel. Middlebrook is delivering a new factory for Hitachi, mixed business park, 270 new houses, commercial leisure operations, multi-plex cinema, bowling and leisure retail. Significantly, a new

railway station has been built, the first between Manchester and Preston. The Bolton Arena on the Middlebrook site will be the first purpose built national tournament venue capable of holding competitions like the Davies Cup. This venue will also be the regional centre of excellence for performance coaching in tennis. The North West regional sports infrastructure will get a boost in 2002 with the Commonwealth Games which will provide a high profile for sport and attract considerable investment, tourists and spending.

Sue Harrison, Chief Executive, North West Arts Board, argued that culture is a seriously important industry and deserved to be unstitched from tourism. She called for more understanding, advocacy, inclusion, investment and partnerships. The North West has many cultures and regional diversity and this needed to be recognised. New Pathway projects should focus on community arts, particularly for young people; the Cream nightclub in Liverpool has created a national demand for young persons' tourism. Culture and arts should be included in the Commonwealth Games. The North West already has the big icons of Music, Sport and Art, but public art is neglected and should be encouraged. Public art can be achieved through architecture, as in the new Lowry Centre, and such projects need to see the connection between small scale creativity and larger projects. Local authorities need to recognise that culture and art are not just frills but a serious business. Understanding the connections between culture and innovation is a key to the North West performing better. The Objective One programme in Merseyside is now focusing on such innovation and has established a number of new agencies devoted to architecture, design, music and film.

### Conclusion

Later this year the North West Regional Development Agency is due to report back to the Government. The report should make interesting reading. The Commonwealth games in 2002, Objective One Stage Two and the proposed World Fair in 2007 all have the potential to inject massive improvements in the regional quality of life. Making the connections between the cities of tomorrow and cultural heritage in the North West demands a creative leap in imagination and the creation of many urban projects worthy of the next Millennium. #

*Rob MacDonald*

# The UDAL Placechecks Initiative

Robert Cowan

Where does urban design start? Not with drawing up an urban design strategy or with commissioning an urban designer, but with asking some basic questions about how a place works. Robert Cowan, who devised the Placechecks methodology for UDAL, explains.

Thousands of urban sites could be developed successfully and sustainably if local people had the tools to help them find out what urban design strategies they need. The potential for urban renaissance can be unlocked in even the most unpromising circumstances if there is a clear focus and a simple approach. UDAL hopes its Placecheck initiative will show how to provide both. Urban design is more than a drawing board skill. There are too many examples where a developer, development agency or local authority has commissioned a master plan for a site, but where this has not led to the hoped-for high standards of design, or even to any development at all. This is often due to a failure to put in place the process for facilitating and delivering such development.

The key to urban design lies neither with any single profession, not with professions alone. Urban design is a process of collaboration, essential to reconcile conflicting interests. The process depends on the people who manage budgets, make policy, write briefs, set standards and shape expectations. Such people include politicians, landowners, developers, business people, accountants, property agents, investors, civil servants, transport operators, educators, community groups, promoters of economic development and many more.

The first step, UDAL suggests, is for people with a stake in an area's future to come together in a local partnership or alliance (formal or informal) to agree to carry out or commission a Placecheck. Local Authorities are likely to be involved, but the initiative can come from anyone, in any organisation or sector. A Placecheck can be carried out for a place as small as a neighbourhood or town centre, or as large as a city or county. The setting might be urban, suburban or a village.

## Methodology

The Placecheck process begins with asking three simple questions:

- **People**  
Who is or should be involved in making decisions which shape the built environment here, and how can they work together more effectively?
- **Places**  
How well does the built environment perform, and how can it be improved?
- **Movement**  
How well is the urban fabric connected into the network of movement, and how can those connections be improved?

Even the most preliminary answers to those questions can provide the essential first step to the process of urban design. The Placecheck method and its checklists allow the questions to be answered with as few resources as may be available. (The checklists are based on the audit approach of *The Connected City*.)

The next step may be to decide to answer the same questions more fully, as the basis for preparing an urban design strategy. Preparing such strategies may be part of the Placecheck or may follow it, depending on what resources are available and on other local circumstances.

The range of possible strategies to which a Placecheck will point includes various types of policy and guidance:

- Drawing up an urban design and development framework for an area, an urban quarter, or a whole city, town or village.
- Preparing a development brief for a specific site.
- Preparing a concept statement as the prelude to a brief.
- Preparing a design guide (or code) for an area or on a specific topic.
- Reviewing the urban design policies in a local authority's development plan, particularly to ensure that the plan is based on a coherent, shared vision.
- Reviewing a local authority's planning and highway standards.

... and a range of new approaches:

- Establishing new ways of managing the development process.
- Improving urban design skills, within and beyond a local authority.
- Forming partnerships and organising programmes of collaboration, to integrate urban design into the planning and development process.
- Setting up a design panel or forum, or establishing a design initiative.

Each place will find an appropriate first step of its own, collaborating in what should become a continuing process. A Placecheck is not a substitute for good designers. It is a way of creating opportunities for them to design creatively.

The Placecheck initiative will offer to those who take part a practical new approach, a contribution to funding, a chance to share experience, and opportunities for publicity. It will promote good practice in urban design and regeneration by testing the approach in a variety of settings, and disseminating the experience of what works best.

UDAL believes the Placecheck initiative to be an essential tool in creating the conditions for urban renaissance. It can help to build a framework for action in every place in which the development industry is uninterested, where public policy is ineffective, where local needs are neglected, and where good design is unknown.

### Project selection

UDAL and its co-sponsors will select pilot projects which, between them, will cover a range of scales and types of urban design issues. Around ten projects will be selected in the light of UDAL's objectives and the concerns of Government policy. In particular, the selections will be made according to:

- How useful the audit is likely to be as a basis for local action on urban design.
- Whether the audit will be carried out by or on behalf of a partnership or alliance involving a wide range of interests (though not necessarily all at the start).
- Whether the audit is likely to serve as a model which will help and inspire people elsewhere.

### Project funding

UDAL and its co-sponsors expect to contribute between £5,000 and £10,000 to each of the successful projects. Applications for smaller or larger amounts (up to £15,000) will be considered. The outputs of the initiative will be:

#### Action

- Around ten Placecheck projects, each initiating a local strategy for urban design action.
- Local alliances or partnerships (including local authorities, development agencies, businesses, professions, and community and voluntary organisations) created to initiate the Placecheck projects and providing the basis for continuing collaboration.
- A programme for sharing experience between the pilot Placecheck projects.

#### Knowledge

- Experience on how to promote a new approach to proactive planning, urban design and urban management – not just for specific, difficult sites, but to shape the general attitudes on which urban renaissance and a modernised planning system depend.
- A detailed, tested methodology for carrying out Placechecks as an effective first step in the process of urban design. #

# Towards a Car-Free London

Brian Richards

The Architecture Foundation launched a competition in 1998 designed to suggest how much better central London would be if cars were not allowed in. Five teams of designers were commissioned to develop their ideas and all the entries - over 200 in all - were exhibited in the Oxo Tower earlier this year.

Peter Fink and Igor Marko proposed a suspended deck along the South Bank of the river from Greenwich to Battersea for cycles and pedestrians, as well as linking green spaces together. Alistair Jeffs proposed a digital net allowing people to obtain better services and travel information. Michael Pawlyn and Kelly Hill proposed emission-free buses and a wide use of new cycle facilities including the use of the river as a cycle and pedestrian space. Muf Architecture aimed to show how public transport could become more enticing, one example being a tram incorporating a bar and linking all the main line stations.

Whilst all these are interesting initiatives that could make a significant contribution to a car-free London, few of these shortlisted competitors looked at how individual quarters of the city could be handled. My proposal was one of those that considered possible solutions in the round for an area including Oxford Street and Regent Street. For this I was awarded an honourable mention: a bicycle. This competition entry assumed that given a strong mayoral direction and government support serious at getting the necessary legislation through – much could be achieved within seven years.

The key, shown below in Year 3, would be a traffic cordon, with road pricing, around the Central Area aimed at reducing the amount of traffic entering and producing substantial funds for public transport improvements. But road pricing would only be acceptable politically if substantial improvements to public transport and the environment were already in place. Funds raised from road pricing would have to be spent solely on such items as a subsidy for the free buses, the new trams and on environmental improvements.

### Years 1-2

Walking and cycling improvements:

- a) Improved walking conditions in a number of areas. Pavement widening and some

Taylor Young were appointed by Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and English Partnerships (now Advantage West Midlands) to undertake a study of Darlaston Town Centre to provide urban design guidance cast within a commercially viable context to be provided by GVA Grimley. The purpose of the study was to follow on from an earlier Community Vision document produced by the Council and provide a vision for the town centre, thus developing the latest stage in the town's regeneration strategy. The Community Vision was produced in partnership with local traders and residents and identified twelve development opportunity sites, in addition to a vacant former Asda supermarket, as a starting point for redeveloping the town centre. The new study, prepared by Taylor Young, will act as an advocacy document for potential developers by presenting a positive future for the town and will also guide new development to create a town centre that would be successful in functional terms.

Darlaston is a small Black Country town located near Walsall. In many ways a suburb of its larger neighbour, it is divided from it by the M6 motorway and retains many characteristics of a freestanding town. The historical legacy is one of traditional small scale Black Country industry, becoming larger and then declining in recent years. With a relatively small population the town centre has traditionally benefited from the



Axonometric of typical Central Area environment showing transport systems in relation to streetscape

**OXFORD STREET**

- A Taxi ranks
- B Through road closed except in emergencies
- C Open air cafes at street level
- D Tree planting
- E Two-way tram on low-level platforms

**BRYANSTON STREET**

- F Existing 300 car garages converted 10 flats on 3 floors
- G Residents parking for 10 cars or space for car sharing
- H Cycle park and cycle hire at ground level
- J Taxi rank
- K Free shoppers bus
- L Pavement widening & tree planting
- M Junctions narrowed
- N Kerb parking removed (20 mph limit)



Top: Pedestrianised Oxford Street with a two-way tram, extensive tree planting and cafes.  
 Middle: Axonometric of a typical Central Area environment.  
 Above: Central London in Year 7.

e) Cycle lanes on all main roads. Signalling at dangerous junctions. Extensive cycle parking.

Public Transport improvements:

- a) Introduction of a new fleet of specially designed low floor, wide door, non-polluting shoppers' buses to run free within the Central Area (Seattle and Portland already run these).
- b) Construction of a new tram line from Elephant & Castle to King's Cross.
- c) Servicing from peripheral roads (like Gothenburg). Tram route creates two service zones and only taxis and emergency vehicles would cross tram route at few points.

**Year 3**

Cordon Area opens:

- a) All vehicles except buses enter through 200 manned toll gates. Pre-purchased tickets displayed in vehicle windows. Reduced traffic entering and income helps to subsidise and improve public transport – possibly £200 million available annually (London First figures).
- b) River buses used by Travelcard holders with bus access to all landing stages. Thames Barrier permanently closed (open one day a month).

driven within centre.

**Footnotes**

Of these proposals perhaps three could be called innovative: in the first three years to use free shoppers' buses, and trams, or in Year 7 short-term cycle hire. Certainly no road pricing would be acceptable to the public before an excellent public transport was in place.

For an area as large as this to be entirely car-free seems unlikely.

Better to concentrate on obvious key areas such as Oxford Street, Soho, Covent Garden or the City which should have been car-free years ago. This could have been done as part of an overall – and long overdue – policy to actually reduce traffic in the centre.

There would be traffic repercussions over a wider area – as occurred around the City when its 'ring of steel' was introduced. But enough is known about traffic in Central London by now to deal in advance where the likely problems would occur – given finance and the most important factor of all, the political will. #

# Phoenix - City of the Future?

John Winnett

Do you remember the poem *The Planster's Vision*, John Betjeman's ironic prediction at mid-century of the future city as a world organised around communal canteens, where "workers' flats in fields of soya beans tower up like silver pencils, score on score"<sup>1</sup> His vision was born out of a marriage of 'social welfare' and modern architectural movement of the Thirties. It became the model for urban development over large areas of the world in the Sixties and Seventies, with dismal results.

Now, fifty years later, I too "have a vision of the future, chum", one born out of concepts of individual freedom and limited architectural control. If my experience of living in Phoenix, Arizona, for the last nine years is anything to go by, the urban future for much of mankind is likely to be different, but unfortunately still dismal.

Metropolitan Phoenix, otherwise known as "the Valley of the Sun", is in fact a collection of over twenty autonomous and semi-autonomous administrations – most of which call themselves 'city'. It is the second fastest growing urban area in the United States, though to call it urban would be a misnomer, for it is really a low density suburban sprawl covering over 2000 square miles of desert landscape. In fact London, including its surrounding green belt and the M25, would easily fit into this valley. Furthermore, it continues to expand at over an acre an hour.<sup>2</sup> In the time that I have lived here the population has increased by more than 30%.<sup>3</sup>

I will never forget my first visit in 1990, when I was taken up into South Mountain Park, a vantage point from which to see downtown Phoenix and its surrounding suburbs. It is an exciting place, especially at dusk with the colours of the setting sun (often highlighted by pollution) picking out the mountain peaks that ring the valley. The grid of street lights stretching to vanishing point on the horizon and planes circling before landing at Sky Harbor Airport always remind me of Sant 'Eliá's visions.

What may be a romantic view at dusk from a mountain peak is very different in daylight

when travelling along one of the seven lane highways which grid the landscape every mile, east-west and north-south. From the highway, everywhere looks the same. Low rise buildings and parking lots seem to go on for ever. Where there are no buildings there are billboards, advertising land for sale. At almost every mile intersection there is a shopping mall, and a succession of mega malls are being built around the valley to add competition for the shopper's dollars. Whilst the highways bind the city together within the context of the valley, at a local level they divide the city into small islands containing suburban housing, office parks and trailer parks. There is little 'sense of place'. Indeed, by general agreement, in all the 2000 square miles, there is only one small area where one gets the feeling of being in a normal city, with streets where people walk and meet other people by chance. This is downtown Tempe, adjacent to Arizona State University, a Mecca for people seeking a night out with a crowd.

When I first came here, I was taken also into the beautiful desert, and the incredible mountains which surround Phoenix. I found these truly inspirational, but was shocked to discover that much of the desert was for sale. It is rapidly being covered by golf resorts, housing and more malls. "What else can we do with the desert" I was asked, "when land use decisions are based on 'the highest and best use'?" This is the epitome of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century American city." In that case, I thought, it could well be a model of the future city – dictating our quality of life world-wide. Is future humanity destined to live in sprawling tracts of housing; forced to drive everywhere to get anything? Is the multi-purpose street, with its range of activities and its sense of identity so representative of urban life today, a thing of the past?

In all my years teaching urban design I had always wondered what a city developed by free enterprise rather than planning would be like. I had often been critical of those lodestones of post war British planning – *the road hierarchy, the green belt and the neighbourhood*. Now I was in a place where every road was of equal value, where each city spreads into the next with no differentiation, where only a few neighbourhoods have a sense of uniqueness. I suddenly missed those planning concepts. In particular, the lack of multi-purpose streets bothered me, and very different from the ersatz environment created for privately owned shopping malls.

With the help of Arizona State University, I obtained a visa to return for three years as a visiting scholar. I did some teaching and got involved in community outreach. By the time my visa expired I had set up in practice as an urban designer. I was very fortunate with my contacts which led me to work first with

the Arizona Main Street Program, and later with downtowns and neighbourhoods. I have since worked on a variety of projects, mostly concerned with improving pedestrian connections through traffic calming. My work, which seems to have made people question some of their previously held views about the use of public space, enabled me to obtain a 'national interest waiver' to stay here indefinitely. Recently I was honoured by being taken around town and shown a number of changes that are credited to my influence ranging from shade trees and sidewalk improvements, to parking meters and street alignments. It is a nice thought that I have had some practical impact, though in comparison with the millions of dollars that have been spent building 'anywhersville' it is but a drop in the ocean.

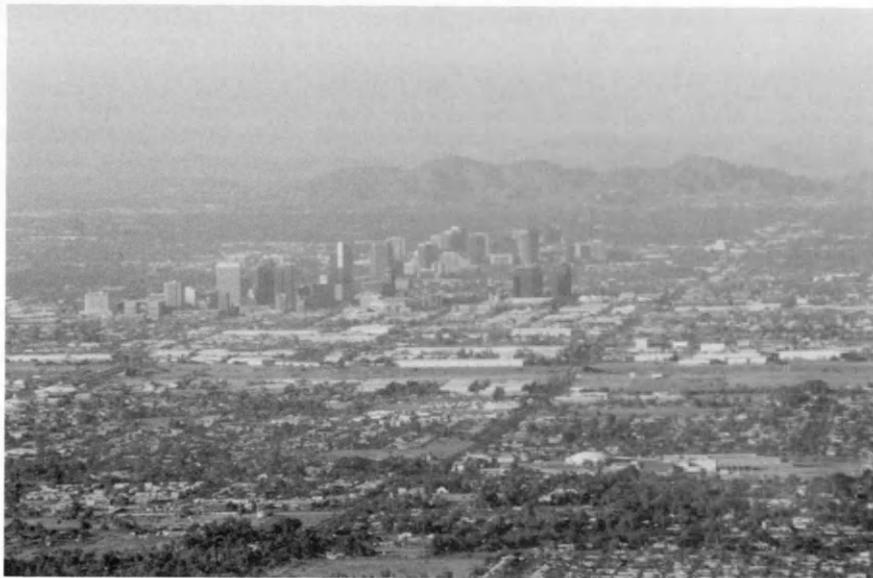
Three years ago I read an article in *The Guardian Weekly*, which made me sit up.<sup>4</sup> The author, John Adams, reported on an OECD conference in Vancouver where the emphasis was on sustainable technologies for aiding human mobility and connection. Speakers hailed a future where a 'Hypercar' would do 300 miles to the gallon, and where electronic mobility by video could decrease the need for physical mobility. Adams was concerned that such ideas encourage us to conceptualise an exciting future while ignoring the implications. What, he asked, are the potential effects on future quality of life?

Adams foresaw a number of dangers:

- an increasingly polarised world, separating those who have mobility from those who have none;
- more cars encouraging continuous suburbanisation and isolation;
- communities no longer as social entities, but instead held together by neighbourhood watch;
- uniqueness and sense of place lost as cultural and linguistic diversity is obliterated;
- local ecosystems destroyed as parking and road space is increased;
- street life disappearing as the scale of urban development defeats pedestrians, and cycling becomes more dangerous;
- increasing use by police and security organisations of computerised data bases which allow law enforcement to become Orwellian;
- electronic gadgetry encouraging politicians to become more remote from their constituents.

I later met John Adams to discuss these issues. On a summer evening in an Oxfordshire garden, they still felt like a nightmare possibility. For me, however, they were already a reality and a challenge. #

John Minnett



Top: Phoenix centre of the Valley of the Sun.

Above: London including its surrounding Green Belt and the M25 (drawn) would easily fit into this valley.

#### References

1. *John Betjeman's Collected Poems*, John Murray, London 1958.
2. *Arizona Republic*, September 14, 1997.
3. The population of the Phoenix Metropolitan Area rose from 2,122,101 in April 1990 to 2,806,000 in July 1998 according to Maricopa Association of Governments, the regional government organisation.
4. 'A Fast Track to Nowhere', *Guardian Weekly*, April 28 1996.



# Glasgow 1999

Hildebrand Frey and Leslie Forsyth

Glasgow's urban regeneration went through a number of key phases which eventually culminated in Glasgow as 1999 UK City of Architecture and Design. Each of the phases had considerable impact on the city's image and contributed on the one hand to the consolidation of Glasgow's historical areas which make it 'one of the greatest Victorian cities in Europe', on the other to the new development and regeneration of derelict and deprived areas. Today Glasgow can compare with many European cities, but up to 1998 it lacked one essential element of development guidance which many European cities have: an overall city plan and urban design framework that would co-ordinate new development and make sure that the city's morphology and identity is maintained and developed.

It is important to understand the 1999 projects and events described in the following contributions as being the temporary culmination of regeneration efforts that started in the mid '70s. It is also important to understand that first with the restructuring of the local council and then with the 1999 programme, Glasgow has set 'A New Beginning' by sketching out a City Plan and an Urban Design Framework as 'long-term framework for physical development'. The current projects need therefore be viewed within a temporal framework.

## Glasgow's awakening in the mid 1970s

The significant starting point of the process was a fundamental change of heart that occurred in the mid '70s: the recognition of the value of the city's architectural and morphological heritage. This led to two parallel consolidation and refurbishment approaches: the rehabilitation of tenements (through groups of professionals such as ASSIST, in close collaboration with communities, a process that led to the setting up of housing associations and co-operatives) and generally the cleaning up of the historical fabric.

The most influential of these projects was the revitalisation of the Merchant City by the City Council in partnership with the private sector, undoubtedly one of Glasgow's most successful regeneration projects in urban design terms, which responded positively to the strong architectural and structural context of the city. In parallel other projects were carried: the GEAR (Glasgow East Area Renewal) project, started in 1976, was hailed as one of Europe's largest regeneration projects but failed to achieve its objective to improve the socio-economic conditions of one of Glasgow's most deprived areas; it also applied a suburban scale and spatial order which is fundamentally unglaswegian. The Maryhill Corridor project, started in 1987, attempted the redefinition of parts of Maryhill Road with new housing development; but here new development failed to maintain or regenerate the historical scale of street enclosure and the traditional mixture of uses. Although not all of these and other projects were entirely successful in socio-economic and urban design terms, they improved Glasgow's image and helped consolidate the city centre as a strong and vibrant core area.

### **The National Garden Festival (1988)**

For one year the area west of the centre and south of what was to become the SECC (Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre) was transformed into a fascinating and attractive array of entertainment and education. The Garden Festival was a popular success, but disappeared without trace at the end of the year. It was an applaudable but wasted effort without long lasting impact.

### **Glasgow, the 1990 City of Culture**

1990 was for Glasgow a year of great celebrations with exhibitions, performances, conferences, and a number of flagship projects, notably the Royal Concert Hall. Again, there was little co-ordination of the projects and little long lasting physical impact on the city, and there was strong critique of the elitist and top down approach that largely ignored if not excluded local communities.

### **Development in the city centre and vicinity**

The shopping mall arrived in Glasgow with the St Enoch Centre development, the regeneration of the old St Enoch railway station area. The successful attempt to reinforce retail as major central function is undoubtedly of considerable benefit to the city in economic terms but the enormous scale of the project diminishes permeability in the area and fronts a number of public spaces with services cores. The availability of 750 car parking spaces causes congestion in Clyde Street. This scheme is followed by Princes Square, undoubtedly a success and today one of Glasgow's most popular meeting places despite its eclectic interior design. The latest development is that of the Buchanan Galleries at the top end of Buchanan Street, a long debated introverted shopping centre, out-of-scale, mediocre if not banal. Due to its enormous size it reduces permeability (it cuts off the direct link between Queen Street Station and Buchanan Street Bus Station) and its 2000 car parking spaces exacerbate the traffic load on the surroundings.

In parallel to the retail development there is the regeneration of Broomielaw to create state of the art office accommodation. As much as this development may be of benefit to the city's economic development, it does not activate the river front and remains a no go area for the general public as a result of the single-use approach. Commercial development at the SECC, culminating in the Armadillo north of the river, is now followed across the river by the

development of the former Garden Festival site as business and leisure park and science museum. Again, useful in economic terms as these schemes may be, they are not integrated into the urban structure and resemble retail parks with low-key sheds surrounded by car parking areas. Lacking is an attempt to integrate such development, to generate an urban frontage to the river and to link the scheme to existing urban areas.

### **The Great Streets Project and City Centre Millennium Plan**

The urban renewal and regeneration approach that started in the mid '70s has now culminated in the refurbishment of a number of key streets in the city centre, especially Buchanan Street, Candleriggs and Gordon Street. This will undoubtedly generate high quality urban spaces. Development is paralleled by traffic calming measures giving priority to public transport and pedestrians. It is unfortunate, however, that such development is going hand in hand with the generation of even more car parking spaces in the centre; the feeder roads are now no longer able to cope with incoming and outgoing traffic and congestion as well as pollution is considerable.

### **Housing and settlement regeneration and development projects**

In parallel to all these efforts there are considerable attempts to improve the quality of housing in deprived areas and to regenerate areas which were comprehensively redeveloped during the '50s and '60s. With a few notable exceptions, these attempts concentrate generally on the refurbishment and replacement of social housing, but hardly any of these attempts includes the review of the structure, density and land use pattern of these areas. The Crown Street Regeneration Project is one notable exception.

### **The link to 1999**

All in all, Glasgow has had considerable success in consolidating tenemental and other historical areas, retaining a strong retail and commercial core, expanding cultural facilities. All this has contributed to the enormous improvement of Glasgow's image. What has not, however, been achieved is to stop the population decline and, again with a few notable exceptions, attract people back into the more central areas. Glasgow still loses population as a result of better workplaces being offered elsewhere. There are large underused and disused areas awaiting a new function. There is still no

integrated public transport system to combat car dependency (the tram project was ill-conceived and failed as a result of a considerable number of objections). Development was largely top down and characterised by the pursuit of individual issues and aims by individual agencies and departments (rather than an integrated approach in pursuit of a common goal); participation of communities in the regeneration process was generally limited to the work of Housing Associations and Co-operatives; the contribution of these as well as Umbrella Groups and other community groups was limited to a small range of housing related tasks and topics.

With the bid for the 1999 City of Architecture and Design, Glasgow firmly based its new regeneration approach on the involvement of communities, a new city-wide plan that co-ordinates earlier local plans, and the beginnings of a new city-wide urban design strategy. Glasgow's new beginning represents an important move away from individual non-related projects towards concerted and co-ordinated planning and action.

The articles for this issue were selected to give an indication of the way Glasgow has been evolving, particularly over the last decade. The choice of contributors was made not simply to illustrate projects that had been implemented. The objective was to attempt to link some of the initiatives, which had taken place prior to Glasgow 1999 with those, which were a direct result of the year of Architecture and Design.

This has been achieved through the inclusion of Crown Street and the City Plan. The description of the preparation of the new City Plan shows the steps which the city has been taking to co-ordinate the numerous local plans, which existed in one strategy document using the theme of 'connection'.

As with regeneration in many cities Glasgow has its 'flagship' projects, which The Lighthouse undoubtedly exemplifies. Millennium Spaces involves a series of spaces, designers and local people. Peter Richardson's description of one of these spaces at Possil, illustrates the product that has resulted and the design concept behind it. Complementing this is the process involved in the realisation of 'Homes for the Future', the view of the project manager providing a flavour of the complexities of the implementation process. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Pauline Gallacher and Anne Wallace illustrate how people have been involved in the range of initiatives which have taken place. The Education Programme and the Area Initiatives provide the forums for local inhabitants to participate in the future development of their city. #

# A Reconnected City?

Stephen Tucker

In May 1996, following local government reorganisation, the City of Glasgow established a dedicated Local Plans team. Having recently left Glasgow to take over as Stirling's new urban designer, Stephen Tucker explains the new direction the City followed to radically improve its record in statutory planning and his role in developing the new relationship that evolved between strategic planning and urban design.

## Introduction

In May 1996 Glasgow had 44 local plans, only 39 of which were adopted. All were at different timescales, covered different areas and had different development control policies. It is testament to the ambition of the City and the hard work of its planners and designers that it was able to achieve so much (the City of Culture, the Merchant City, the Crown Street Project) without any single, long term strategy for its physical development.

I was appointed to the Local Plan team in May 1996. Two years before, I had written a Masters Degree thesis on the need to produce a vision for the future of the City and had long harboured a desire to help write the Plan that would guide Glasgow toward the year 2000. Many of the conclusions of this thesis are now echoed in the draft plan. In July 1999, only three years on, the team is on the verge of achieving a revolution in the City's approach to statutory planning.

It was not an easy task. Indeed it has been a process fraught with difficulties that reflect the questions that people ask about the role of planning, and the future of urban regeneration and urban design. In other words, how do you incorporate vision and ambition into statutory planning? How do you get urban regeneration to think longer term? And what role has urban design in determining the future development of our cities and towns?

## The first step: a dedicated team

Our ideas began to formulate in early 1996 with the establishment of a Local Plan team which had a great mix of enthusiasm,

imagination, experience, excellent graphic and GIS support, and good flexible management.

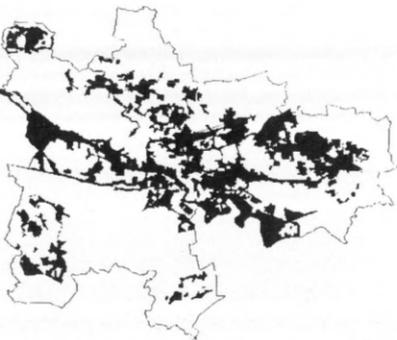
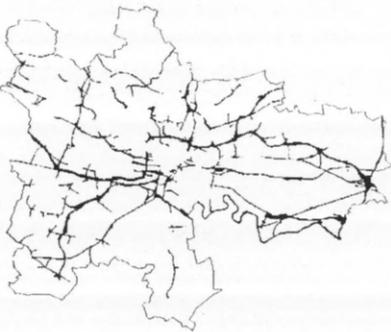
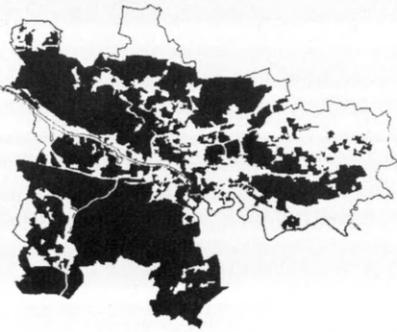
The first task facing the team was to clear up the mess of Glasgow's 44 old style Local Plans. In 1996, the average adoption rate was one per annum; with the arrival of the team this rate was improved to nearly four per annum. The adoption of more plans earned us the right to finish our research into best practice in metropolitan planning and further develop our own ideas. While we kept feeding the 44 plan system, we did not believe in it; the team held aspirations which went far beyond it.

## Glasgow's Local Plan Review

Our developing vision was that of a single plan. The bridge that we designed to enable this to happen was Glasgow's Local Plan Review: this split the City into five geographical sectors, North, South, East and West, and the City Centre. There was a very real fear in the team that a switch overnight, from 44 separate plans to one, would not be popular with local politicians and communities. But in fact, while people disagreed with some aspects of the content, the overwhelming response was a backing for a single City Plan.

The Review was designed to focus on particular problems and identify particular solutions. Glasgow has had a tendency to attempt to solve all its problems all of the time, spreading limited investment very thinly. This is one reason why big development opportunities, like those along the river and around the city centre, have taken an inordinate length of time to be delivered. We deliberately restricted our approach and identified only ten key physical challenges; these included the need to build new urban housing districts within the city, to develop more vacant land, to construct a modern integrated transportation system and to ensure a greater quality in what was developed. Interestingly, the final physical challenge was a commitment to achieving the principle of a 'reconnected city'. The Review clearly showed that these challenges could be countered by looking strategically at the whole city, over a much longer term than current initiatives allowed.

The Review was published in August 1998 and some 120 responses were received. While the major issues were seen as retailing and development in the green belt, the fundamental principle had been established that Glasgow needed a single, ambitious, physical plan. With this step complete, attention could turn fully to the development of Glasgow's first City Plan. It was here that urban design began to play a more significant and proactive role.



From top to bottom:

1. Nodes of Activity.
2. Stable Environments.
3. Physical Barriers.
4. The Gap in Glasgow's Built Environment.

## Looking abroad

Long before the publication of the review the team had researched the style and performance of plans in ten to fifteen cities across Europe. I personally had interviewed high ranking officers engaged in the delivery of UDP's and district wide plans in the UK and studied some of the best examples of metropolitan plans in continental cities. The results of the study were two fold: from the UK examples we learnt a great deal about the processing of single plans; and from those on the Continent we learned lessons on incorporating vision and ambition in long term plans.

Our greatest desire was to produce a plan that showed clearly the importance of vision and imagination to the long-term regeneration of Glasgow; one that could provide ambitious ideas but was capable of coming down to a local level and involving local people in their delivery; a plan which contained the best elements of both strategic planning and community regeneration.

## Rediscovering Glasgow through urban design

The team then focused in on the production of the finalised draft City Plan. Our instinct was that the development strategy should revolve around the theme of 'reconnection', but we needed detailed evidence that this was a valid principle on which to base a statutory document. In the last few weeks leading to the publication of the review, in an effort to try to see the city in a new way I had begun a survey of Glasgow's physical environment.

In our research of metropolitan plans in continental Europe, we had noted the emphasis placed upon building on areas of strength, on anchoring regeneration efforts in parts of the city where the physical environment worked well. We believed that regeneration in Glasgow could be made far more cost effective and sustainable in the long term, if it grew from the stable parts of the city and around nodes of activity. This was an important principle to establish because as well as coming up with a vision we had to show that it was capable of being delivered within increasingly limited budgets.

My survey identified the stable environments and the strong points that regeneration could be anchored to. Stable environments were environments where physical change was unlikely and the pedestrian felt comfortable and safe, and the strong points or 'Areas of Strength' occurred where a buzz of human activity took place within such a stable environment. The City's physical barriers had also been identified, for while roads, railways, canals and rivers form the

lifelines of the City, many of them, particularly the City's motorways, cause massive destruction within the urban fabric. The survey clearly showed a City characterised by outstanding but isolated environments, and dominated by large gaps; in other words a 'disconnected city'.

Proof that we could use these strengths was not restricted to our continental experience. Our own experience in Glasgow showed that local housing associations had been tying together the pieces of good environment that existed in Partick, Govan, Maryhill, Whiteinch and large parts of the East End, for years. That their success was only partial, was testament to the lack of resources and to the scale that these associations operated on, as opposed to the principle they were unconsciously delivering.

## 'Reconnecting Glasgow': a development strategy

The City Plan team were not the first people to perceive Glasgow as a disconnected urban area, but were the first to attempt to use this discovery as the basis of a statutory plan. This is precisely what makes the City Plan process in Glasgow distinctive, and worth learning from. It is an attempt to use a visionary if simple principle 'reconnection', as the basis for the development strategy of a statutory plan.

The survey of the physical environment had left us with a wealth of information. We had pinpointed the stable environments of the city (the parts of the city that worked) and the parts of the city that did not. In addition, we had identified the networks of activity, located around shops, pubs, public spaces and markets; almost always these were located along key arterial routes and were the strong points that we intended to anchor regeneration efforts onto.

We then divided the areas that did not work, into eight Key Development Areas and set about preparing non-statutory Action Plans for each of them. These fit together like a jigsaw and form the development strategy of the statutory City Plan.

Perhaps not surprisingly, these development areas were similar to many of the priority areas the city had been trying to regenerate for years. However, because our survey specifically focused on strengths and weaknesses in the physical environment as opposed to investigating social and economic need, a number of notable exceptions emerged. Large parts of the river front had now become priorities in the plan, as well as large areas of land to the south and east of the city centre. These areas had found it difficult to receive funding in the past because money was channelled toward need rather than opportunity.

By the time I left Glasgow in May 1999 the city had an "in house" draft plan that dealt with the entire urban area (its strengths and its weaknesses) and a principle, "reconnection", that could guide its regeneration.

### Implementing a concept

The first stage in each of the Action Plans is the consolidation of 'Areas of Strength', the local centres which lie along the arterial routes, and other nodes of activity. Making these areas more effective anchors for sustainable regeneration is critical to making the process of reconnection work. The obvious priorities for action will be those nodes of activity, which lie between stable parts of the city and the weaker areas.

Bearing in mind that there is a statutory process underway, it is difficult to go into the specifics of which nodes of activity will be regenerated first. The easiest way to imagine what could happen, is to take Glasgow's 'Homes for the Future' project as an example (see page 25). Imagine eight such projects across the city. If 'reconnection' were implemented in this strategic way, it would slowly spread regeneration in a natural and sustainable way throughout the urban area.

### Lessons for All

The aim is to put vision and ambition back into planning, to show the leaders of the City and the spending agencies that there is an alternative to the way things are being done and that that alternative is achieved through planning rather than despite it. While this belief is echoed in the excellent design, conservation and landscape strategies that the city also produced in 1999, the real prize remains the forthcoming statutory plan, which has the potential to pull everything together in one corporate document.

In my opinion, the move from 44 plans to one in such a short timescale was nothing short of miraculous. Similarly, if the city can hold onto the principle of reconnection throughout the statutory process, including the inquiry stage, then Glasgow's plan could answer many of the fundamental questions that exist on the future of metropolitan planning and on the strategic role of urban design.

Nowadays, the focus seems to be constantly on the short term, and on delivering development of any form, no matter what the quality. Yet evidence from abroad suggests that longer term planning of infrastructure and regeneration is the way ahead. Our research showed that the only effective way for cities and towns to compete in a global economy, is through



St George's Square, Glasgow.

ambitious long term planning that involves local communities.

This can only be achieved if cities are willing to design and implement a new kind of statutory plan which can offer regeneration a strategic long term vision displayed in an exciting three dimensional way. To achieve this, cities must rely on sound principles of urban design and must use their urban design staff in a proactive as well as reactive way.

For our discipline to realise its true potential, we all must attempt to bridge the gap between vision and statutory planning. In other words, whether we like it or not, we have to come into the real world of policy and budgets and show how a strategic physical vision can be an invaluable tool to the regeneration of our cities.

The next few months will see whether Glasgow goes down the road of such an ambitious plan. With pressures on jobs and services in the City, it is easy to see why it might err towards caution. However, I would argue that if planning is to survive and urban design to realise its true potential, we have to stop being that little bit over cautious. Instead, we must take every opportunity to show our leaders, local and national, that strategic urban design has a tremendous contribution to make to the ongoing development and reconstruction of our urban areas. #

With the Urban Renaissance now at the fore the Crown Street Project is being used as an exemplar of how regeneration in our cities should be undertaken.

Hutchesontown 'E' was the fifth phase of the post-war comprehensive redevelopment of the Gorbals slums. It was a major part of an almost ruthless dream to sweep away everything associated with the past and to herald in the brave new world of the car and a green city of high rise towers. Built in 1968, and centred on the main thoroughfare of Crown Street, it consisted of twelve linked deck-access blocks. Within nine years the first families were being moved out and by 1982 the blocks, known locally as the 'Dampies', were vacant due to incurable penetration dampness. In 1987, after a vigorous campaign by the local community, they were demolished leaving a 40 acre gap site in the heart of the Gorbals.

#### Partnership formed

In 1990 the Crown Street Regeneration Project was set up to fill the gap. It sought to bring new life and confidence to the Gorbals and build a new urban community right in the centre of the city by adopting a process of 'careful urban renewal'. The Project was formed by a partnership which brought together the expertise and resources of:

- The Glasgow Development Agency
- Glasgow City Council
- Scottish Homes
- The local community

#### Objectives

As well as orchestrating the development of a new community on the Hutchesontown 'E' site, the Project was given the aims of:

- making the Gorbals a place in which people wanted to live;
- developing a new and positive image for the Gorbals as a popular, balanced community;
- assisting in bringing new energy and growth into the Gorbals economy;
- integrating the new development into the social, economic and physical fabric of the existing community; and
- providing solutions that would stand the test of time.

From the outset, a steering group made up of representatives from all the partners was set up to oversee and monitor the Project.

This group has met on a quarterly basis and continues to deal with all the major decisions regarding the implementation of the Project.

#### Masterplan

In order to stimulate ideas for the form of the new development, a nationwide Urban Design Competition was held. From four finalists, Piers Gough of CZWG Architects was chosen to work with the Project Team to draw up a Masterplan for the site. Although this was not intended to be a 'blueprint' for future development, outline planning consent was granted in order to provide a context for the necessary infrastructure works and for a phased approach to the development. In retrospect obtaining this consent has proved very useful.

The Masterplan proposed the creation of a mix of new development uses to help create a revived Gorbals Community. It included:

- almost 1,000 new houses (75% for sale and 25% for rent)
- a new business centre
- a new local shopping centre
- a budget hotel
- some small office accommodation
- some student housing
- some new light industrial units
- a new local park.

The aim was to use the Crown Street development to help stitch the area back together again by providing a new heart for the Gorbals, one which would revitalise the local economy and raise confidence in the area.

#### Implementation

The Masterplan proposals were divided up into manageable development packages which were released in a phased manner. Each individual package was the subject of Developer/Architect Competitions, based on detailed Urban Design Briefs and fixed land prices, so that the submission could be judged on their design proposals, build quality and public sector grant requirement.

#### Long term management

Each development package was sold by way of a Feu Disposition which have strict conditions regarding future management and maintenance of the development. The Project has retained the Feu Superiorship to all of the development land in order that these conditions can be properly monitored and enforced. The ultimate aim is to transfer this Superiority to a Trust Company which is owned and run by the residential and business community within Crown Street, and can inherit the role of overseeing the

development of the Project in the long term. The Trust will take over the monitoring and enforcement role in a staged manner beginning in the Autumn of 1999.

Five principles were developed within Crown Street by which the development has gained repute; they are :

**The Liveable City**

People live in cities for a number of reasons; some crave the thrust and energy of a big city, while others live there under duress. Urban life should, therefore, have vitality, but also dignity and calm. Its hard edged quality should not be emasculated, but there should also be the alternative of a softer retreat.

**The Grid**

The grid iron pattern of streets is a fundamental element of Glasgow's urban character. The re-introduction of a grid into the Crown Street site allows the street pattern to make better connections with the surrounding area, and thereby repair a hole in the urban fabric.

**The Block**

The street block helps to make the city a liveable place. The urbanity of the public street can be counterbalanced by a secure and peaceful private space. Every house can have a public front and a private rear, with no ambiguity as to which is which, and each can share a large and totally secure communal garden at the centre of the urban block.

**The Street**

Historically, the street has been the basic element of urban form. Following its demise during the 1960s, it is being rediscovered as we learn again how to create 'joined up' architecture. A hierarchy of multi-functional streets forms the basic urban structure of the new Gorbals, most of which are much wider than normal in order to accommodate a boulevard of mature trees and car parking at the centre. Crown Street itself forms the main spine of the development with the shopping at its northern end and the new Gorbals Park at the southern end.

**The Tenement**

The tenement is Scotland's, especially Glasgow's, traditional building form. A desire to recreate a strongly urban character in the Gorbals, while also providing housing for young families, has led to a rethink of the tenement concept. The ground and first floors of a 4-storey tenement have been used to create 3-bedroom maisonettes, each with their own front and back door and a private rear garden. The two upper floors can then be one, two and three bedroom flats accessed by a separate communal stairway.



**Progress to date**

In 1992 the first residential development packages were released nationally by way of a two stage Developer/Architect Competition. From a final short-list of four, two winners were selected:

- Miller Homes with The Holmes Partnership (Architects)
- Wimpey Homes with Cooper Cromar (Architects).

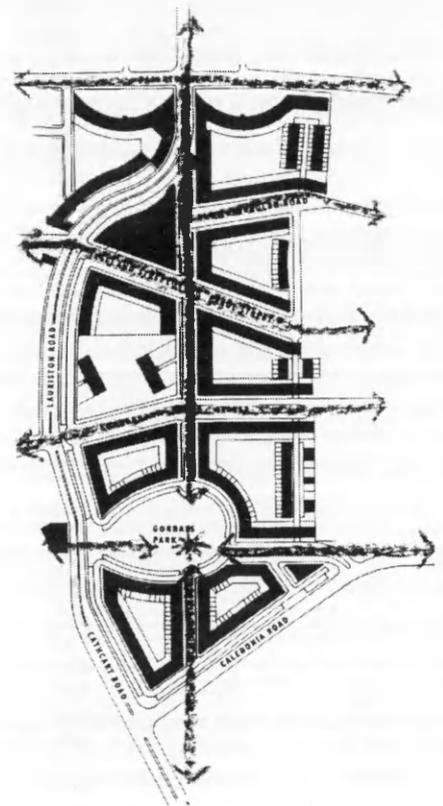
A second competition was held in 1994 for Phase 2B and it was won by Tay Homes with Hypostyle Architects. As the programme of development continues other buildings have been constructed such as a new local supermarket and 10 local shops. The community that was shattered is once again beginning to form a certain cohesion.

With Phases 3 & 4 being won by Stewart Milne/Holmes Partnership and Miller Homes/Cooper Cromar respectively the development has reached a critical mass. All homes built have been sold and a strong secondary market has been established.

The new Gorbals Park was opened at Christmas 1998 and Phases 5 & 6 were due to start on site in late August 1999. When these are complete there will be over eight hundred new homes with almost 80% being in private ownership. The socially rented accommodation has been developed by New Gorbals Housing Association utilising the services of various Architects and comprise nearly two hundred homes.

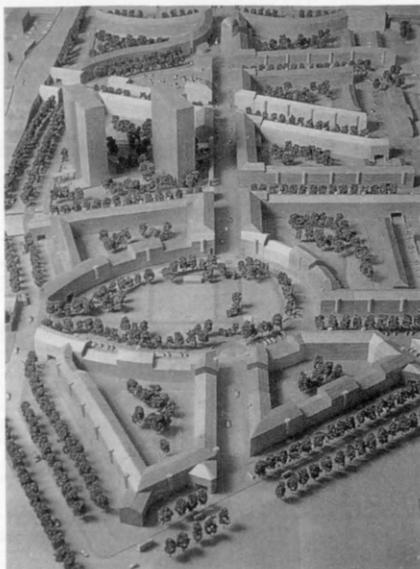
**Economic development**

For any area renewal to be successful it cannot be residentially driven only. With the new housing having established the area as once again desirable, the commercial development is coming forward. The international hotel chain Howard Johnson



Top: Award-winning housing at St Ninian Terrace. The Holmes Partnership for Miller Holmes.  
Middle: The CZWG Masterplan.

Above: Social Housing at Benny Lynch Court. Cooper Cromar Architects for the New Gorbals Housing Association.  
Top right: Model of CZWG masterplan.



will build a 115 bed hotel along with 200 student residences for the Glasgow Nautical College. Railtrack will refurbish twelve railway arches for small businesses and a new 3000 m<sup>2</sup> business centre is being created to aid start-up ventures. Finally with a new District Library and more shops planned to be ready in the summer of 2000, the 'Urban Village' concept is coming to fruition.

#### Conclusion

A great deal has been written about the Gorbals of Glasgow, most of it incorrect, but the Crown Street Project has proved that by enlightened development and adequate resource huge benefit can accrue to a once blighted area. The whole Gorbals is once again being viewed as a desirable place to live and areas such as Queen Elizabeth Square, Oatlands and Laurieston are now viewed as real development opportunities. If Crown Street and the new Gorbals is sustained over the next 50 years this Project will have succeeded where so many have failed and that will truly be '*no mean achievement*'. #

# Homes for the Future

Norrie Innes

#### The beginning

In 1996, Glasgow won a coveted architectural prize - the title of City of Architecture and Design 1999. Traditionally, of course, Glasgow was home to some of Scotland's great architectural names, but some felt its more modern architectural achievements were perhaps less worthy of note than the title implies.

Since then, Glasgow's architects, housing agencies, homebuilders and development agencies have worked together to improve the overall standard and bring life back to Glasgow's inner city. It was with these more recent achievements in mind that Glasgow 1999 came up with the idea for a demonstration housing project to celebrate the city's reign during this year-long festival.

Inspired by the Deutscher Werkbund's 1927 scheme of experimental housing at Weissenhof, the idea was to see internationally renowned architects create signature buildings for Glasgow. However, the final result would go beyond this, taking Glasgow's pioneering experiments in housing to an even higher level that has also seen new standards of participation. All the local regeneration, housing and planning agencies would be involved - but private developers would take the lead.

Having achieved funding from Glasgow Development Agency and been encouraged by the main potential funders of the project, Scottish Homes, the Core Group led by Glasgow 1999 and including ROCK DCM, set about identifying a site.

#### Site selection

At first, the preferred locations included the Gorbals, Shuttle Street and Partick. News of the scheme quickly filtered out and, as one of the first big ideas to come from Glasgow 1999 that involved actual buildings, there was great enthusiasm.

The Gorbals, however, had become the focus of so much planned regeneration that there was a general consensus for a "*new site, new move*". This would allow energies and minds to focus on a fresh challenge. Of course, the chosen location would have to be in an area of relatively low land values as well as a brownfield site to attract Glasgow Development Agency funding and conform to government policy.

During the initial site appraisal exercise for Homes for the Future, Bellahouston Park and Govan were also looked at, but the strict criterion of 'deliverability' and the attraction of an East End location led to the present site which was not one of the original five. It was felt that buildings here would make a significant contribution to the regeneration of

the city. The site is right on Glasgow Green and only a quarter of a mile from the edge of the Merchant City and the city centre.

**Site remediation**

ROCK DCM would manage the site remediation works for Glasgow Development Agency and apply for planning permission. A site investigation was carried out to check ground conditions and existing services in the area while the environmental audit looked at, amongst other things, signs of any ground contamination. Following consultations with the Public Utilities and Railtrack the actual remediation works were completed.

**The masterplan**

The design phase of process began with two initial stages - the appointment by competition of a masterplanner, and a further competition for the design of the individual buildings.

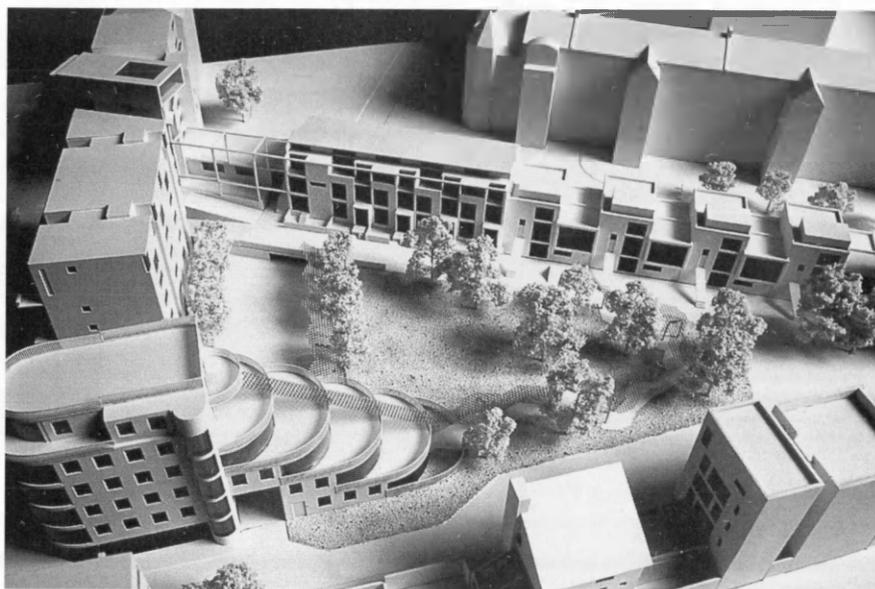
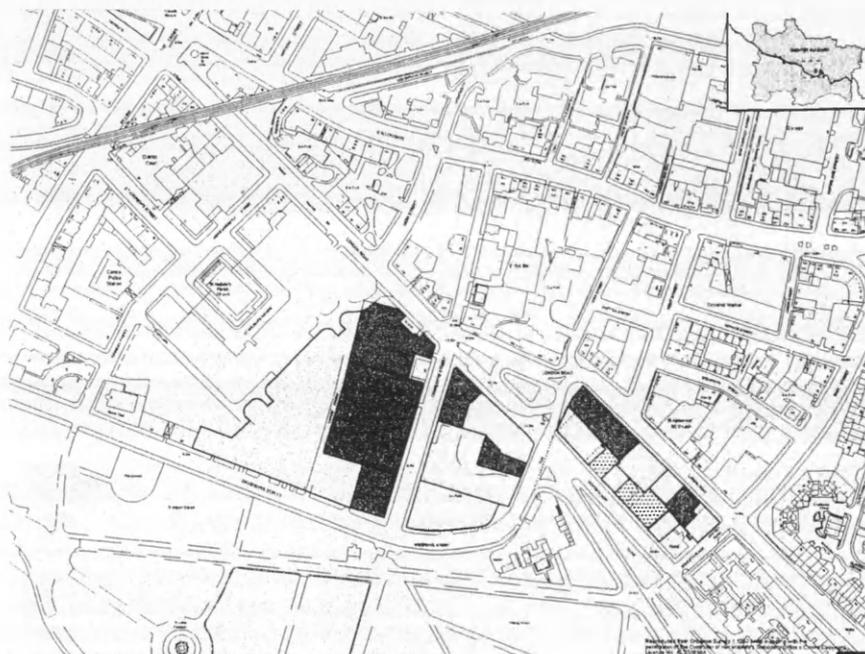
The masterplanner's role was to create the overall vision for the site, including the size, placing and type of buildings along with the open spaces. Page and Park prepared the winning scheme in collaboration with ROCK DCM, Ove Arup, Chestertons and Vincent Wang Developments. It proposed a gentler mixture of terraced, 'villa' and larger scale flatted urban apartment blocks filling the three sites but offering a flexible collection of buildings set around 'semi-private', rather than completely open gardens.

Development parcels were identified that represented a variety of housing and mixed use opportunities. Page and Park also drew up design guidelines in consultation with Glasgow 1999. The object was to create visual coherence and an overall sense of appropriateness.

The masterplanners were at pains to point out that these guidelines did not preclude the introduction of landmark or iconic buildings. The plan also specified landscape principles, and here again there was a wish to create 'semi-private' parks in several of the land parcels. There was also guidance on permitted densities.

**Developers' submissions**

A second stage of submissions was then invited to show the design work for the site. Working within the terms of the masterplan, developers were asked to team up with architects to provide a range of house types. Three architects were to be involved in each submission - one from Glasgow, a UK architect, and an international designer. The resulting submissions were tremendously



Top: Master Plan Area.  
Above: Homes for the Future Model.



Two views of housing under construction.

varied and exciting and from it, rather than select a single entry, the judging panel chose those of the two main developers, John Dickie Developments and The Burrell Company, along with three additional submissions from Mactaggart and Mickel, Logan Construction Management and the New Housing Association.

The job of the masterplanners, Page and Park Architects, and project managers, ROCK DCM, was now to put together a scheme that would provide mixed housing in a dynamic, creative and realistic package. ROCK DCM would carry out a Financial Appraisal in conjunction with Chestertons.

Five developers and seven architects were chosen to deliver ten buildings. Mactaggart and Mickel with Wren Rutherford, Thenew with Ian Ritchie Architects and Logan with RMJM joined the teams led by Dickie with both Elder and Cannon and Rick Mather Architects, and Burrell with the Ushida Findlay Partnership and McKeown Alexander, in the shaping of the site.

### Statutory consents

Planning permission for the assembled project was obtained in only *six weeks* - a remarkably short period of time. The key was down to the Core Group, whose individual partners worked together extremely well. The result was that planners, roads engineers and funding bodies had already been fully involved with the process, contributing to a ground-breaking 'planning day' held in April 1998. Fast track, quality building solutions and construction strategies were all used.

A limited mix of external materials - white render, red cedar and steel was agreed in order to achieve cohesion without uniformity. Only one building, Ian Ritchie's block for Thenew Housing Association, sets itself apart with its brilliant use of copper cladding.

### Development agreement

The next hurdle was to make everyone sign up to a unique and complex Development Agreement. This would take the form of a legally binding document committing everyone to a programme and financial package for the delivery of the project. The design of the buildings and external works would have to be of the highest quality as well as both innovative and energy efficient. Consultations were carried out with the Energy Design Advisory Service at Strathclyde University regarding the last point.

Crucially, the Development Agreement would also set out key dates for the completion of various stages of the work. ROCK DCM would also play an essential role in ensuring that all the external works packages were finished in time for the opening of the Expo by Donald Dewar on 1st July 1999.

### Site management

The nature of this complex project, involving so many developers and architects, has required careful project management. ROCK DCM has been responsible for the co-ordination of both the design and construction processes. On site this was made possible by the establishment of a site management structure. Site Rules and Regulations were formulated to create efficient and strong procedures for day to day working practice and a unique contractual framework was drawn up to allow the external works to be completed. This was necessary due to the arrangement of the site, which was broken up into so many different land parcels.

ROCK DCM was the "*glue and the gloss*" for the external works, which were essential to the delivery of the project. It has proved very demanding and there was a period of 48-

hour working in the lead up to the opening. This highlights the most important ingredient that you can bring to any project - *commitment*.

### The result

The result is a truly different development, comprising flats, townhouses, loft apartments and duplexes, each with its own style. These might be eclectic, but the building materials maintain a sense of cohesion. The aim is to combine innovative architecture with urban renewal, and to provide an inspirational model for urban housing in the UK and beyond. The project also explores new responses to the changes in urban living, tackling issues such as changing family structures, environmental and energy concerns, and designing for special needs.

With a mix of private and public housing, Homes for the Future will breathe new life back into the city, helping to knit together the urban fabric by creating a new community and regenerating the East End of Glasgow. On the open market each one has been sold at incredibly high prices for the area. Others have been grant-assisted from Scottish Homes and still others will be made available for social rented housing.

A primary purchase agreement was drawn up, meaning that these selected homes on the development could only be sold to first time buyers, people on the council housing list and housing association tenants during the first three months. Indeed, part of the design brief spelled out that the ultimate aim was to create a development which would bring a new urban community to a part of the city in dire need of assistance. Phase one has already been a great success, with the total investment from the public and private sector at around £10 million. The development of the site will continue beyond this initial phase and we anticipate that up to 300 homes will be available to buy or rent by 2005. The future for these looks equally bright. #

# 1999 Millennium Spaces

Peter Richardson

## Initiation

In 1996, Glasgow 1999 City of Architecture and Design organised the Transformations on the Edge workshop from which Fruin Street Millennium Space arose. The aspiration was to create 15 new public spaces for Glasgow neighbourhoods combining art, architecture and landscape architecture of the highest quality. The concept provided an opportunity for Housing Associations to develop peripheral areas with the same standard of urban transformation that is typical for the city centre.

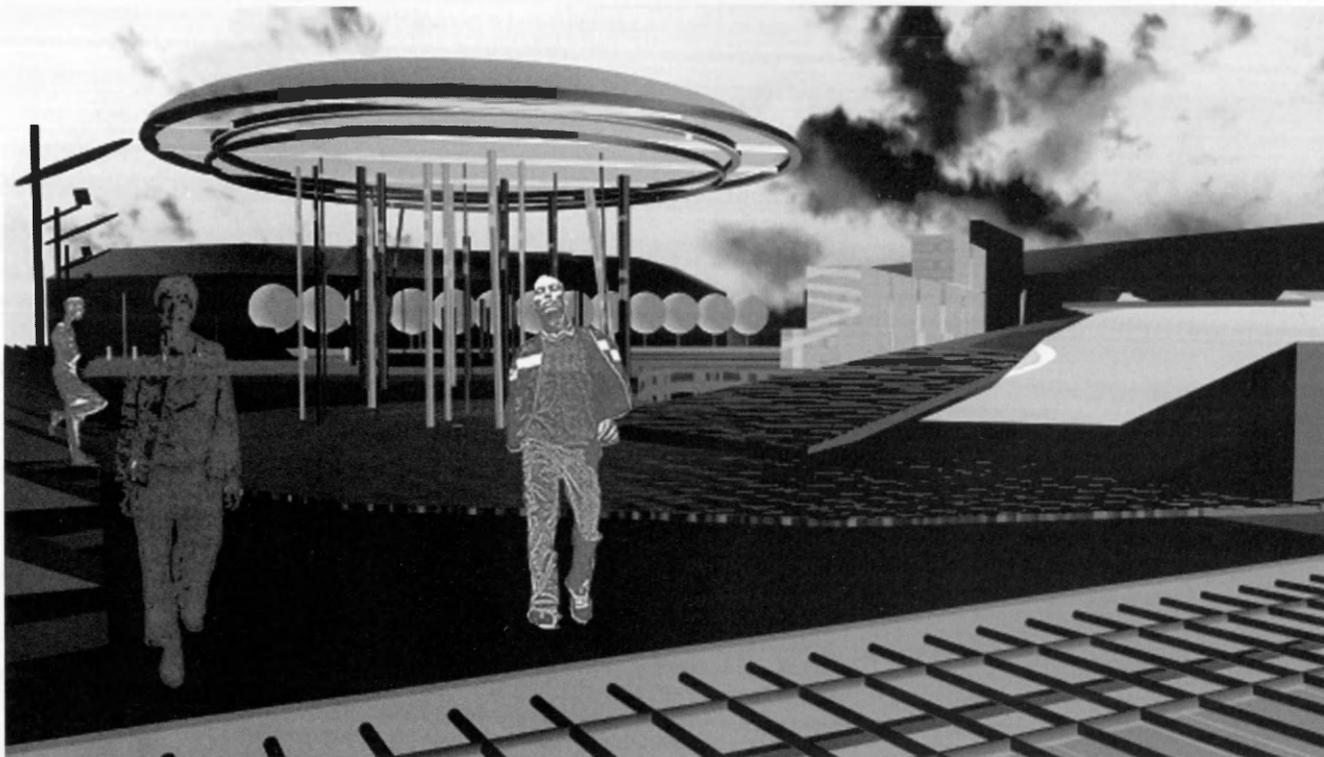
## Development

The project was developed in close consultation with Hawthorn Housing Association. Zoo Architects organised events to create community awareness and support. A presentation was made to the local primary school of computer generated 3D images which were easily interpreted by the school children familiar with computer game imagery. The same slides were projected on the site, inviting the local community to attend. Workshops involving the artist with groups of local children gave the design team additional information as to how the space could be developed. Following a feasibility study and applications for funding the design team was set up. It included the following:  
Rock DCM - project managers / quantity surveyors.  
Robert Johnstone Associates-structural engineers.  
Henderson Warnock- mechanical and electrical engineers.  
Visual Arts Project - the public arts agency who organised the employment of the artist David Shrigley.

## Description

The project creates a new public space in Possil that contributes to its regeneration by providing a range of specially designed play spaces for all age groups whilst offering the local community a new focus and identity.

The perimeter of the site is defined by a channel, which drains it. Its steel mesh cover deters dogs from entering and is a surface barrier to playing children. Within this rectangle the site is divided into two parts: hard and soft with a ramped route between. The interstitial spaces become designed places for play activities. A combination of low and high technologies and contemporary play ideas are used in these zones. Along with interactive lighting and a water feature the project aim is to challenge traditional ideas of play spaces.



The hard landscaped concrete surface offers an area for cycling and skating. The surface steps towards the corner and is broken into geometric planes of colour and texture. The soft landscaped area is contour modelled exploiting the site's change in levels, creating profiled sculpted edges and forming sound buffers to the neighbouring houses.

The ramped route between landscaped areas reinforces the original track through the derelict site between the housing and the local shop. The retaining walls are constructed using gabion baskets and concrete interlocking walls, typically used at the side of motorways. Carved out of the soft landscape are two play basins- the first forming a designated toddlers play area, the second a play area for older children. The canopy structure on the corner, opposite the local shop, offers shelter and acts as a focal point for the site. Play items include a steel skate ramp, a graffiti wall, climbing wall and a basketball hoop.

Text and images of encyclopaedic information form the majority of the artwork which are shot blasted and inscribed in the surface of the concrete. David Shrigley also created a sculpture of a stone head inserted among the rocks in the gabion baskets and a pair of stone feet on a monuments plinth.

#### **Project statement**

These individual concepts in their entirety sum up the ambitions of Hawthorn Housing Association and the local community in the creation of their own public space which is both stimulating and unifies a sense of community. #

*Top:* 3D computer model image.

*Above:* Possil Park model - Zoo Architects.

© Andrew Lee

# The Lighthouse

Stuart McDonald

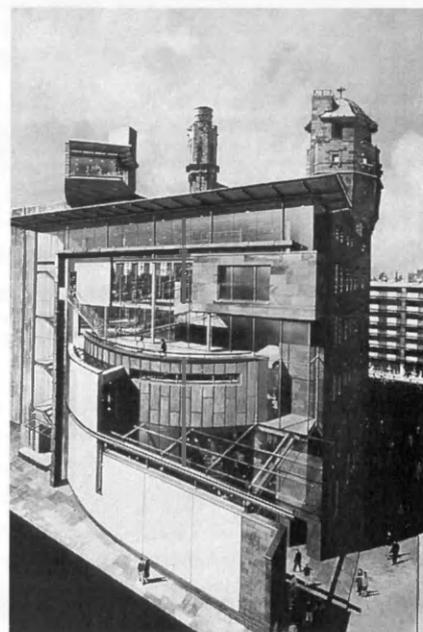
Reaching out and drawing in, the Lighthouse – like Patrick Geddes' Watchtower – is a useful idea, especially given the current popular interest in design matters. The opening of the Lighthouse as Scotland's Centre for Architecture, Design and the City is, therefore, timely, not least because Enric Miralles' vision for the Edinburgh Parliament building has captured the public imagination, opening up a debate about architecture and democracy and the nature of cultural identity.

At the same time, people are questioning the relationship between architects and clients, cities and citizenship and how we can negotiate the future. Architecture and design, as the most visible and accessible of art forms, certainly seem to be climbing up the agenda.

With its mission to educate, to engage, to outreach and innovate, the Lighthouse is particularly well placed to address the contemporary need to involve the public in issues to do with the built environment and made objects. The Lighthouse sees architecture and design as social, educational and economic concerns and Page and Parks' conversion of the Herald building facilitates that aspiration, superbly. The industrial toughness of the Mackintosh building translates well into flexible spaces for a range of purposes - education, exhibitions, conferences, Design into Business, Mackintosh interpretation cafes and a shop. Also, Page and Parks' two new extensions, one nicknamed the "battery pack" which has created the entrance, and additional exhibition space, the other called the "Dow" after the building which was demolished to make way for office, store and workshop space, have added considerably to the Lighthouse's muscle in terms of circulation and additional smaller galleries.

### Model of partnership

The Lighthouse development is a model of partnership with contributions from the Scottish Arts Council Lottery, Heritage Lottery, Historic Scotland, the European Regional Development Fund, the Glasgow



Top: The Lighthouse scheme model.

Middle: The original Mackintosh building.

Above: Image of the finished scheme.

# Area Festivals

Anne Wallace & Pauline Gallacher

Development Agency, Glasgow City Council and, not least, facilitation from the Glasgow 1999 Festival Company. This pulling together of resources towards a mutually agreed objective, exemplifies the direction the Lighthouse might take in the future.

## Living experience

Debates about the value of architecture centres focus on the fact that architecture is physical, environmental; it is out there. Architecture cannot necessarily be experienced in the same way as fine art in a gallery. The Lighthouse offers an architectural experience in itself. The way the Centre is sensed by visitors is a formative one. You enter through contemporary glass and steel, then ascend the building by escalator moving past traditional materials – sandstone, tiles, brick. The effect of the tactile surfaces making up the back of the Mackintosh building is strong and offers a brilliant contrast to the lightness of the newer materials of the “battery pack” This intimate sensation of the building’s construction is even more forceful as you climb the original tower. Becoming aware of old and new, the sensuousness of the materials, stylistic differences, changes in building technology and the sheer physicality of the architecture is unavoidable.

This induction into the world of architecture through real experience is continued when the visitor climbs out onto either the old tower or new viewing platform. Visitors can look out over the city Mackintosh and his Victorian and Edwardian peers helped create. Alternatively, the history of architecture can be enjoyed in rooftop microcosm from David Hamilton’s classical Royal Exchange to Wyllie Shanks’ Corbusier-like College of Building and Printing. And, as well as interpretative materials relating to this experience, the Lighthouse has created a guide to its near environment, reinforcing the uniqueness of Glasgow’s grid plan. The Lighthouse also offers novel virtual experiences – Strathclyde University’s ABACUS computer model of the city, Glasgow School of Art’s Digital Design Studio interactive about Glasgow’s industrial design heritage.

## Education centre

Public engagement with architecture and design is expanded through the purpose designed education centre, one of the largest of its kind, which, with its range of spaces, will allow visitors to play and learn in creative ways. It is in education and community outreach especially that the Lighthouse hopes to distinguish itself, working with the public on real design problems in the real world, building on the success of Glasgow 1999’s education and initiatives programmes. The Lighthouse policy about people being involved with architecture and design in ways that are entertaining and educational, applies equally to exhibitions. The aim of this programme is to make exhibitions interactive and to complement them with workshops, lectures and other activities and to operate at a number of levels, maximising access.

All of this sets an agenda with a number of inter-related themes – the learning city, the creative city, the connected city. Permeating these is the recognition that people are the key resources in the sustainability of our cities. The Lighthouse will communicate this agenda working with its partners both in Scotland and abroad. #

Glasgow won the title of UK City of Architecture and Design 1999 against competition from around 20 cities. The Arts Council brief was simple - the effective communication of architecture and design to the widest possible audience. Glasgow’s achievement in engaging its citizens in the process of urban renewal was in large measure responsible for earning it the title, and this broad, cultural remit underlies the whole programme.

Glasgow 1999’s Area Festivals of Architecture and Design have three aims:

- to celebrate the huge range of Architecture & Design projects generated within the community, supported by Glasgow 1999 itself or others;
- to communicate to all Glaswegians major projects - eg the Lighthouse, Homes for the Future, the many exhibitions;
- to deliver events which are attractive, accessible and fun in their own terms, and appropriate to local circumstances.

## Community projects

The Partnership Fund and the ‘What’s Your Problem?’ projects provide the core content of the 1999 Area Festivals, complemented by the projects sustained by the Education Team. The Partnership Fund, open to all, has supported around 100 projects, ranging from doo-cot (pigeon loft) design to a stunning lighting scheme for the giant Cranhill Water Tower in a housing scheme on the edge of the city. An access guide, a study of architectural sculpture, tours of social housing, therapeutic gardens: the range of applicants, the type of projects and ‘reach’ throughout the city has well matched the ambitions of the initiative.

‘What’s Your Problem’ was a ‘dating agency’ for community groups and design-orientated college and university departments, and one which it is hoped will provide a basic model for future development. Relieved of even the need to propose a defined project, groups were free to describe a ‘problem’ which was then taken up and developed as part of the student course work. The ‘problems’ presented ranged from the lack of stylish clothing for wheelchair-bound women to the unsightly boundary railings at a community



Top: Cranhall Water Tower Project.

Middle: Royston spire.

Above: Lochend Rd mural, Easterhouse.

facility.

It was not sufficient to limit the benefits of these valuable projects simply to those participating. The wider community needed to know, both on a practical level - ("where can I obtain the access guide?"), and also on the more subtle level of its contribution to community achievement - ("the people of the East End did all this?").

### The major 1999 projects

The basic premise was simple: Glasgow 1999 belongs to all Glaswegians and every effort must be made to maximise awareness, and remove obstacles to participation. Thus all the Area Festivals promote the major projects in two particular ways: The Design Capsule "something between a caravan, a Tardis and a bouncy castle" is a mobile unit which tours local neighbourhoods for a fortnight before each Festival. On board is a colourful exhibition, communicating in plain language the full range of 1999's endeavours, from the Lighthouse to the Glasgow Collection. The unit is staffed and its whole purpose is to communicate and involve, and to offer, among other things, participation in the free guided bus tours from each area organised for the Festival in collaboration with Strathclyde University's Senior Studies Institute.

### The Festivals themselves

How does one communicate architecture and design in areas where the preoccupations are jobs, housing and the safety of children? Dumbing down, inappropriate language, complete irrelevance - the pitfalls are many. The strategy - having worked hard on the solid core of development projects discussed above - has to be one of the light touch, the combination of good fun and serious intent.

### 4 festivals, 4 months, 4 themes

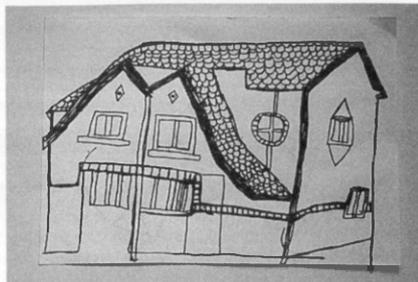
The city was divided into four quadrants, and each Festival, a month in duration, has a theme which provides a focus for the main Festival day. Thus, in September, in the West of the city, the theme is 'Producing the Goods'. The centre piece of the Festival day is a specially commissioned 'Classic Car Boot Sale'. Product design will be animated by actors 'selling' classic junk from their car boots, in a zany and interactive way. Exhibitions of local projects, dance, music and local radio complete the picture, but the event requires this additional 'take' on a subject many find difficult to approach.

If the underlying principle of 1999 is cultural change, and the challenge to this extent an educational one, then this must be achieved by endowing people with an enthusiasm for our basic message; that an understanding of

design in its widest application is life enhancing and empowering. It is not enough to tell people what is good for them - hence the idea of festival, of celebrating what our city is, what we have done and what our city might become. If, by painting a street red (not one of our current plans, but it has appeal) we suddenly, for the first time 'read' the street and become critically conscious of it, then the 1999 project is advanced. If, in noticing an enigmatic sculpture appear overnight in a piece of wasteland, we focus on that space, its industrial past and its new role in the inner city, we are beginning to interrogate the city in a new way. If 1999 itself, this high profile and high style organisation, has made it its business to organise local festivals in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the city, then maybe it has demonstrated that there is something about local struggles to make communities stronger and to provide better environments which deserves the attention of the outside world and is indeed worth celebrating.

Much is made of the legacy (or lack of it) left in the wake of large cultural events. It is easy enough to count heads at concerts or exhibitions, far more difficult to assess how individual hearts and minds are affected, and how the sum of small attitudinal shifts creates a felt cultural change.

In one way, 1999's exhortation is a simple one; open your eyes to the world around you. It may be beautiful, or scandalously ugly, but it has all been formed by human intervention. If we are investing our hopes in a long term educational process, then the first step towards change is that act of critical seeing. #



Left: Drawing by primary school child exploring his built environment.



Right: Window design at a Glasgow secondary school.

What does architecture and the built environment mean to young people? Many see architecture as being about impressive buildings and expensive homes, and architects as remote professionals who design only for the very rich and can be recognised by their stylish clothes. It is assumed that all architects are male.

Teaching of the built environment has suffered through the emphasis placed on the natural environment and all things green. So where to begin?

#### Artists in residence

The idea of artists in residencies in schools is not new, but to undertake a programme which places artists, designers and architects working with pre-fives through to higher education students and leading them through the design process is ambitious to say the least. The programme was set in motion two years ago when a database of over two hundred practitioners was amassed which included cv's and folios of work.

Schools throughout Glasgow were contacted with a view to undertaking a residency. Many responded and were matched with a designer or architect. An initial meeting and exchange of contracts established ground rules; in particular that the residency was as much for staff development as it was for the pupils. One of the main aims of the project was that teachers could be given the skills and confidence to deliver a design or built environment education which could be sustained and developed over the years.

And what of the residencies themselves? To date almost two hundred have been completed. They range from nursery children carrying out a survey on windows in their area to secondary pupils redesigning their school entrance which developed when a visiting architect could not find his way into the school. This particular project moved from prototype to reality when the Construction Industry Training Board offered their support in building the entrance.

New library areas have been designed and built, playground areas evaluated and redesigned as well as studies in design disciplines in jewellery, fashion, theatre, product design and graphics. All residencies have been documented and evaluated; it is important to adapt and improve residencies and to get the views of the participants - designers, teachers and children.

Nursery, Primary, Special Needs and Secondary teachers of Art and Design, Technical subjects and Home Economics have benefited from In Service lead by professional designers and from curriculum aid materials which support a wide range of exhibitions within Glasgow 1999.

In October of this year young people from seven countries will gather at The Lighthouse, Scotland's Centre for Architecture Design and the City to work with designers to design an International cafe.

Support from the R.I.A.S. and in particular from the Glasgow Institute of Architects has been crucial to the success of the programme. There has been a great willingness from architects to enter the sometimes unpredictable world of education and to embrace the challenges of working with young children. As well as residency support the G.I.A. has provided architects to walk groups around and interpret the annual G.I.A. awards exhibition, led workshops at the Architecture and Democracy conference which looked at the design of the new Scottish parliament building, presented evenings for teachers 'Architects Talking' and generally been supportive in raising awareness of all things architectural. The R.I.A.S. provided tickets for pupils and teachers to attend the recent conference 'From the City to the Spoon' during which young people could mix with design gurus such as Richard Seymour and world famous architects such as Nigel Coates.

The extensive programme will continue until the end of 1999 when the legacy will be continued by The Lighthouse. A dedicated education floor will ensure that Scotland's young people grow up with a sound understanding and appreciation of design and the built environment. #

# Darlaston Town Centre

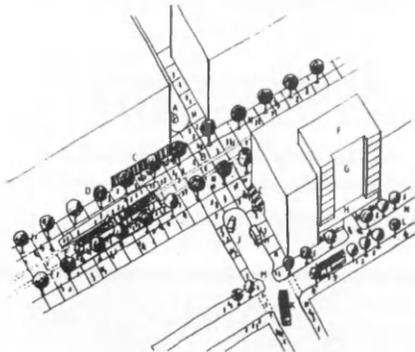
Lesley

## Introduction

There has been much debate in the professional press as to whether the Urban Task Force (UTF) succeeds with its remit; some have even asserted that there is nothing new in it. It may be a highly publicised affirmation of the approaches to urban design led regeneration that those of us already understand and yet are all too often lost in the development process. As we become more aware of the pressing need for sustainability there has been increasing focus on the role of town centres, expressed through central government revisions of planning policy guidance. This is beginning to be taken on board at a regional and local level by the new regional development agencies and by local authorities who recognise the need to develop a new direction in the way that they manage their town centres into the next millennium. This article explores the approach to developing such direction for town centres that Taylor Young advocate, looking in particular at a recently completed study of Darlaston Town Centre, and relating this to the UTF report. Like the latter, it may be that the approach serves to illustrate the applicability and relevance of various strands of best practice, rather than introducing it wholly.

## Darlaston town centre





reduction of on-street non-residential parking.

- b) Experimental Saturday road closures combined with shoppers' buses to test public reaction in Kings Road, Oxford Street and Regent Street.
- c) Permanent closure to traffic in Soho and Covent Garden, and partially Trafalgar Square.
- d) Overall reduction in traffic speeds to 20mph, improving walking and cycling conditions.

### Year 5

Public Transport improvements continue

- a) Second tram line opens from Paddington to Liverpool Street. Relieves Central Line and reduces need for Crossrail (at a fraction of cost).
- b) Servicing now from all peripheral roads of all 4 zones.
- c) All taxis to be non-polluting (run on CNG or other fuel). Operate from taxi stands (like Paris) adjacent to tube stations.
- d) Reduced on-street parking for non-residents.
- e) Pavement widening and tree-planting within the centre.

### Year 7

Reduced parking in centre

- a) Circle Line frequency increased to 3 minutes with disabled lifts to all platforms. Improved pedestrian access to all stations within a 5 minute walk.
- b) Central Area tube line refurbishing complete.
- c) Off-street car parks open at 10 am. Some multi-storeyed car parks converted into flats. Cycle parks and short-term car and cycle-hire at ground level.
- d) East-west tram line continued to Shepherd's Bush.
- e) Electronic road-pricing eliminates road cordon tolls. Drivers pay for mileage



#### Left page

Top: Contemporary Darlaston.

Bottom: Vision for future Darlaston.

Above: Vacant shops in Darlaston town centre today.

large number of workers located nearby. This is a trend that has continued until the early 90s recession from which the town has never really recovered. Closures of large factories in the vicinity have seriously affected trade in the town centre.

Retail in the town centre had been dominated by the 70,000 sq. ft. Asda store that was developed in the 1980s. Of typically bland modernist design and accompanied by a two-tier car park this large store dominated the small town centre both physically and economically whilst it has also anchored trade for the small businesses that occupy the rest of the centre. More recently however Asda decided that this store was not trading effectively and decided to relocate out-of-town. Planning permission was refused for the out-of-town site and during the process of appeal (which was also refused) Asda closed the Darlaston store. The store has remained vacant for the past two years. Asda still hold the lease and redevelopment of the site has remained stagnant. This has had an obvious and severe effect on trade in the town centre with various of the small businesses forced to close creating many vacant units in the centre today. Other traders are insisting that they cannot remain after their current leases expire in 2002-3 unless the situation improves. There is a clearly an urgent need for action.

#### The process

Taylor Young worked closely with GVA Grimley and the client to produce five development options for the town centre, including proposals for the thirteen sites identified in the Community Vision. Public consultation was undertaken to identify the buildings and spaces that local people valued and wished to retain in the town. Important pedestrian linkage routes were also identified. This, together with an urban

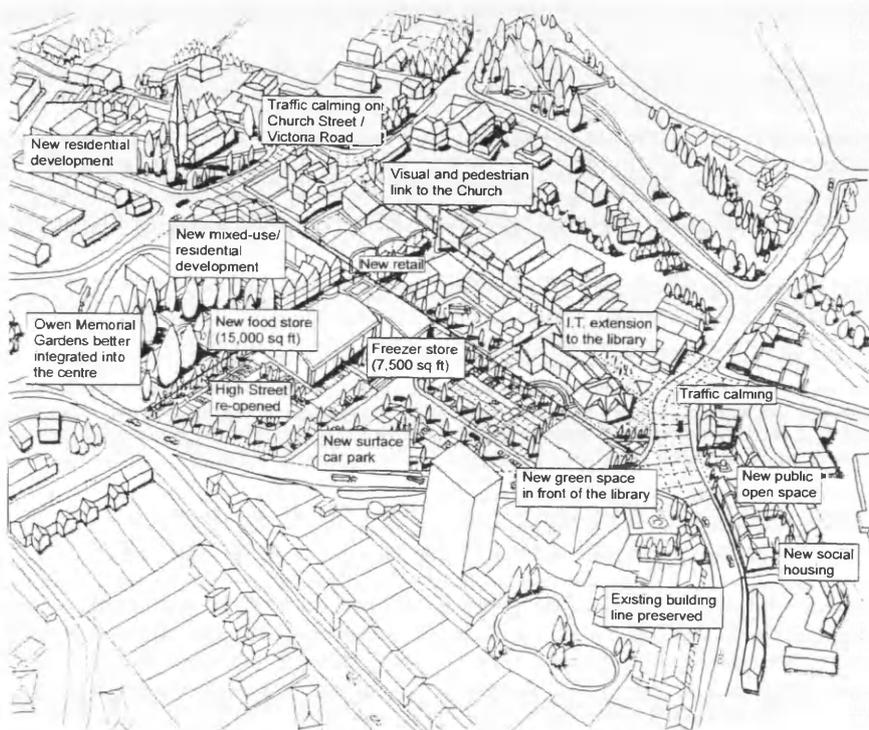
design appraisal of the current town centre, formed the basis for the option drawing stage which integrated site proposals with a new design framework for the town centre. The five options were then presented to the public in a further round of consultation and were used in the market testing exercise in ascertaining operator interest.

Each option had a different sized foodstore to replace the vacant Asda unit. Two preferred options were chosen and these were presented to operators. Interested parties would be asked to conform with the designs laid out in these options.

#### Urban design objectives

The key urban design objectives of the study were to promote the consolidation of retail functions of the pedestrianised core: in King Street. Before the former Asda store was developed High Street linked this thoroughfare with St. Lawrence Way, the major traffic route to the west. High Street has persisted as a pedestrianised precinct off King Street on which the Asda entrance was located. A key objective of the public realm strategy is to re-establish High Street as a pedestrianised through link. This will serve to better integrate the Owen Memorial Gardens, currently isolated by the Asda store, with the town centre. In all the options the foodstore was locked into this street pattern and fronted either King Street or High Street. Retail units elsewhere, notably on Church Street and Pinfold Street are failing, many of which are now derelict and so it is recommended that they are replaced by residential developments. These will mostly be for social housing and there are several Housing Association projects currently underway in these areas. These policies are in line with current compact town and mixed use principles and accommodating additional homes in town centres. Other objectives involve traffic calming at the northern and southern ends of King Street, the latter to accompany new green and open spaces to enhance the setting of the library and create a central space at a key node that is currently heavily trafficked.

Gateway treatments are being recommended at all entry points to the central core. This will involve appropriate signage, environmental enhancement and the development of landmark buildings where appropriate. St. Lawrence Way, currently the site of the bus terminus, is the least pleasant part of the centre. This will be improved by the possible replacement of the bus turning facilities with on-street stops, the removal of a poorly maintained planted area and wider development on the adjacent former Asda car park. A range of other environmental enhancement projects have also been recommended.



Alternative future for Darlaston

Emerging from the study is a Vision For The Future of Darlaston which encompasses development options, urban design guidance and site design planning guidance. These are expressed in a series of alternative future plans which embrace the following principles :

- Integration
- Context
- Identity
- Permeability and access
- Mix of activities
- Sustainability.

#### Next steps

These recommendations provide a solid base for Darlaston to develop its role as a vital focus for services and activities. The emphasis of the study is practicality and applicability with objectives that seek to recreate a town centre that is user-friendly and will meet the contemporary needs of a more compact town. The concept of compactness is often misperceived to apply only to cities but Darlaston is a prime example of how a town must adapt to survive. The notion of a compact town or city is one which is well-connected, with all parts easily accessible to the centre which has a balanced mix of uses. Making this centre accessible to all sectors of society is the basis of the study whereby an emphasis is placed upon increasing permeability in addition to improving public transport facilities. However, once these recommendations have been implemented the responsibility for success will lie at a local level with the local authority and community.

Perhaps where the UTF really displays its value is in its suggestions at this level in the regeneration process, whereby it recommends that the mixed use town centre will only thrive if there is a strong impetus to restrict any further expansion of those services that drain on the car-borne catchment. The previous refusal of planning permission for the out-of-town Asda store illustrates this local level of commitment to the town centre. Furthermore, the value of local community and operator consultation cannot be underplayed as it underpins the study to ensure its public ownership, which is crucial if the town centre is to improve its prospects.

But carrying forward the vision to reality is where the real challenge lies. Whilst the basic concepts put forward in the Darlaston Study reflect accepted urban design practice, studies of this nature will always be required as there is no single blueprint. The greatest value in the UTF report is not its groundbreaking urban design concepts but rather its recognition of the importance of the stages in the development process to bring about public acceptance and physical implementation, and the effects that this has upon public stewardship. Clearly, these issues are dependent upon the foundations set in the study but equal if not more importance is being attached to the subsequent stages. Agencies and authorities realise the value of urban design-led regeneration and that this needs solid foundations in the form of a study like Darlaston. However, latterly planning and development briefing has tended to be more development control or site marketing orientated and thus the opportunity to set regeneration objectives has frequently been missed.

Securing skills in urban design-led regeneration is about balancing the use of consultants such as Taylor Young with the development of in-house skills just as much as it is about developing the general public's understanding. This is what the UTF refers to as managing "... the interface between politician, professional and public". However, the UTF also recognises that not everyone is comfortable with these principles of urban design-led regeneration and there is a need to encourage closer links between uses and users. The implications for those of us involved in the evolution and management of the urban environment will be a re-appraisal of how we deal with the issues of mixed use and users, an accepted approach to the creation of 'responsive environments' and the continued value of town centre visions like that for Darlaston. #

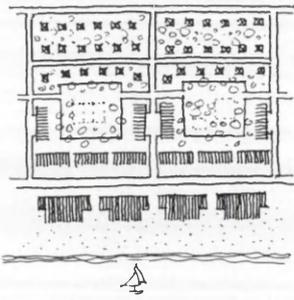


Figure 6.2a A line of high density, tall buildings, arranged to take maximum advantage of the main natural attractions, e.g. along the seashore (but the same may occur at the bottom of ski slopes), creates a visual barrier to the resort area situated behind and a very few buildings only benefit from a direct relationship with the sea and the beach

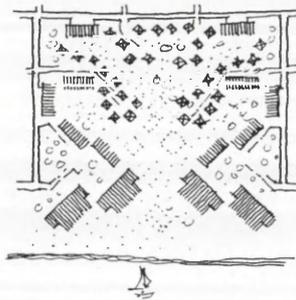


Figure 6.2b By orientating the building lines at right angles, maintaining a balance of lower buildings and extending the beach area with adapted layout and landscaping, contact with the main resource and attractive visual lines can be extended throughout the resort

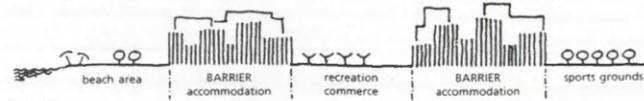
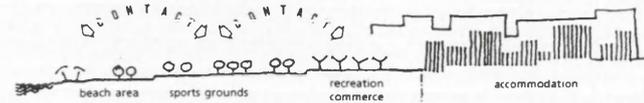


Figure 6.3a



**Tourism and Recreation**

Handbook of Planning and Design  
Manuel Baud-Bovy and Fred Lawson  
Architectural Press £40

If you need to know the space requirements of hotels, holiday villages, campsites, sports centres, golf courses, equestrian centres, swimming pools, boating centres, and related access roads, parking areas and infrastructure, this handbook provides them all together with illustrative layout plans of such facilities on sites in *inter alia* Turkey, Dubai, France, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Australia and the UK.

If you need to know how to formulate a tourism/recreation masterplan and how to carry out the necessary market research, surveys of resources, production of plans, financial planning and implementation strategies, this handbook provides the appropriate guidance complete with examples of plans at the national level for *inter alia* Bali, Holland, Dominica, Iran, Taiwan, Niger, Bhutan, Cyprus; at the regional level for the Albania coastline, Paris, Helsinki, the Lee Valley; and local level site layout plans and photographs of such developments as Port Grimaud at St Tropez, ski resorts in France, Switzerland and the USA, an equestrian centre in France, a 'Centre Park', a forest holiday village in the UK, suburban parks in Germany and

Austria, a nature park in Holland, Disneyland and Paris.

The handbook is very comprehensive and is illustrated with a wealth of site plans, drawings and photographs of tourism/recreation development world-wide. Some of the plans have emerged from the authors' own portfolios, Manuel Baud-Bovy being an architect-planner based in Switzerland with projects in over 30 countries, and Fred Lawson being an international tourism expert.

The book is an update of an earlier publication by the same authors, 'Tourism and Recreation Development - a Handbook of Physical Planning', produced in 1977. The updating has taken on board recent issues such as sustainability as well as new concepts and trends affecting leisure and tourism, eg housing/golf developments, eco-tourism, world heritage sites, etc. It is a valuable source of reference for urban designers and will continue to be so while there is no let up in the tourism/recreation boom. The foreword to the book, written by the Secretary General of the World Tourism Organisation, states there will be 700 million international arrivals by the year 2000, one billion in 2010 and 1.6 billion by 2020. A sobering thought. #

Tim Catchpole

**Architecture: Design Notebook**

A. Peter Fawcett  
Architectural Press £12.99

We are so used to seeing fantastic books on architecture, beautifully photographed, that this book comes as a surprise and I did not know at first quite what to make of it. Because of its format and presentation it gives the appearance that it might be a scholarly work. But it isn't. Peter Fawcett's is a 9 inch square paperback with all the illustrations hand drawn, no photos of the built reality. The text is all on the left hand page with pen and ink drawings on the right hand. Some of the illustrations such as the comparative axonometrics or plans are very informative but others such as Le Corbusier's Wessenhofsiedlung Apartments do not show the subtlety which a good photograph might display. Other drawings such as the exterior of Willis Faber in Ipswich simply look banal.

The book aims "to provide students engaged in building design with a framework of accepted ways of looking at things". It does this admirably and is readable and concise but will it get anyone excited or inspired? It tends to jump around, often the same buildings crop up in different chapters. This is a result of organising each one with a particular emphasis whilst still trying to knit together the whole. Chapters include 'How will it stand up?' 'How is it made?' 'Will it be comfortable?' and 'How will it look?' One major omission is 'How much will it cost?', a subject which preoccupies many architects in practice.

As a student, one of my favourite books was *House Form and Culture* and Fawcett's book is similar in feel whilst dealing largely with the present century. But with the array of brilliantly illustrated educational books with beautiful photographs, will this one have appeal? The advert for the book says "Comprehensive treatment of core design curriculum . . . this vital companion will be the cornerstone of an architectural undergraduate's studies - studio

design projects". On my visits as an external examiner I cannot see it having this mass appeal. If it had a discussion on Zaha Hadid's or Ghery's work then it might. The book seems dreadfully old fashioned in other ways too, for example "Despite the enormous sophistication of computer software for drafting and three dimensional modelling, the best tools to facilitate our form-finding excursions remain a soft pencil and tracing paper supported by cardboard and glue for further three dimensional exploration". Although it is important to encourage rudimentary model making it is also important to help students embrace computers, particularly as computer models are linked to cost data analysis and project management tools which cardboard and glue are not.

Another disappointing aspect is the lack of urban design and contextual issues. Even at undergraduate level these are most examined and it is where most students seem to have difficulty. The book may well encourage the undergraduate preoccupation with creating a jewel like object, testing out ideas irrespective of context. #

Chris Williamson



### New Life for Smaller Towns

A Handbook for Action  
Urbed £13.50

To review this book whilst travelling through central Italy is a strange experience indeed. Here is a document - sponsored by one of Britain's largest retailers (possibly responsible for some of the decline of the small towns) and blessed by a Government minister - which puts forward ways of reviving British towns of between 2,000 and 20,000 inhabitants. There is a succession of lively towns of the same scale with nobody needing to do much except normal management. Italy has it, Britain lost it, and there is a certain feeling of desperation in the mere fact that such a handbook is needed. Will these moribund small towns ever revive? Urbed certainly hopes so and suggests first aid action.

The handbook consists of two main parts cross referenced to each other: one is a standard report covering five themes, the

other a series of case studies in loose leaf form "intended to be moved around and added to". The themes - Improving the Shopping Offer, Diversifying the Attractions, Coping with the Car, Creating Pride of Place and Resourcing Town Centre Initiatives - have been rehearsed elsewhere but here the approach is comprehensive and holistic. Friendly service in shops or good value for money are seen as important as places to eat and drink, convenient parking or responsible public transport.

Surprisingly the issue of living in towns - perhaps a key to their renaissance and a fundamental difference with the Italian counterparts - is included as part of Diversifying the Attractions. Suggestions are made about how to increase the housing available but these seem timid in relation to the importance of the issue. The related case studies give the impression that the authors are less than convinced of the schemes' success and they

may well be right. On the other hand the report is honest enough to recognise the difficulties of the task and the need to involve all sectors of the community. A renaissance of small towns cannot be imposed by government, local or central, and yet it needs some leadership, investment, management, commitment. The case studies show how it can be done: most are based on British practice but three are from other countries. The US Main Street Programme cited in two of these relies on community involvement: "the essence of the programme is to implement local initiatives with a trained project manager" (5.2). Wal-Mart must be shaking with fear! The other foreign example - Design Places to Promenade - is based on the *passaggiata* of Italian towns. The problem is that these places are not designed; they just are.

These are quibbles. The report recommendations and the case studies will undoubtedly be useful to town managers wanting to take action. Numerous publications at the moment point in a similar direction and maybe British towns will one day be Mediterranean. #

Sebastian Loew

### Framing Places

Mediating Power in Built Form  
Kim Dovey  
Routledge £50 hardback £17.99 paperback

This is a complex and challenging book: Dovey attempts to tread where others have not done before, and only after reading parts 3 and 4 does one appreciate his timely and justifiable criticism of the effect of global capitalism on Australian and North American architecture and urban design.

In his introduction the author states "The aim is to show that the practices of power as mediated in built form are multi-dimensional, they cannot be simply addressed as forms of representation, life-world experiences or spatial structure; rather places are experienced and understood within the

tensions between these paradigms". There follows four main parts: Frames of Theorisation, Centres of Power, Global Types and Localities.

In part 1, the author draws on the social theories of Giddens, Bourdieu and Foucault, together with Hillier's Spatial Syntax. Following a discourse on the nature of power, Dovey adapts Hillier's analysis to show three different types of plans: linear, looped or ringy, and framed or branching. The purpose is to analyse the degree of control exercised by different plan structures, a key issue being the depth to which visitors are permitted to penetrate into the structure.

In part 2, three very different "Centres of Power" are examined: Albert Speer's grandiose plans for Berlin - he intended to overshadow Paris, Rome and Washington; the Forbidden City in Beijing which in line with Confucian and Taoist philosophy achieves its power by being remote from the populace; Canberra in Dovey's native Australia, including both the Provisional Parliament House (1927) and the New Parliament House (1988). Whilst the earlier building was adapted from Westminster with a Prime Minister as the head and the Senate replacing the House of Lords, the New Parliament House is very different in that Guirgola's design manages to impress without intimidation. Canberra stands between Speer's megalomaniac fantasies for Berlin, and the seductive secrecy of the Forbidden City - all of which underlies the author's central thesis that Power in built form can manifest itself in many different ways.

Most examples are in parts 3 and 4, from Australia or North America and give the overwhelming message that global capitalism dominates local needs and community interests. "Tall Stories" compares Collins Street in Melbourne with Wall Street in New York, and Threadneedle Street in London. Ironically the competitive urge to outdo one's neighbour by building ever higher, leads to creative destruction. Meanwhile

"corporate towers spread weed-like across the landscape", yet architectural magazines treat the economy as neutral in creating good architecture". Similarly Dovey reveals his distrust of the ubiquitous shopping mall as a panacea for coping with an increasingly hostile, dangerous and polluted environment. These so-called 'malls' evolved from early 20<sup>th</sup> century department stores and earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century urban arcades, their success being largely due to the decline of quality and safety in the public places of our cities.

In analysing "Domestic Dreaming", the book shows the extent to which commercial pressures via advertising mainly related to social status, dominates suburban housing in Australia and the USA. The rise of gated communities (about 10 million in the USA, and rapidly increasing in Australia and Britain) is seen as a sinister trend, essentially anti-urban, socially destructive and a retreat from public conscience and community involvement. Finally the author gives four examples he feels challenge the stereotyped commercially driven environments already described: the Parc de la Villette in Paris; The Vietnam Veteran Monument in Washington DC; Gehry's Loyola Law School in Los Angeles and the seductive Uluru/Kata Aboriginal Cultural Centre near Uluru (formerly Ayers Rock). In conclusion although this deeply critical and perceptive book may raise more questions than answers, it certainly stimulates thought and may prove to be a seminal work. The author concludes by calling for greater participation of citizens in public affairs, and *de facto* power over all built projects, meaning greater fairness and freedom for all concerned. His book deserves to be widely read, acted upon and taken to heart. #

Derek Abbott



### Towards an Urban Renaissance

Final Report of the Urban Task Force  
E & FN Spon £19.99

The Urban Task Force (UTF) was set up in April 1998 by the Secretary of State John Prescott in order to find ways of housing 3.8 million additional households in the next 25 years without covering the countryside with concrete; the Government's aim is to build 60% of the new housing on recycled land. Quite rightly the UTF under Lord Rogers' chairmanship saw this as an opportunity to embark on a wider study of urban problems and potential in order to find ways to revitalise towns and cities. The title of their report reflects this objective and the text covers a great spectrum of issues from the causes of changes in cities to urban design, from investment to planning, from recycling land or buildings to training and local government. This is probably the most comprehensive study on urban living produced under government auspices for a generation and neither its analysis nor its 105 recommendations shy away from the controversial.

The report is divided into five parts. The first - The Sustainable City - sets the scene and the tone: it looks at the changes that are taking place in society and how they affect urban areas; and it suggests how future changes can be made to work towards better urban environments: design - defined as "a product and a process" - , economic strength, environmental responsibility, better local government, equal access to resources are the motors of the renaissance. Some of these themes are developed in the other two

chapters which look at issues often rehearsed in UDQ such as density, mixed uses, transport and traffic.

The second part - Making Town and Cities Work - starts by looking at the management of urban areas and, by implication, challenges current approaches not just of local government but also of the whole succession of regeneration programmes of the past. The third chapter of this section considers the problems of skills and professional education, emphasising both the need for new and better training and for the breakdown of traditional barriers between specialisms.

The report's third part - Making the Most of our Urban Assets - tackles the question of how to find the magical 60% of land for new housing on recycled land. Planning comes under careful scrutiny in chapter 8 and what can be termed as constructive criticism is put forward mainly through rare examples of success. The recommendations in this section are not necessarily novel: devolution, flexibility, participation, regional strategies, better co-ordination. Experience tells that these good ideas are not easy to implement and that there may be conflicts between them, but this should not stop us from trying. And the next chapter gives some teeth to the proposals by suggesting ways of facilitating land assembly and bringing underused urban land into productive use. Easier ways to achieve CPOs and a reduction in existing green field allocation are two of the methods suggested.

The next two chapters address the problems of recycling land and buildings, the former dealing mainly with the cleansing of contaminated sites, the latter with making better use of the existing urban fabric, such as living above shops. The report does not limit itself to physical matters but addresses the issues of taxation and funding; sticks and carrots are combined in order to achieve the desired objectives. This is also the theme of part four - Making the Investment - where both the private and the public sectors

are challenged to contribute: "an urban renaissance is not going to come cheaply; we have to increase the amount of institutional investment flowing into areas in need of regeneration." Some relatively new ideas to get investment are put forward involving VAT and the creation of private-public investment funds. Fundamentally the recommendations challenge the government to "include the objective of an urban renaissance in the terms of reference for the 2001 Comprehensive Spending Review which will determine public expenditure priorities for the following three years."

The last part suggests how English urban areas might be in 2021, how the Renaissance can be more than a short-lived blip. It requires a number of totally feasible actions by Central Government such as the publication of an ambitious Urban White Paper and the establishment of an Urban Policy Board.

The report itself is extremely ambitious; it requires a change of attitude and almost a cultural change. Members of the UTF visited a number of cities in continental Europe and the US and drew from what they saw as best practice. This is all to the good and UDQ readers will be encouraged by this report, even though some will regret omissions or disagree with details. The \$64,000 question is will it be implemented? Will the government take the important (as opposed to the easy) recommendations on board? We all must ensure that it does since it provides a unique opportunity. The report cannot be seen as an end but as a beginning. It should be widely disseminated and discussed and it should be used to influence decisions makers at all levels and in all sectors. #

Sebastian Loew



House at Streatham,  
designed by Gordon  
Allen 1934-36.

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### London Suburbs

Miele, Barson, Bowdler,  
Harwood, Booth, Saint.  
Merrell Holberton London  
in association with English  
Heritage £25

Don't be deceived by this coffee table-looking, handsome book, with its dust jacket of gleaming Tudorbethan gables. It contains the better suburban architectural examples of the Greater London area, together with period marketing ephemera. The excellent colour pictures, nearly all taken on cloudless days, make these semi-rural idylls look very desirable. Ignore those derogative assumptions from the intellectual middle classes who wouldn't live there. The suburb, whether we like it or not, is undoubtedly the most successful housing form created, with its curving tree-lined streets, semi-detached housing, gardens front and back, semi-public/private zones, more than any of the utopias developed by architects or housing thinkers.

This official history of 'best practice' is as stuffed full of quotes about the city, suburbia and the country as a rich plum cake. Betjeman's 'Metroland' jostles with Ruskin, Osbert Lancaster, and Bill Bryson. Hampstead Garden Suburb gets the best accolade, although there is no comment on the changes from mixed tenure. The frontispiece shows the Unites of Roehampton, closer together

than Le Corbusier would have liked, - a mother leading her child across the road while still a building site, without a car in sight. Go there now.

This is a scholarly work, not only for the armchair, but for getting about. It carries on the glorious tradition of earlier classics about the great wen, building on the wisdom of Summerson's 'Georgian London', Rasmussen's 'London the Unique City', Dyos' 'Victorian Suburb' of Camberwell, and Tindale's 'The Fields (are sleeping) Beneath'. It joins the flood of publications from the 1970s when suburban and city studies proliferated. How book production has improved since those yellowing page classics! Now colour photos are pleasurably mixed and integrated with engravings, paintings and maps. A good series of black and white 'flick' maps show the gradual engulfing of the inner London area, century by century, driven by the railways, the underground and the arterial roads, a continuous evolution, moving back the frontier, stopped by the Green Belt and then leapt over.

The history is divided into four successive periods - "Aristocratic ideal to Middle Class Idyll" 1690-1840, "Infinite Variety Brick and Stucco" 1840-1914, "Between the Wars" 1914-1940 and "The Road to Subtopia" 1940 to the present. Each title sums up the period style and journalese, from

terraces, villas, 'working' settlements, company built estates, and detached palaces.

The authors have all worked for English Heritage who are concerned increasingly with protecting the better examples of this century, of all 'styles' including buildings in the suburbs. The book seeks to raise standards. Their publications on conservation are listed in the useful Bibliography. The history of protection and legislation is summarised in a further chapter. The concern is for the cumulative effect of small scale changes, and the need to balance intervention, repair and restoration. Many of the entries are now in Conservation Areas but Boroughs are inconsistent in recognising and responding to the qualities of their suburbs.

The 60 page Gazetteer at the end of the book covers all 32 boroughs (but not the City, as suburbs started outside its walls). Richmond, the archetypal 'river suburb' with Royalty's interest, has 22 entries, the average 12-15, and the least - Enfield, Sutton, Redbridge, only 3-4. The Borough maps are clear, and when copied and joined into a large map, provide sites of developments, groups of buildings and individual properties, for those needing sights and diversions on 'journeys through 'those endless suburbs'. Would these entries correlate with an overlay map of higher house prices in London? The capital is an expensive place to live in the world, second only to Tokyo, and prices are still rising.

The Gazetteer is tied into the four historical periods set out above. Where a Borough 'lacks' the earlier periods or is bereft of good examples (Barking and Dagenham scores only 1), the coverage is shorter. There are some good background sketches on the nature of the fabric development for each Borough which have built on the resources of the volumes of Pevsner's London and the Survey of London. There is new research which makes a good read for those like myself who have lived and worked across Boroughs of low and higher densities of the metropolis for 30

years, and for punters who will want to spot similar buildings to those that they inhabit. There are gaps, for instance mansion blocks, and some of the larger social housing estates, which have been radically transfigured, but to include even more would have swollen the book to more than its 240 pages.

A few quibbles. A few more contrasted pictures comparing 'as built' with 'as now', more aerial photographs/drawings showing 'city texture', and more period interiors, would have been revealing. More measurements in plans of suburban areas and buildings drawn to similar scales, information on densities and land coverage, more residents' opinion related to what can be achieved, could have contributed to the current debate on how we best can live. Can any of the suburbs qualify for UDG's Good Places Guide?

Some outer suburbs are decaying with the decline of their local shopping centres, eg Redbridge suffering from Thurrock's challenge. The Urban Task Force has criticised the lumpen mass of suburban building which doesn't work well. Today's challenge is increasing quality and quantity in the suburbs, and providing for a different age/family structure. This book gives us the material with which to be informed. The entries provide a ready made nucleus for an ecologically sustainable neighbourhood. #

Peter Eley

**Clone City**

Miles Glendinning and  
David Page  
Polygon 1999 £11.99

The subtitle, *Crisis and Renewal in Contemporary Scottish Architecture*, expresses the objective of the book which was originally envisaged to include new works and thoughts by Scottish architects. However the authors considered there was a need first of all to "challenge the contemporary market led globalisation which has fragmented and debased the Scottish urban environment and which has produced a clone city of uncontrolled mass produced urbanisation".

The book consists of seven chapters analysing the issue, the different phases of urbanisation and design approaches, the ways to build a democracy, the characteristics of the Clyde/Forth conurbation, ways in which parts of it could become specific places and the processes involved. Illustrations consist of oblique and vertical aerial views of the various communities that make up the conurbation although the cover photograph of the whole urban belt is the most meaningful. The essential thesis is that the central belt of urban Scotland is now growing in a materialistic anarchic way with no identity. The authors adopt the Geddes concept of Clydeforth so that the two cities linked by better rapid transit can become complementary rather than competitive and be seen as part of one planning structure. They believe that the present green belts should be reviewed and replaced by an outer green border to Clydeforth with better landscape controls and initiatives for inter-urban spaces. There is concern that the Glasgow tenement is the wrong solution for providing new housing forms (equating it with the block surely is an incorrect parallel) and goes so far as to suggest that the careful use of the tower block and beneficial open space may be a more appropriate solution. The text emphasises that environmental education is essential to overcome the alienation of people to their city and their environment.

Clearly the home rule referendum and the discussions concerning the new Parliament building have heightened the interest in the definition of a Scottish architecture. The book sketches out a radically different vision of how architects can help to build a Scottish identity but there is a big difference between the policies advocated and the individual work of architecture. It still leaves a gap with its original intention of describing both works and thoughts of Scottish practices. Perhaps part of the link may be found in the way that Hildebrand Frey approaches his subject in the second book which also draws inspiration from Geddes. #

*John Billingham*

**Designing the City:**

Towards a More Sustainable Form  
Hildebrand Frey  
E&FN Spon 1999 £32.50

Sustainable urban form is one of those hotly debated topics and there are considerable differences of view concerning suitable urban models. This book seeks to define criteria and investigate different macro and micro structures to see how successfully these are fulfilled. It examines theoretical forms of city such as concentric, star, satellite, linear and net and ascribes them weightings to indicate how well they meet the criteria. Whilst people may form different views about these weightings, the conclusion is that the search for a generally sustainable form is a bit of a red herring; what really counts is the search for a sustainable city region and in this respect it is the network of settlements that is generally applicable. The criteria put forward for sustainability can however be applied to the individual parts which make up the network.

The second part of the book applies the objectives and criteria to Glasgow. One chapter examines the historical development of the city and concludes that as it stands, it is unsustainable. Another chapter analyses the macro and micro form of the city by identifying existing and potential

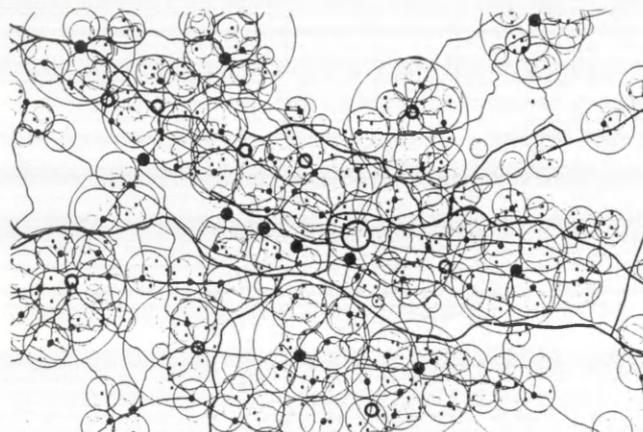


Diagram of the structure of the conurbation of Glasgow.

neighbourhood boundaries and districts, aggregating these to form towns and service centres and exploring linkages between parts of the city. This analysis results in the definition of a hierarchical structure of provision centres and linkages from which a diagrammatic structure of the Glasgow conurbation is derived (see illustration).

The chapter that follows examines the strategic design of districts through case studies of Bridgeton, Easterhouse and the Partick/ Govan area. The figure ground maps of the areas provide a basis for defining potential neighbourhoods, and mixed use centres are proposed at the heart of them. The structure of Bridgeton uses traditional blocks whilst Easterhouse is a typical peripheral estate with a series of unconnected parts. In Bridgeton the structure is rationalised with a more severe grid although it is unclear how much of the existing community facilities remain within the new structure. In Easterhouse a permeable grid replaces the earlier form and additional areas of land - for example school sites and open space - appear to be used for development. The third case study of Partick and Govan does not seem to fit the pattern of examining a district structure in greater detail.

A concluding chapter argues that to achieve more people friendly cities we need strategic plans and design frameworks for city regions, cities and districts. These should involve incremental "conservative

surgery" as described by Geddes. The search is therefore for a sustainable city region framework which is unlikely to fit political boundaries as they stand - needing at the very least cooperation between adjacent authorities. The fact that the community needs to be involved in urban regeneration, should influence professional education through interdisciplinary working and training.

No one can argue against the view that what is needed is a rigorous analysis of urban areas to ensure that natural boundaries of neighbourhoods form the basis for the structuring of the city and that a long term view of urban form is needed to overcome the deep seated problems of many communities. Whether that takes enough account of today's political realities is doubtful. Urban design as defined here is close to the Urban Task Force report and is seen as an activity shared by all those involved in improving a community's physical environment and structure. The book demonstrates how this can be applied to Glasgow and should be a useful stimulus to urban design issues in that city. #

*John Billingham*

### Haven't We Been Here Before?

#### RIBA Book of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Housing

Ian Colquhoun  
Butterworth Heineman:  
Architectural Press 1999  
Paperback 358pp £25

#### Building the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Home: The Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood

David Rudlin and Nicholas Falk  
Architectural Press 1999  
Paperback 271pp  
£19.99

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I was once told that there were two sorts of people. You could tell them apart by the way they travelled in the train. There were those who sat with their backs to the engine, going into the future but with a strong sense of the past and those who sat forward, who only had eyes for the future, and ignored all that had gone past. I thought that I would find the two contrasting approaches in these two new books, but they do not conflict with each other, rather they become companion books, the one giving flesh to the other.

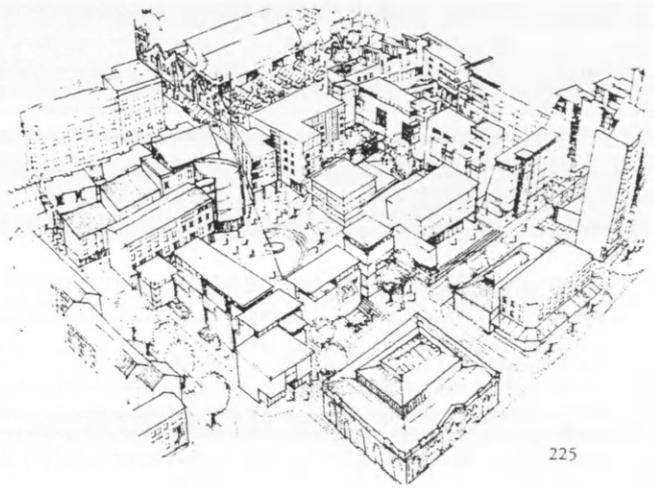
Both books approach their onerous task in a methodical way: the RIBA's reviews the past achievements but stays within the confines of the rear-facing seat; David Rudlin and Nick Falk's starts off looking at the past, but halfway through swaps seats and presents a vision of the Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood (SUN) for the future.

Ian Colquhoun's starts with the philosophy of the Garden City movement with its Fabian determination to replace slums with an integrated form of suburban development, drawing on the Arts and Crafts movement, Ruskin, and the English Romantic landscape, to promote housing at 30 dwellings per hectare. It rushes through "homes fit for heroes" and the 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act, which set regulations on density and other aspects still held as sacred in many a supplementary planning guidance. Colquhoun takes us through the impact of European thinking and especially that of the refugees from Nazism, who

arrived in Britain with a different set of philosophical values. It is of critical importance to the understanding of housing development in this country to recognise the intellectual impact of the proponents of change. Both the Garden City movement and modernism had at their hearts the key themes of freedom, health, sun, light and air. These themes translated into a set of actions that ultimately led to the cleansing of certain areas to create a healthier population, and also led to the wholesale comprehensive redevelopment to create healthier environments. Meanwhile between 1919 and 1939, the private sector promoted ribbon development along the major transport routes and built 75% of the 4 million dwellings constructed during that time.

The 1944 Housing Manual and 1949 Housing Act consolidated the more traditional approaches, encouraging the creation of balanced communities of 5000 people to support a primary school, and 10,000 to support a secondary school. High density and mixed use were key elements. Architects initially updated Garden Cities in the form of New Towns. However the coming together of Corbusian ideals, prefabricated construction, and the policies of housing numbers led eventually to the appallingly mismanaged 1960s dash for units that culminated in the collapse of Ronan Point.

The more humane architecture, based on Christopher Alexander's ideas, or Shankland Cox's schemes in Hillingdon was a parallel route pursued by many local authorities. The social and economic contradictions between the two approaches were resolved as housing moved towards a humbler, more community-based approach, epitomised by Hunt Thompson's Lea View project in Hackney. Meanwhile the private sector just got on with the job, though to a quality that drove Gordon Cullen to say that "*Towns should be planned as towns, which is denied by present suburban sprawl*". The RIBA Review takes us through the exemplars of these different ideas and brings



us up to date with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's "Lifetime Homes", Urban Villages, and the return to the idea of neighbourhoods.

In this scene setting the emphasis is on the social, economic and political contexts. Style is hardly mentioned, architecture not discussed. Even the RIBA's 10 point agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century contains only one point specifically linked to design - and that relates to standards of housing.

This guide takes the reader around the UK on a region by region basis. Good photos, plans and sketches illustrate some 300 projects. Inevitably at least a third are drawn from schemes in London. It allows one to contrast schemes relatively close together, such as Camden's Branch Hill, St Anne's Close by Walter Segal, Grimshaw's Supermarket Housing, and Parker and Unwin's Hampstead Garden Suburb. However there is no indication of the significance of a particular project. The seminal importance of say Eric Lyon's New Ash Green, Lubetkin's High Point, or Darbourne and Darke's Lillington Street, is not given prominence, and Thomas Pollard and Edwards' Cherrywood Close is almost given the same celebrity as Welwyn Garden City. The question of criteria for inclusion remains unclear. Every now and then a piece of urban design emerges, such as Hulme in Manchester or the Calls and Riverside in Leeds. It would have been useful to have seen these examples explored in the urban design framework

diagrams that were originally part of their genesis.

Other aspects emerge. The first is the importance of enlightened patronage and the role that the public sector has played. The demise of such patronage has now left the DETR fumbling on design issues, and English Partnership picking up the baton as mentor of good design. Housing Associations and Local Authorities are also starting to set design agendas but they are very limited. The second is that apart from one example from Energy Park in Milton Keynes, energy resource efficiency and sustainable forms of housing are few and far between. The third is the paucity of private sector examples other than those built within 'controlled' environments, such as Development Corporations. This is a sad indictment on our House Builders, who continue to build dwelling types essentially unchanged for 30 years. One wonders about this statement from Greenwich Millennium Village developers: "*the consortium feel that in this instance the commercial companies and house builders are all committed to their objectives and are confident that the outcome will now be achievable.*" But haven't we heard this before?

Rudlin and Falk actively promote a new agenda. The first half of the book provides a historical review, in a much wider context and to greater detail. It questions the assumptions behind the way we plan and build our cities. Whilst it paints a utopian ideal, albeit firmly linked back to reality, the nature of that

concept relies on an integrated approach to urban development that is still some way off. The gap between such an urban design approach and deliverability points to resistance from planners, developers, housebuilders, and highway engineers amongst others, and - let us not forget - lay committees who know what they don't like. As Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk says, "*Our predicament is this; we admire one kind of place ... but consistently build something very different*".

Like the RIBA's review, the book makes much of the early Howard's Garden City Movement and re-interprets it into the language of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The idyll comes together in a sort of neo-bourgeois utopia where 'Blairite' values creep into the suburban setting. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Rudlin calls for the re-invention of urban areas as "*civilised places*" that can meet the much broader cross-section of society but it will require jettisoning the ideological baggage of social housing and gentrification by the left and right.

This book also brings together various historical and social trends and proposes a cohesive view of a way forward. The Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood is seen as a model to compete with the suburb. It is built on a range of urban design and environmental principles. These are not new ideas, but they have been brought together in a well rounded and understandable way.

The book attacks the 'Anglo-American Suburb' in favour of a more compact 'Euro-city'. It focuses on trying to understand what the authors call the suburban conspiracy, where Government policy, housing design and laissez-faire attitudes reinforce an inertia of unchanging values. These values will have to change because of the need to conserve water, manage waste or control energy usage. The book points to the need for Government patronage and for more stick than carrot to help

the volume house builders respond to changing demands. A delightful sketch of the 'Artisans Labourers and General Dwellings Estate at Hornsey' of 1833 shows a better understanding of liveability than any volume builder can muster today.

The SUN model reflects issues of urban capacity, loss of countryside, compactness and lifestyle. Ecological principles are brought into the urban design approach. The various components such as streets, urban blocks, public spaces are examined. Social issues such as continuity, balance, and stewardships all promote an alternative to the bleak 'free-fire zones' of Highway engineered and secured by design cul-de-sac development. The result is a model neighbourhood encapsulated in proposals for Hulme: 2,500 units at densities of between 25 and 50 dwellings per hectare; a mix of uses; street blocks as basic urban components. Sounds familiar? However, it is the addition of 'eco-design', car-share schemes, passive solar gain, perma-culture, and the re-introduction of perimeter blocks, that start moving the agenda forward.

Like the RIBA book, this contribution to the debate is well illustrated with photos, Rudlin's own drawings, and vignettes of examples of good practice. It would have been useful if key issues and perhaps the relevant guidance could have been summarised at the end of each chapter, or highlighted in text. But this is nit picking at an otherwise useful book that takes the position facing the engine to look forward.

David Rudlin says:

"When we plan our towns and cities, when we build housing we should be thinking at least 100 years ahead, something we have manifestly failed to do in the recent past. Successful places are those that stand the test of time, that are built to last". #

Jon Rowland

## Directory of practices and urban design courses subscribing to this index

The following five pages provide a service to potential clients when they are looking for specialist professional advice on projects involving urban design and related matters and to students and professionals considering taking an urban design course. Those wishing to be included in future issues should contact the UDG office  
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**Jon Rowland Urban Design**

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Fax: 01865 863502  
Contact: Jon Rowland AA Dipl MA RIBA

Urban design, urban regeneration,  
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Contact: Tim Stonor MSc DipArch RIBA

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Fax: 0161 491 0972  
Contact: Stephen Gleave MA DipTP  
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Fax: 0171 247 9377  
Contact: Andrew Karski BA (Hons) MSc  
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Fax: 01908 678672  
Contact: Stuart Turner Dip Arch (Oxford)  
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**Tweed Nuttall Warburton**

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Fax: 01244 325643  
Contact: John Tweed B Arch RIBA FRSA

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

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regeneration, town and village studies,  
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**URBED (The Urban and Economic Development Group)**

41 Old Birley Street, Hulme  
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Tel: 0161 226 5078  
Fax: 0161 226 7307  
Contact: David Rudlin BA MTP

Sustainable urban development,  
housing, urban regeneration and town  
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**Urban Initiatives**

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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  
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improvements, traffic calming and  
design guidelines.

**White Consultants**

35 Severn Grove  
Cardiff CF1 9EN  
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Fax: 01222 664362  
Contact: Simon White MAUD Dip UD  
(Dist) (Oxford Brookes) Dip LA MLI

A qualified urban design practice  
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town centre studies for the public,  
private and community sectors.

## Education Index

### 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.

### 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  
MSc 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).

### Sheffield Hallam University School of Environment and Development

City Campus, Howard St  
Sheffield S1 1WB  
MA/PGD/PGC Urban Design  
Full and Part-time  
A professional and academic programme to improve the built environment, enabling a higher quality of life and economic growth by sustainable development.

### South Bank University, London Faculty of the Built Environment School of Urban Development & Policy

Wandsworth Road  
London SW8 2JZ  
Tel: 0171 815 7330  
Fax: 0171 815 7398  
Contact: Sue Percy, Course Director  
South Bank University's MA in Town Planning is a RTPI accredited course in Town Planning and is open to graduates with an Honours degree who wish to take the professionally recognised qualification.

### 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.

## Endpiece

# Searching for the Genius Loci

The *genius loci* is something easier spoken about than defined, easier recognized than made apparent. Strange that one of the central ideas of urban design is so reticent, and too often taken to reside in things, in the solid matter of nature and construction than in the momentary, the transitory and the ephemeral. If it is the vital spirit of place it should reveal itself not just in the language of urban design but across the whole spectrum of ways of talking about places.

"Site specific" is an idea which has spread beyond the more familiar visual arts - whose site specificity is sometimes questionable - to the performing arts, where the conventions and rites of the theatre are shifted and challenged and the place itself determines the nature of the performance.

Deborah Warner's *The Tower Project* occupied the top floors of the Euston Tower. Among the debris and detritus of the empty offices, cupboards, canteen and kitchens between the stacks of abandoned computer monitors and scraps of noticeboards were clues of a different occupation, discovered as you wandered alone (you were taken by lift to the 31st floor and left alone to explore). Filing cabinets with the names of an angel or archangels on each drawer, a fax machine slowly unrolling Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a room of white talc and white lilies, a gilded trumpet standing in the corner, white feathers scattered. In the far corners, silent angels trapped by the double glazing, staring out over the skyline. Except they are actors who, when you are asked to leave this performance art paradise, part cosmetic ad, part out-take from *Wings of Desire*, tumble out in cargo pants on their mountain bikes. So much for the suspension of disbelief.

*Take me to the River*, a three hour three venue trip upriver from Greenwich, was as much picnic as performance, even if it did include a tape of Iain Sinclair reading parts of *Downriver*. Rosemary Lee's *The Banquet Dances* ghosted the past lives of The Painted Hall, as calico shrouded and white wiggled performers slipped from Nelson's lying in state through fluid anatomy, to the shifting tides of the river, to the unknowable charts of the future, to leave as stately ship tableaux, waving and cheering us to our cruise. The opening of Wendy Houston's ironic reading of Canary Wharf, *Fêted*, as we were guided by red suited PR greeters past the marketing suite could almost be the real thing, except the star opening of the fete gradually degenerated from savage impossible games to baser rollings and tumblings under the sprinklers as the star is stripped of her glamour shouting, as we are guided politely back to the river. Pieces such as these remind us that the *genius loci* is more than the buildings and spaces and stuff that we design so earnestly. It touches dimensions of history and meaning, more than things can say, and more than those who commission urban designers may wish to be reminded of. #

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