

DIARY OF EVENTS

Unless otherwise indicated all LONDON events are held at The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, London EC1 at 6.30 pm. All tickets purchased at the door from 6.00pm. £5.00 non-members, £2.00 members, £1.00 students

WEDNESDAY 17TH JANUARY

'STREAMING' URBAN LANDSCAPES

Much is being said and written about the importance of the public realm in making places but only a few designers are really comfortable with the psychological subtleties of how people move through urban spaces and choose where to stop or assemble. The creation of successful places requires an understanding of these subtleties. Through the course of the evening we will explore the influence of this issue upon the design of truly great places. Tom Lonsdale of Camlin Lonsdale Landscape Architects will lead the discussions and share some thoughts on how the personality of a mountain stream can provide useful inspiration.

WEDNESDAY 14TH FEBRUARY

DESIGN CODES

The newly published PPS3 reinforces the Government's position on the positive role of design codes as a part of the ever expanding tool kit to deliver high quality development. Does design coding provide a mechanism for ensuring that a collective vision, developed with local stakeholders, can be delivered more or less within the constraints of an agreed consensus? What are the experiences on the ground? Ben Bolgar of The Prince's Foundation and Roger Evans of Roger Evans Associates, will explore the processes of engaging in the preparation of codes and their delivery and discuss the challenges for development underpinned by this design tool.

WEDNESDAY 21ST MARCH

DESIGN IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Design Review panels, Design Codes, Design and Access Statements, Design Workshops, Stakeholder engagement... the list goes on! What are the experiences of applying this ever expanding tool kit of initiatives? Speakers will include Rob Cowan, Director of the Urban Design Group, who will explore some of the emerging issues and experiences, which have come to light, eight months on from the mandatory requirement for Design and Access Statements.

WEDNESDAY 18TH APRIL

Speaker and topic to be announced

STUDY TOURS

POSSIBLE VISIT TO CROATIA – 12 - 18 MAY 2007

Alan Stones will not be arranging his annual visit to traditional cities in 2007 but depending on response John Billingham may be leading a small group of about 15 people to Croatia including Trogir, Split, Korcula and Dubrovnik. The cost will be about £580 p.p. for UDG members in double rooms including flights, boat and bus travel and six nights accommodation. If people wish to take part they are asked to inform John early in January so that an indication of interest can be obtained. Email j.billingham@ntworld.com

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COVER

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LEADER

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CURRENT SUBSCRIPTIONS *Urban Design* is free to Urban Design Group members who also receive newsletters and the *Directory*

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LIBRARIES £40 **LOCAL AUTHORITIES** £100 (two copies of *Urban Design*)

OVERSEAS MEMBERS pay a supplement of £3 for Europe and £8 for other locations

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CODES AS METAPHOR



This issue's topic is Design Codes; Matthew Carmona and Jane Dann have assembled a selection of international contributors and summarised their findings, commenting on the future of coding in the UK. The articles show a mixture of confidence in the value of codes and some scepticism when it comes to their universal application. One point is repeatedly made: the codes cannot guarantee good design and they need a commitment to quality; they also require a solid structure to implement them.

Reading the various articles on the subject, I couldn't but find a parallel with debates taking place in the Urban Design Group at the moment concerning the need for a more professional type of membership, and closely related to this, the wish to endorse courses. Arguments are being advanced that if the UDG does not establish criteria for membership or does not monitor urban design education, others will do so. Who these are and why it should matter is not clear but they seem to be wanting to attack our as yet non-existing fortress. Like design codes, any of these criteria will require a bureaucracy which the UDG can ill afford. Like design codes they will not guarantee the quality of members any more than other professional bodies. And like design codes they could exclude exciting but unconventional contributors.

The campaigning phase of the UDG was needed as a result of the specialisation and silo-mentality of the various professions, reinforced by institutions keen to keep a monopoly on practice. Now there is a danger that a new silo will be established. It would be a pity if that path was to be pursued since it may stifle the current debates, also reflected in this issue by several polemic contributions. Colleagues in other European countries are sometimes puzzled by the term 'urban design' as it is not easily translated as urbanism, a word normally associated with planning, which does not mean the same either. When told what urban designers do, those colleagues understand but wonder why we need a separate label for it. Or a new Institution?

SEBASTIAN LOEW

Urban Design

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Growth Areas: China and The East, THE GALLERY, LONDON, 12 JULY 2006

Given the global context of urban growth, this pair of talks provided an update on projects in China, Dubai and also Blackpool and Glasgow. Martin Crookston of Lllewellyn Davies Yeang gave his perspective on Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an and Guangzhou, and the new developments that are appearing on their streets.

He described the continuing western influence on Chinese cities, whether through the design of Olympic facilities and spaces, or the European concessions dating back over several centuries. The attractive pedestrian scaled areas tended to be the old *hutongs* and concession quarters, which are starting to be rediscovered and preserved. This scale and sense of history provides a great contrast to the bold international architecture elsewhere, which has lost its human scale.

Ian Mulcahey of Gensler described the firm's work in Dubai's Financial District,

a free trade zone and attractive stopping off point for international visitors and trade. The proposals for a 50 hectares site on a new island adjacent to its capital Abu Dhabi demonstrated the scale of new development and the climatic drivers. Reclaiming land and creating new growth areas were seen as the key to attracting tourism and adding a sense of place to an already busy but unstructured centre. For Shanghai's Shipyard and Wuxi Bin Lake, the proposals that Ian showed explored issues of providing pedestrian scaled spaces and development in the face of aspirations for greater car ownership.

For Blackpool, Ian described Gensler's work on the Casino project and the role of this development in transforming an otherwise gradually declining town. The Clyde Gateway Master Plan for Glasgow told a similar story of an area once densely populated and with good employment opportunities, becoming a place with a tenth of its people and



homogenous outdated residential areas. The project contrasted with the others as a lesson in how to manage natural urban decline.

Later questions debated employment opportunities for UK urban designers in China and the importance of building relationships; the 'internationalism' of the property market in Dubai and the value of public space in that context; the often minimal requirements for consultation and how these would be handled.

Louise Thomas

Town Centre Futures: Urban Design Group Annual Lecture THE GALLERY, LONDON, 21 SEPTEMBER 2006

This event was jointly hosted by the UDG, launching the new Urban Design Directory, and GVA Grimley. John Billingham introduced the professionally produced Directory that replaces the Source Book and now contains illustrations of the work of 46 consultancies and 9 Universities; it should be an invaluable guide to clients and practitioners as to who is doing what.

Steve Norris, partner of GVA Grimley in charge of Planning and Regeneration introduced the three speakers to address the issue of town centre regeneration. Ten years after PPG 6, the move back to the town centre in major cities like Manchester and Birmingham is well under way; attention now needs to be focussed on lower profile towns where big boxes are often still the dominant retail force.

John Gosling, Head of Planning and Urban Design at RTKL shared his vast experience of the US situation before his recent return to the UK. As most retail initiatives appear to emanate from the States his observations such as 'retail reinvents itself every seven years' had a prophetic quality. Apparently for the last five years we have had 'elastic retailing' where the internet, catalogue and real world shops support each other, and this is likely to be the model for the

next ten years: it will cover two retail cycles. Despite restrictions on out of town centres there are many still in the pipeline. 'Big boxes are also smart' and are getting into the high streets through Tesco Metros and the like; only well managed local retailers will survive this well organised competition.

Gosling reported a lack of visionary schemes for town centres which need to be tackled with careful retail strategies and long term 'patient money'. We need to emulate the successful US local traders groups such as the Texas Main Street Association that aim to get local retailers together to co-operate to reinvigorate their streets with 'quality of life events' such as street festivals and appointing local 'ambassadors'. Gosling then ran through a list of useful design clues that had many in the audience scribbling down notes. These were examined in more detailed case studies by his London colleague Mahmoud Faruki, including the retail link to Sutton Harbour in Plymouth, and a rare honest example of a misdirected strategy at Barnsley Market.

Practical guidance on implementing retail regeneration was given by the third speaker, Susan Lynch from Drivas Jonas. She explained the measures they employ to help local authorities deliver schemes which can take ten years, such



as requiring at least ten percent of new schemes to be let to independent retailers. In the UK we have the mixed blessing of having more sophisticated retailers than on the Continent who are better at keeping us in their shops and away from the public realm.

The three lectures were a call for urban designers to realise that retail needs to be better understood if we are to revive our high streets. We need to come up with imaginative strategies that require thinking like the manager of a shopping centre to consider how uses can support each other and to create 'lifeline streets' that link active areas across boundaries.

Malcolm Moor

Green Wednesday THE GALLERY, LONDON, 11 OCTOBER 2006



This lecture/debate was the UDG's answer to Al Gore's film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, a call to arms against global warming. Duncan Ecob chaired the evening and introduced the two speakers, Lynne Ceeney, Sustainable Communities team leader at the BRE and Richard Wheal, a physicist working for consultant White Young Green.

A common theme of their contributions was that issues of sustainability need to form an integral part of a scheme's conception right from the beginning and not be introduced

once decisions have been made. Lynne took this as her leitmotiv to emphasise the need for multi-disciplinary teams of consultants working together from the start. She used examples from industry to show this was not just essential for sustainability but also more efficient and more profitable. Although working with other disciplines is not easy, it ensures that people's preconceptions are challenged and that we can discover what we don't even know we should ask. Referring to housing and regeneration schemes of the past forty years, Lynne suggested that they often failed because the wrong assumptions were made. She offered a 'Sustainability checklist' which BRE is preparing as a working tool (www.sustainability-checklist.co.uk), and emphasised the need for shared responsibilities between professions.

Richard Wheal's presentation was more technical and more specifically related to issues of climate change: using graphs and statistics, he briefly outlined what this was and what were its effects. Having emphasised the need to develop cooling technologies more urgently than heating ones, and to save energy before trying to install

alternative sources, he described the choices we have to generate energy through technologies that are low in CO2 emissions. He also indicated the importance of buildings themselves in these emissions and suggested that we still have a long way to go before we find the right solutions. Nevertheless he briefly outlined what was being done in this regard in the UK. Finally he reiterated the fact that there is no universal answer and that the appropriate solution needs to be found for each individual project.

Both speakers were preaching to the converted but in answers to the numerous questions that followed, they put forward some practical ideas to widen their influence. For instance they suggested ways to overcome barriers related to professional pride and to convince reluctant clients that an alternative technology is worth utilising. The evening's message was strong and it is hoped that UDG members will be able to spread it further. And as a follow up, the Spring issue of this magazine will be devoted to climate change.

Sebastian Loew

Kevin Lynch Memorial Lecture 2006 THE GALLERY, LONDON, 15 NOVEMBER



A packed room welcomed Peter Bishop, the recently appointed head of Design for London. He was introduced by Rob Cowan who made witty and pertinent references to Kevin Lynch, the man who inspired so many urban designers and after whom the evening's lecture was named. Surprisingly these days, Bishop's talk did not use power point technology or any other visual aids and

was refreshing for it. It was in a sense, an old fashioned quasi professorial talk, peppered with numerous literary references and life experiences. It was also based on careful thought about the cities of yesterday, today and tomorrow. So we started in Sarajevo during the siege, travelled through Beirut, Berlin, Cairo and Las Vegas, walked through London and ended back in Sarajevo today.

Peter discussed the great challenges facing cities: climate change, technology, demographics and the consequences of war, terrorism and civic unrest. He compared cities to a well lived house full of accretions from the past, including mementoes and junk; some of these have lasted for a long time but maybe one day they will come to the end of their life and be thrown away – perhaps an allusion to too much conservation getting in the way of new development? His vision

is not apocalyptic but pragmatic and he asks questions rather than offer solutions which he is not sure to have. For London – a city which is pragmatic, random, opportunistic and adaptable – he is fairly optimistic as he sees it full of opportunities as a result of a long period of uninterrupted growth. And not surprisingly, he sees the role of the Mayor as expanding. But his talk did not give much away as far as the role of Design for London is concerned and those that expected to have a preview of what its role and policies would be may have been disappointed. Bishop gave refreshingly short answers to sometimes long questions and indicated that issues of design and the design profession would be high on his agenda. This could only have pleased the evening's patron. The audience will have to wait to see how this is translated into facts.

Sebastian Loew

UDG Visit to Ljubljana and Trieste

The UDG's late September tour began in Ljubljana the capital of Slovenia, until 1991 part of Yugoslavia and now a member of the EU. The main reason for going there was the work of Joze Plecnik, responsible for the civic improvements carried out in the city between 1920 and the early 1940s. We were fortunate in being able to enlist the help of Richard Andrews and his wife Kaliopa Dimitrovska, Director of the Urban Planning Institute of Slovenia, based in the city. The Institute concentrates on planning and urban design matters and has a staff of about 25. On the first evening our group was given a reception at the Institute and a talk about the historical background of the city and current policies.

The city's form has developed in a number of distinct ways: the Castle hill used as a defensive position from early times; the Roman city of Emona, parts of whose basic layout are visible in the city of today; the old town nestling below the castle hill; the new market on the western side of the river Ljubljanica, which winds its way around the contours of the castle hill. An earthquake which destroyed parts of the city in 1895 led to a competition for its restructuring in which Sitte and Fabiani submitted proposals. This resulted in a clearer street structure and interesting areas of Art Nouveau buildings. A later city plan synthesised these ideas and served as a stimulus for Plecnik's own plan of 1928. Plecnik's work can be seen in the connection between Trnovo, the suburb in which he lived, and the town centre, the restoration of key parts of the Roman wall, the treatment of the street running from Krizanke to Congress Square and important improvements to the river access and frontages.

We visited Plecnik's major building, the National and University Library which has an impressive double storey reading room, an axial relation of spaces and an atmosphere not dissimilar to an Asplund building. This was followed by a walk to his own house, his first work in the city which shows his particular approach to design: a small house extended by adding glazed enclosures at ground level and with circular spaces on two floors.

Plecnik's embankment and a sequence of spaces connected to it

provide a delightful walk through the city, enlivened by the many restaurants and cafes: Shoemaker's bridge extends an adjacent space across the river because of its width and detailing; the key space in the centre is Three Bridges which connects St Mary's Square to the Market. This is the principal public space by the river and it was given greater emphasis by Plecnik's addition of two pedestrian bridges to the existing crossing, a grand and sophisticated civic composition. The market, located north of the Three Bridges, backs onto the river with a colonnade of shops and a classical portico, giving specific identity to that area. Beyond the market lies Dragons bridge, and further downstream is the Sluice, a major structure designed in classical style and fundamental in maintaining the appropriate water levels in the centre.

On the second day, Peter Krecic, director of the Architectural Museum in Ljubljana, guided the group to three Plecnik buildings in the periphery of the city, churches at Siska and Barje and the cemetery at Zale. At the end of the day he summarised the architect's life and work. We also visited housing developments including Koseze, a stepped back structure reminiscent of Alexandra Road in Camden, with more space between blocks. This scheme had underground parking as had the adjacent more recent scheme at Mostec, and the last group with curved streets that we saw at Nove Poljane. This underground parking was partly made possible because of previous uses and the environmental benefits were immense.

The trip continued to Trieste, just over an hour away on the Adriatic coast, a distinct change in scale and atmosphere. This Italian city had had its period of glory as the principal port of the Austrian Empire; its grid layout dated from the reign of Empress Maria Theresa. We climbed the hill of San Giusto through the oldest part of Trieste to the highest point, where part of the Roman city had been located. Down by the sea, the grand Piazza Dell Unita D'Italia is the largest civic space in Europe, surrounded by neoclassical administrative buildings and enlivened by restaurants and cafes. The grid links this square to the Canal Grande with its imposing axial church, and



Top UDG travellers in front of Plecnik's cemetery at Zale, Ljubljana
Middle Three Bridges on the Ljubljanica
Above Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia in Trieste

beyond. Another destination in the city was the Museo Revoltella, two old palaces (disappointingly) renovated and extended by Carlo Scarpa.

Overall it was fortunate that the group visited Ljubljana first, as the contrast between the two in scale and atmosphere, would have been less successful the other way round.

John Billingham

The Healthy City: Creating Sustainable Urban Environments

UDG CONFERENCE, BRISTOL, 20-21 OCTOBER 2006



Health and safety was at the origin of UK planning and housing legislation. It came full circle at the UDG conference which explored what urban design could contribute to sustainable healthy cities. Guided walks through Bristol and the work of design review panels in Wales and the South West provided evidence.

Herbert Girardet set the scene with a wake up call about unsustainable living. He hopes that the World Future Council he founded with Jakob von Uexkuell will improve sustainable behaviour and design to reduce urban ecological footprints. Lamine Mahdjoubi raised awareness of the need for more active urban life by arguing that the shift from eradicated epidemics to geriatric and mental illnesses is stemming from unhealthy lifestyles. A better designed public realm would enhance outdoor activities and foster more active lifestyles. Hugh Barton advocated mandatory fiscal and design solutions to reduce car dependency in his vision of 'healthy cities beyond urban design'. Together with the local discussants Marcus Grant and Mark Pearson they focused on 'smart growth' based on reduced movements and more sustainable modal shifts.

The built environment professionals have to leave their silos and take counter-intuitive risks to resolve tensions between traditional normative urban design and the challenges of sustainability. Unless urban design is able to reintegrate healthy human action with a sustainable environment the metabolism of cities remains fractured and inhibits community building, key to a sustainable urban identity. Urban designers share the responsibility of changing attitudes instead of relying on institutional enforcements to make

cities healthier. Design solutions such as home zones, are more likely to generate sustainable survival than localism and nimby opposition to local development frameworks potentially segregating communities. However, negotiated physical change takes a very long time to materialise successfully. Unsustainable alternatives, massive investment in demolition, redesign and reconstruction were witnessed during the guided walks through "Bristol, the legible city".

Design Review Panels chaired by Colin Fudge, presented during the second day by John Punter for Wales and Peter Clegg for the South West, attempt to redress the worst development excesses and lead the way to more sustainable urban design. The fundamental question is the remit of such panels and whether they should get involved in the politics of urban developments. Uneven development pressure complicates their role. Tempted to curb development in high pressure areas they are risking to duplicate the existing planning control system, while encouraging development beyond the expectations of the developers in depressed areas may conflict with democratic decision making processes.

CABE Commissioner MJ Long - the only woman speaker from the rostrum and Richard Parnaby - brought a different flavour to the debate. Flash masterplans did not prevent the crushing banality of many projects, especially as final schemes often departed completely from the masterplans. What mattered most was impact not size of projects. MJ Long envisaged post hoc examinations to assess the impact of design evaluation of realised schemes. The purely consultative status of the panels may limit their influence, as does the voluntary nature of their work. Some saw remuneration as the way forward. Others feared a proliferation of design review panels which could turn into a toothless bureaucratic nightmare or simply a new little earner for design professionals. Could design review panels have improved the quality of Bristol's urban fabric built over the past twenty years by making planners getting it right the first time round and avoid costly reversals of design decisions on road traffic in particular? More imminently, could they impose a moratorium on the Broadmead mega-retail project?

HIGHLIGHTS

By far the most imaginative approaches to urban design were presented by an engineer, John Grimshaw and a 'movement specialist' Ben Hamilton-Baillie. Grimshaw aimed at healthy city living by involving youngsters in more cycling and walking, and parents in revisiting their perceived fear of risk. With great humour Hamilton-Baillie presented concrete solutions of streetscapes to enable all modes of movements to share road space. Inspired by European solutions and by informal behaviour on camp sites, he showed how the unsatisfactory 'is-state' can be turned into convivial and much safer streets promoted by the 'save our streets' campaign. Research confirmed that road sign clutter is not improving safety, quite the reverse. His examples of shared space demonstrated the pros and cons of the highway engineer approach based on 'system time' and the public realm function of the street based on 'context time'. Not all streets can have equal use, but the transition from roads dedicated to car traffic into shared space could be marked with symbols akin to ancient city gates.

Backed up by lots of statistics, including evidence of inverse proportion between cycling rates and obesity, Grimshaw's argument was to change behaviour in early life by teaching young children how to cycle safely in the real built environment. Grimshaw's group Sustrans promotes sustainable transport in practice and assists in bringing the national cycle network through cities. This includes changing traffic management by attributing priority to cyclists and pedestrians to encourage short journeys on foot or by bike. Flexible work and school hours, fiscal incentives, together with innovative planning and design policies can produce more compact environments with near by attractive recreation places to facilitate shorter journeys on cycle and by foot. The conference curators managed to stimulate dynamic debate between speakers and participants which raised many pressing issues albeit without resolving them. UDG should bring this wealth of ideas to practical use by converting it into beneficial outcomes for UDG members and urban designers at large.

Judith Ryser

Urban Design Group's Annual General Meeting

At the AGM held on 12 July, Barry Sellers stood down as Chairman. A new Executive was elected with a number of members serving for the first time and bringing it new blood. It now includes Ben van Bruggen as Chairman, John Billingham, Philip Cave, Cathryn Chatburn, Duncan Ecob, Bill Erickson, Hugo Frieszo, Marc Furnival, Sebastian Loew, Malcolm Moor, Paul Reynolds and Alan Stones.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In his report Barry Sellers recounted the achievements of his period in office. The following are excerpts of this report:

Over the last 12 months I have been working with Rob Cowan and the Executive on developing a new structure for the UDG. The aim is to create a step change for the UDG making it a more professional organisation fit for the 21st century. An organisation that can grow and serve urban design professionals. Rob Cowan, the Director, has put enormous amounts of energy and enthusiasm into working up the details of a new structure. The proposals emphasise the need to give recognition to the status of urban designers as professionals. Most urban designers have several qualifications, be they architects, planners, engineers, landscape architects or building conservationists. Having trained in one or more of these disciplines and also trained in urban design gives these professionals a unique and well-rounded educational background. Therefore it is proposed that a new category of membership be created, that of Associate of the Urban Design Group. Members who meet the qualification criteria will be elected to Associate and will be able to use post nominals after their name.

In June 2004 the UDG launched STREET, an active group for young urban designers. The launch took place with a Marketplace event in which UDG practice and local authority members participated in staging a job's fair for recruiting young urban designers. Further Marketplace events took place in Manchester at the Annual Conference and in Belfast, Northern Ireland... I am enthused by the energy and dynamism of these young professionals who are helping to shape urban design and the UDG. Members of STREET recently interviewed the UDG's Patrons about their work and urban design, and a booklet is due to be published in the Autumn.

Action on urban design education and skills has focussed on the continuing skills deficit being experienced by local authorities and practices. The demand for urban design skills is continuing to increase with the proactive role of urban design in the planning system. To this end the UDG has campaigned for the establishment of a bursaries scheme to encourage and foster urban design skills. A representative of the ODPM's office gave a favourable reception to this initiative that has since been put to the Minister in government.

The UDG's Annual Conference, The Multicultural City was held in Birmingham in November 2005. The feedback from the conference was that the venue, content, speakers, and organisation were very successful. I would especially like to thank Dr Noha Nasser and her team for all the work put in to organise the Conference to make it a very successful event. Thanks also go to Susie Turnbull, Amanda Claremont and Grace Wheatley for their work in helping to organise the Conference.

Over the last year the UDG has responded to government consultations on PPS 3 and Changes in Development Control (principally about Local Development Orders and Design and Access Statements).

As we look forward the UDG must continue to grow and develop and respond to the challenges ahead. We need more help from members interested in taking an active role in the UDG's work, for people to help in securing sponsorship and for assisting in maintaining the Website.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer Hugo Frieszo commented on the UDG's financial performance for the financial year ending on 28 February 2006, as follows:

On income:

Income from subscription is slightly up for 2005-06 in comparison with 2004-05: £67,390 compared to £65,572. This can be attributed to a marginal increase in membership numbers and reduction in the number of overdue subscriptions

Publications income increase can be attributed to royalties of £5,779 from sales of Urban Design Guidance from 2002 to 2004. It is unlikely that there will be further royalties from this publication.

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 28 February 2006

INCOME	
Subscriptions	£67,390
Publications	£19,533
Training Income	£10,036
Donation from U D S Ltd	£2,305
Interest Received	£1,104
Inland Revenue: Gift Aid	£7,882
Miscellaneous Income	£211
TOTAL INCOME	£108,461
EXPENDITURE	
Publications	£35,166
Management & Administration	£61,570
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£96,736
NET INCOME	£11,725
BALANCES BROUGHT FORWARD	£29,243
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD	£40,968
BALANCE SHEET at 28 February 2006	
Fixed Assets	£1,331
Current Assets:	
Cash at Bank NatWest Current Account	£26,244
COIF Account	£11,665
COIF Publications Account	£5,787
Cash Float	£50
Sundry Debtor (UDAL)	£1,891
	£45,637
Current Liabilities:	
Items Banked in Wrong Entity	£6,000
	£6,000
NET CURRENT ASSETS	£39,637
TOTAL ASSETS	£40,968

Sponsorship of £3,000 was received for Design Statements and a further £9,000 is expected for 2005-06. These funds will be internally safeguarded into fixed deposit until needed.

Training income in 2005-06 almost trebled to £10,036 compared to the 2004-05 figure of £3,375. The (previous) Executive has decided that this service should be discontinued, therefore this will cease to be a source of income.

On Expenditure:

Management and Administration – costs were similar to last year.

UDAL has postponed its subscriptions in 2005-06 and has reduced the UDG's from £2,000 to £1,000, which will be reflected in next year's accounts.

Publications expenditure has decreased by £11,480, attributed to not printing the Source Book for 2005-06 and reduced expenditure on Graphics for Urban Design and Planning. The latter is still a work-in-progress.

Cars – The Mode of Choice

KEN BAKER RESPONDS TO TIM PHAROAH'S ARTICLE IN ISSUE 99



Where is the equivalent of glossy ads in Sunday supplements for public transport competing with the beautiful, seductive car ads?

Cars: Why a mode of choice only in the growth areas? Surely, they are the mode of choice in all areas. Cars are here to stay, like it or not, so get used to the idea! The fuel might change but there are always going to be cars, they are flexible, go everywhere, come in different styles and sizes to suit all tastes and pockets. It is a fundamental right to own a car.

But whether you should be able to use the car in all circumstances is a different matter. Society can choose for various reasons to restrict their use through tolls, congestion charges, parking fees, road pricing, vehicle tax etc.

But let me reinforce Tim Pharoah's ten reasons that the car will be the mode of first choice not only in new areas but through the developed world.

1. Parking policy and ownership : perhaps we should only be able to own a car so long as we can demonstrate where we can store or park it safely out of other people's way.
2. Out of town facilities: economy of scale, convenience of modern lifestyles, who is leading who into this cycle. Tesco would argue they are providing what people want. The ex chairman of Next wrote recently that the High Street is dead. In an individual sense, who has any longer the option their parents had in going down the High Street and in and out of different shops? Who is going

to champion the need for real shopping? We would need to start teaching it at school. Hands up who knows how many potatoes in a pound.

3. Public transport usage: now we come to the nub; public transport has a poor image - recently photographed on a bus shelter was the graffiti 'only losers catch the bus'. Where is the equivalent of glossy ads in Sunday supplements for public transport competing with the beautiful, seductive car ads, or where are the TV shows to challenge Top Gear? There have, however, been some Virgin Train ads.

4. Car usage: if you want people to use public transport, then the vehicle needs to match the luxury of a car and providers need to improve customer care. Throwing the passengers about in their seats while the driver listens to a transistor radio with a fag in the mouth and refusing to carry passengers without the right fare – this approach is going to find it hard to compete with the car.

5. Successful development: if Thames Gateway is to be successful, it is down to education, stupid, learn the lesson: without quality education you will not attract the middle class families. This will lead to congestion, but you will then know that you have succeeded.

6. Tipping the balance: you have to make public transport attractive and most importantly flexible. It must respond to need, not need to it.

7. Urban design: urban design is a wide ranging activity and the resolution for the public transport element is only one of the pillars to the temple.

8. Who runs the buses? Emphatically not the present operators alone. I propose a Public Access Transport Trust (more of that later).

9. Experience of public transport: most urban designers and planners outside London rarely go on public transport. 'I'm not standing in that shelter with the graffiti!'

10. Related development: public transport needs to support the plan not the reverse where it is dictating above all other considerations.

So to Milton Keynes. Yes, a very important lesson in Urban Design. It is successful; people who live there love it, so its basic form and layout are right for someone - yes the people. If it does not fit the current agenda of London luvvies,

who cares! They are 50 miles away, taking even longer to commute to work from their suburban homes in Hampstead Garden Suburb or Dulwich, how dare they be so hypocritical?

So back to Milton Keynes and public transport. It's not going to happen but let's consider how public transport might work in Milton Keynes. It will take a different mindset on the part of politicians, transport engineers and regulatory authorities and an all embracing Public Access Trust (not for profit) taking the powers away from the politicians.

THIS IS HOW IT GOES:

Firstly, taxis must be reinstated as part of public transport. A solution to Milton Keynes means providing a choice from a taxi as an individual, point to point fare, with a second tier licensed 8-seater taxi/bus using GPS technology which would provide shared point to point fares at a cost lower than a taxi but higher than a bus. You would share your fare and GPS technology would allow reactive pick up and drop off to be organized in an efficient manner. Buses would still be an important part of the system. They would be express luxury travel running on grid roads with limited stops.

So you could walk to a grid road stop, take a bus to the centre and return with your shopping using taxi/bus direct to your front door.

The Public Access Trust (PAT) would be responsible for the taxi, taxi/bus and express buses but more importantly they would be in charge of car parking. The Trust would be able to regulate the car parking charges in relationship to taxi, taxi/buses and express bus fares. They would be able to balance the cost across various modes so that the total system responds to the changing circumstances during the day, night and the seasons.

The recent study (2003) certainly endorses my express bus element. We just need to bring the taxis/bus into the picture. Bring on board the taxi companies in organizing a taxi/bus company and we're there!

Just now, I think, I am waking up, I must have been dreaming!

Ken Baker

On behalf of the Friends of Central Milton Keynes and as member of CMK Parish Council

Planning for Change



Whatever you think of Tony Blair's time at the helm you have to admit the Stern Report is nothing short of a masterstroke. Not to take anything away from the environmentalists, who have been bringing the issues of climate change and population growth to our attention for years with impressive accuracy, but money talks! Stern shows that if we carry on with our current emissions, between 5 and 20% of global GDP will go down the pan forever. If we act now and take a hit of 1% of Global GDP, with the developed dirty nations shouldering more of the costs, then we could keep ourselves from the brink of a global recession. All of this is based on probability but it is the only language the world understands right now. We are frogs about to be boiled!

So how does the built environment contribute to this rather serious issue? As Jerome Glen points out in his State of the Future report;

'Next to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, unsustainable growth may well be the greatest threat to the future of humanity. Yet without sustainable growth, billions of people will be condemned to poverty, and much of civilization will collapse...' Today's 3.2 billion city dwellers are likely to grow to 6 billion by 2050. Once thought a problem, urbanization could now be part of the solution to poverty, ignorance, disease and malnutrition due to its efficiencies and economies of scale.'

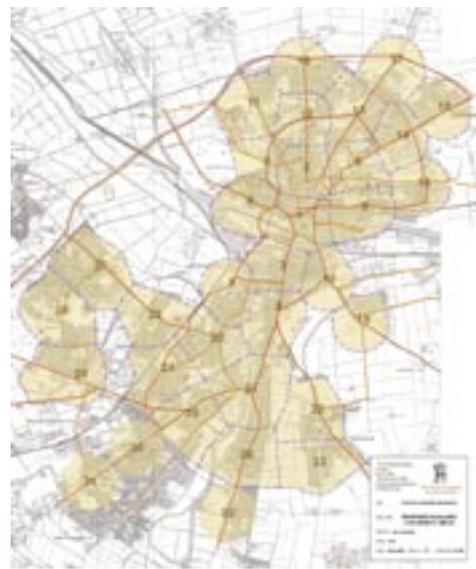
Try telling the private sector that. Why would a Plc bother when there is housing boom and flogging a badly built two up two down is like falling off a log? The answer is they wouldn't unless they were made to. So how do you make them? We know that house builders and developers are incredibly responsive to

the market. We also know in boom times there is less incentive to improve quality because the demand is still there. Enter design coding!

Although many of the Plc's have vast land banks they still have to get planning permission to build. There is also much more onus on them to consult properly with the local population and outline planning applications are not as cushy as they used to be. If local authorities had the resources to become more actively involved at the consultation stage, had the tools of engagement to suggest meaningful processes to the developers and could then insist that the collective vision produced during the process was set down in a design code then that might be a help.

The trouble is no one actually seems to know what a design code is. There have been lots of chat about removing architectural freedom and the dangers of setting something in stone that won't be able to respond to the market but show me the code this was written about? The truth is there isn't 'a' design code. Suburban America and strip malls are coded within an inch of their lives – so it is possible to write an awful code. But there are people out there who have successfully built places using design codes such as one of our senior fellows Andres Duany who is busy coding the gulf coast after running emergency charrettes post hurricane Katrina, and his partner Elizabeth Plater Zyberk who is writing a code for the city of Miami.

What is really needed is a good long gaze into the future to understand how, politically and physically, we are going to restructure our existing towns and cities and build new places that are robust enough to meet the challenges



Top Part of a development code, Lincoln city centre masterplan, The Prince's Foundation
Above A walkable catchment structure for Lincoln

that are likely to confront us over the next fifty years. Alright, everyone is busy in their day job but we owe it to future generations not to behave like idiots with our heads in the sand who weren't ready and waited when the oil started drying up and it got warmer. We would all love to imagine that there is a techno-fix out there waiting to come to our rescue, but until there is, we'd better take a good look at how we structure our movement patterns, our food production and energy consumption and start planning for that change. If we do that and have a mechanism for handling that physical change, we might lessen the impact of future conflict which will occur between the haves and the have nots across the country. Are you ready?

Ben Bolgar, Director of Design Theory

New Things Happen – A Guide to Future Thames Gateway



Regeneration cannot continue to take a market-led approach: steering supply to meet demand is already leading to homogeneity

Top Isle of Sheppey
Above Rainham
Marshes
Photographs by Polly
Braden

There is more interest now than ever before in creating distinctive places. This is due partly to a growing realization of the amount that developers and local authorities have to gain from raising the quality of architecture, urban design and public spaces. But it is also due to a growing understanding of the lost opportunities represented by bland, anywhere places. People invest in places for many commercial and personal reasons, whether it is to make money, find decent employment, educate their children well or improve their quality of life. But they are more likely to choose to invest in places with a clear and valuable identity.

Nowhere is the need to create a coherent vision for change more pressing than in the Thames Gateway. This is the largest of the four growth areas in the south east. So close to London, this 40-mile region could be highly attractive to investors – individuals or institutions. It is also rich with ancient places and diverse communities.

Yet whilst it has indeed been a gateway to the rest of the world for over 200 years, the Thames Gateway has also been London's backyard over the same period of time – eight power stations are located here along with landfill sites and manufacturing plants. It is a heavily scarred landscape, with 3,800 hectares of brownfield land. It includes some of the most deprived wards in the country.

A study by Deloitte MCS found a substantial gap between the Gateway and the rest of the south-east in terms of economic activity rates, unemployment, earnings and skills. Regeneration cannot continue to take a market-led approach: steering supply to meet demand is already leading to homogeneity. Deloitte's argued for focused intervention, warning that without it, the Gateway economy will continue to fragment and decline.

Whilst the estuarine landscape and history of the Thames Gateway has the potential to provide a unifying identity, complex governance structures have meant it has not been treated as a region in itself but parts of three others – the south east, east of England and Greater London.

Until now there has been no pan-Gateway understanding of the relationships of different towns and cities to each other, and no spatial plotting of their economic and demographic character as well as their urban morphology. There has also been limited understanding of what is special about the place, with damaging results. For instance private housing developers in areas such as Thurrock have largely ignored the asset of the last remaining riverfront.

Yet there is no shortage of information available about the value of good design. Research comparing commercial developments in city centres across England has found that better designed schemes generated higher rental levels, lower maintenance costs, enhanced regeneration, and increased public support for the development.

Now the Thames Gateway faces dual pressures - from housing growth in the south-east and the need for London to hold its position in a global market. London is falling in its world ranking and politicians are looking for a big idea that will enable the economy of London and its hinterland to find new ways of growing. Over the last 12 months, however, there has been a growing awareness of the need for a radical

change of policy and political direction. Proposals for the Olympic Park and Stratford City are well underway; Terry Farrell has publicised his London-centric (but nevertheless influential) vision for the Thames Gateway as a national park, a playground for London; and last November the Secretary of state for the environment, David Miliband, announced a strategic framework for the Gateway.

CABE argued that working with the unique identity of places within the Gateway was the key to successful change in the area. We were asked by Yvette Cooper, the minister for the Thames Gateway, to lead on a project to define the identity and character of the area that would feed into this. In November 2006, at the Thames Gateway Forum, CABE published a guide book to the future of the Thames Gateway called *New things happen*. It describes four key themes that can positively shape the future identity of the Thames Gateway: a place where work is redefined, where people can reconnect with nature, a place where communities can reassess their individualism and where people and places can reinvent their identity.

Our findings are drawn both from research we have commissioned and from existing studies prepared by organisations across the Gateway. It captures for the first time the unique qualities of the landscape, design and existing identities of places within the Thames Gateway, and look at how these can be used to ensure that new development there is of high quality. Identity is about rootedness, but it is also about diversity, distinctiveness and self-expression.

The Gateway needs to capitalise on the opportunity it has to work across political boundaries to create a region that is world class in the quality of its biodiversity and development. There will be an environmental framework, the Thames Gateway Parklands, with new types of energy creation and the creation of a new type of environmental aesthetic in architecture and landscape design. Climate change presents a very real threat there and sustainable flood management solutions are vital. *New things happen* defines the key ideas which should be at the heart of planning policies, investment strategies, design decisions and environmental projects for individual places across the region.

Sarah Allan, advisor, CABE

Rebuilding Homes in Post-tsunami India

What happens when housing developments are planned in other parts of the world, and in developing countries? This summer I spent a month in south-east India and saw one approach to the delivery of a large-scale housing project there.

Tarangambadi is a busy fishing village in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. With a population of 7000, around 80% of its citizens belong to fishing families, the remainder being other Hindus, plus Muslims, Christians and Dalits - members of Hinduism's lowest caste. Situated close to the sea and on low-lying land, a large proportion of the homes of fishing families were destroyed or damaged in the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, which also took the lives of 500 citizens. Those who lost their homes are currently living in temporary shelters provided by western charities and other NGOs - either long sheds subdivided to give each family a room, front door and kitchen area, or an individual, stand-alone hut. Their residents are understandably impatient for new permanent homes, as particularly in the less sophisticated shelters, overcrowding, lack of privacy and hygiene risks are ever-present issues.

The socio-economic situation of the fishing families sets the context for the reconstruction of homes. Water quality is a big issue; government tankers bring drinking-quality water into the village, but supplies are inadequate, and since the tsunami, the water yielded from ground pumps has been saline. Only 4% of homes have a toilet, so open defecation is the norm, generating risks of disease and contamination of the groundwater and sea. Electricity is universal here, however, with even temporary shelters benefiting from lighting and fans. A doctor is based in the village part-time, and although most fishermen and women did not receive formal schooling, their children are increasingly doing so. Fishermen typically make 150 rupees (£1.20) a day during the 7.5 months of the year when they can fish. Their wives often transport and sell the fish, generating around 50-100 rupees each day. With many issues facing the fishing community, charities and other organisations are busy at work in Tarangambadi. There are over 90 NGOs actively involved in education programmes, health initiatives, financial support and construction here, including the South Indian Federation of Fishermen's Societies (SIFFS).

The SIFFS reconstruction project

intends to re-house all of the displaced families. Funded by Christian Aid and the Swiss Red Cross, the project is the brainchild of local architect Benny Kuriakose. The concept is that of a participatory approach, where - in contrast with most government- and NGO-led housing projects here - families contribute to the design of their homes and have a sense of ownership from the outset.

Following the tsunami, the government bought an area of land immediately inland of the existing village and donated it to SIFFS for the project, subject to certain conditions. The fishermen's Panchayat - the village's most influential (although unelected) governing body - opted for a grid layout for the new neighbourhood and requested an even distribution of open spaces throughout the area. Between the Panchayat, the lead architect and the other project staff, a layout was developed based on principal roads at its centre and perimeter, secondary streets leading off these and 680 orthogonal plots of land, each allocated to a specific family. Four house designs were drawn up; as well as selecting their preferred house type, families have been able to determine where their new house will sit within its plot of land, where windows and doors are located, and choose some of the internal fittings.

I joined the project as an intern, working in the project office situated between the existing fishing families' neighbourhood and the new housing area. Construction was underway and was slowly progressing; the first houses were nearing completion but many decisions were outstanding. The project approach represented a picture of aspiration and achievement mixed with naivety and weakness. A positive aspect was the mix of people in the office: architects, engineers and a social team from across south India, teenage volunteers from the village itself, and interns from India and Europe. But unfortunately the work undertaken was marred by an absence of leadership and management, and construction on site was beset by a lack of adequately skilled managers and in-existent quality control.

Many elements of the new neighbourhood were still to be planned. A toilet was to be provided for each house, but the sanitation system was yet to be determined. Electricity, street lights and drains were expected to be provided by the government, but only



Families contribute to the design of their homes and have a sense of ownership from the outset

after completion of the houses. Open spaces were allocated but did not yet have a purpose. The interns started to address these issues; for me, the challenge of persuading people of the importance of good connections between the new neighbourhood and the places where fishing families go - mainly the beach and the centre of the village - was huge.

What did I gain from the experience? An insight into the realities of poverty, international aid and housing in one part of a developing country, and experience of post-disaster reconstruction and the challenges it poses. It was also a great privilege working alongside the villagers, local professionals and interns. What did the project gain from my involvement? I don't know yet if my ideas for improving connections and shaping streets and open spaces will make their way into reality. Hopefully it was a learning process for everyone; and hopefully those who need to gain most from this project will indeed do so.

Rachel Toms is CABE design review advisor

Top Colony Street, typical of the fishermen's neighbourhood

Above New housing under construction
Photograph Kaja Terpinska



Development Control Management: A Personal Manifesto

Graham King offers a personal and provocative view of the planning system

For 30 years as a local authority planner I thought as a local authority planner and behaved as a local authority planner. Then in 1991 I went private, and learnt of the frustrations with the system from the private sector's viewpoint. Work in Europe and elsewhere, including teaching in Hong Kong, helped to change my perspectives. The result is the manifesto below - a set of 12 principles challenging widely held attitudes which I now present for debate, spiced with some additional comments. The Government wishes for a new culture of planning - well let them have it.

1. Consider your work as creative engagement rather than a chance to impose regulation and control through an impenetrable sheaf of sometimes wildly outdated very general policy vetoes. There seems to be a form of fundamentalism at work treating policy documents as sacred texts, not as guidance but as tablets of stone. It always seems easier to say no rather than to explore possibilities in a fast changing world.
2. Go for robust pre-application discussions - remembering the applicant may have given blood, sweat and tears to produce the masterpiece you are too quick to condemn.

Imagine sitting down in one of those airtight municipal cubicles and hearing the officer say 'Wow! What a great idea - I think we can do something with this!' Probably mission impossible as the officer bears the full weight of the whole team hierarchy above him/her and has to confer and consult both upwards and sideways.

3. Ensure that the context studies/character appraisals are actually read and passed around as the application moves through the office. In spite of sophisticated information technologies, planners do need to read, see, absorb the detail and critically appraise schemes for themselves. This still involves personal memory and commitment.
4. Resist the temptation to refuse an application when a short phone

call may resolve differences: put service before those febrile statistics of performance.

You may have 30 applications in your in-tray, 30 pending, and 30 ready to action. Resources are short, but do try to keep that dialogue going to get a positive result.

5. Remember every site is unique in some way: so brush up your sense of place and bring a fresh eye to bear on each and every proposal. Avoid becoming one of Geddes' routinists.

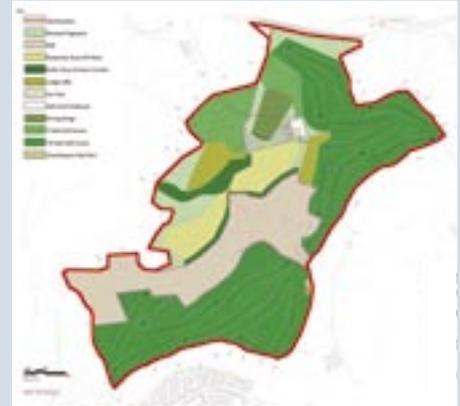
Geddes saw the danger of planning becoming merely a mechanical process with a tick box mentality. He quotes Aristotle as a warning, for whom the general was the lazily broad, while the universal arose from intense concentration on the particular.

6. Don't be overawed by blanket policies designed to sustain a rural arcadia - use your imagination to foster sustainable solutions with social and economic dimensions.

Great schemes can still be condemned on minor design infringements. Note the sea change espoused in the new circular on Gypsy and Traveller Sites (ODPM 1/2006) which emphasises that social and cultural needs may override long held environmental objections to countryside sites. Also note the new thinking on urban fringe management and acceptable uses to maintain green belts.

7. Savour the fact that you are the ones in closest touch with reality: challenge the policy zealots when they come waving their mighty abstractions, principles, and strategic tomes.

No problem with principles as such, but how do you handle policy dissonance? Surprisingly Cardinal Newman, a 19th century divine, posed the following intensely practical question: an ethical system may supply laws, general rules, guiding principles, a number of examples, landmarks, limitations, cautions, distinctions: but who is to apply them to a particular case? His answer was almost existential: the living



Opposite page Druma House, proposed works

Above left Druma House as it is now

Above top Layout of the Royal Fern Golf Resort, Swansea, supported by the council, despite the vigorous opposition of the planners

Above The derelict golf course site with wrecked cars

intellect, the alert intelligence, a trained and experienced capacity that sums up a situation and knows what to do – or who to ask.

8. Be flexible in your responses as we move through the new century into a world of cross-cutting initiatives that probably challenge the current approach.

As the UDP (or LDF) enters its final years of preparation, make sure that it is responsive to emerging social and economic trends. Accept you are in a dynamic feedback situation most of the time.

9. Be truly observant as you weigh up the pros and cons of a case: allow your plan-led instincts to absorb a place-led response; use your discretion – that's your essential humanity.

Geddes said we need both town thinking and town feeling. Too much of planning today is conceptual and intellectual, narrowly rational. But feelings are rational indicators too; so take care to use all the senses and absorb the scene.

10. Throw your reliance on precedent to the winds of chance: inspectors sometimes get it wrong; and even the Inspectorate encourages the submission of revised applications for fresh consideration. Be open-minded, site by site.

Toynbee in his magisterial *Study of History* describes how in the vast bureaucracies of declining cultures 'in any official action which a civil servant had to take, his decision was apt to be determined less by the actual merits of the case in point than by a calculation of the precedents which this or that course of action might or might not create.'

11. How would plans and planning ever move forward in this dynamic world if we rely on consistency above all else? It can be a bad habit that leads to mediocrity.

To question consistency per se is to make some planners blanch. If consistency means fairness, fair enough; equally if it is in relation to

up to date and relevant policies. Otherwise it needs to be taken with a pinch of salt. Planning is frequently the arena for the expression of conflicting interests.

12. Watch your language: tone down the terminology, be user friendly, even when refusing – can a small infill cottage in a remote hamlet possibly lead to the coalescence of settlements and offend 12 other policies in the process?

Talk of alien structures (actually some attractive decking), exacerbation (traffic noise), incongruous features (an attractive balconette in an inner city area), or unsympathetic fenestration (windows) are unhelpful.

Surprisingly, I have high regard for hard-pressed development control managers. At their best they're great, creatively guiding and shaping built form and other land use. At their worst they bring amazing energies to bear on stopping things. This attitude seems to have arisen through a combination of factors that have merged giving rise to immense public frustration with the system. A new culture is emerging, but surely not the one the Government intended. It is hewn from staff shortages, an increasingly cumbersome and bureaucratic system, the insidious advance of risk aversion and threat of compensation, and the government imposition of targets, riding on the back of a profession trained in terms of a mechanical vision of top down policy enforcement and thus the phrase delivering planning. I have been deliberately provocative in order to provoke. Some consultants – representing developers – have been enormously supportive of what I say, but the vast bulk of local authority planners have studiously ignored me. What do others think?

Graham King is Director of his own consultancy Environmental Planning, specialising in town planning and coastal zone management



State of the Art

Alastair Donald reflects on the role and funding of public art

Visiting San Sebastian recently, I was struck by the quality of some of the public art within the city. For example, work by the Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida at its best has an uncanny ability to translate meaning through form and materials helping to enhance its setting and animate a space. Perhaps Chillida's work stands out because of the impoverished quality of much new public art. Recent conversations confirm these suspicions – an expanding number of commissions for new public artworks seems inversely proportional to their artistic quality. Too often public art fails to capture the public imagination, becoming either incidental to a space, or an obstacle to be negotiated around rather than engaged with.

MORE ART, LESS QUALITY

How might we account for this situation? In our process obsessed times the answer is often said to reside in poor working practices such as poor project management, or failure to engage the artist early enough in the design process. This interpretation is challenged in a provocative collection of short essays from the think tank Policy Exchange. As hinted by the title *Culture Vultures - Is UK arts policy damaging the arts?* the authors suggest we look at the new cultural policy climate and especially the manner in which art has become politicised – a tool for building communities, regenerating economies or including marginalised groups. With Government and other public authorities seemingly disconnected from the public and lacking a clear set of ideals, and the public equally unengaged by the current set of political priorities, art and culture are called upon to connect across the gap.

We've become used to claims for transformational powers of the arts. As one official put it, an artist's creativity and skills creates 'positive outcomes for communities, urban and rural renaissance and business' adding that as a component of regeneration, the arts 'encourage personal development, build confidence, skills and social networks and encourage social cohesion and community empowerment'. It seems that Antony Gormley is not alone in his recent assertion that art is 'the crucial element in ensuring human survival'. The message appears to be pick up your tools and get sculpting. This newfound importance has led to a huge increase in number of public sculptures commissioned over recent years, with 1990-99 representing a massive 600% increase on the numbers in the first decade of the same century – a time when the statuemanía of Victorian era was at its height.

ART AND THE VACUUM IN PUBLIC LIFE

The era of statuemanía was notable for the small matter of creating quality art that expressed the prevailing public values and future aspirations – a factor often absent from current discussion. Works emerged from campaigns and real movements in society and were often funded through public subscription. The recent Rodin exhibition at the Royal Academy for example highlighted how *The Thinker* potently captured the struggle for democracy enabling Rodin's supporters to secure funds from the public for a new version of the statue for the front of the Pantheon in Paris.

Few works today could claim to originate in such a public clamour for a new piece of art. In fact political life today could be said to be



When the purpose of art becomes something external to itself it ceases to have intrinsic worth - its content and form become the product of factors other than its integrity as a piece of art

characterised by the lack of coherent values and a confused set of aims. Values such as diversity, tolerance, inclusion and sustainability seldom seem to permeate outside official channels. Malleable to the extent of being deprived of real meaning, they fail to convey what society stands for. The upshot is an explosion of public art - but one devoid of clear ideals, nor a clear reason to exist other than as a tool of social engagement. Such artworks emphasise the vacuum at the heart of public life.

This suggests why much recent public art has tended to look awkward or even ill-conceived. An 'explosion of memorialisation' can co-exist with uncertainty as to what is being celebrated. Hence Lutyen's austere and abstract Cenotaph now shares space with the more literal, almost twee Memorial to the Women of World War Two - a sculpture that intrudes upon the space of the Cenotaph, and whose awkward character suggests current unease with the tradition of militarism and war. If this more feminised and inclusive sculpture suggests uncertainty, what then should we make of the Jilly Cooper inspired *Animals in War* memorial in Park Lane? And while my trips through Trafalgar Square tell me that Marc Quinn's sculpture of Alison Lapper has not had the provocative impact intended of fourth plinth works, it does add to the feeling of a central square that no longer has purpose - as identified in Richard Williams brilliant study of the *Anxious City*.

ART FOR ARTS SAKE

Unlike the public subscription of Victorian times, art funding today is likely to come from one of the many agencies, public sector arts budget, or private monies raised through the likes of the 'per cent for art' campaign. Inevitably these funding mechanisms and the close

entwining of the arts with social policy objectives lead to a change in emphasis. With arts justified on the grounds of ability to deliver social transformation, government subsidy is nowadays termed investment - with all the attendant requests for evidencing success. Art is often called upon to say something (sometimes anything) that could create identity for a particular local community, or engage with or represent a particular group.

When the purpose of art becomes something external to itself it ceases to have intrinsic worth - its content and form become the product of factors other than its integrity as a piece of art. Whereas in the past with the clear aim of representing society and beautifying public space, an artist like Chillida might have attempted to translate universal qualities to specific context, today's art is characterised by more arbitrary choices as to form/history/materials - and poorer for it.

CONCLUSION

One solution suggested by the Policy Exchange is to turn off public sector funding for art and return to a system of public subscription. This may seem unnecessarily harsh, but the clear intention is that, stripped of investment and associated policy objectives, the passive consultation exercises of today might be returned into more meaningful interaction between artist and public. In this sense the focus of the Policy Exchange initiative is a positive one that can help clarify how we might design and deliver better city environments, and create quality works of art.

Alastair Donald, urbanist and contributor *The Future of Community*, to be published in 2007.

DESIGN CODES

	BLOCK SIZES				STOREY HEIGHTS		SET BACKS
BLOCK CODE 1	Terrace	Terrace	Non-attached	Non-attached	2-3 storeys	2-3 storeys	Set back
BLOCK CODE 2	Terrace	Terrace	Non-attached	Non-attached	2-3 storeys	2-3 storeys	Set back
BLOCK CODE 3	Terrace	Non-attached	Non-attached	Non-attached	2-3 storeys	2-3 storeys	Set back
BLOCK CODE 4	Terrace	Non-attached	Non-attached	Non-attached	2-3 storeys	2-3 storeys	Set back
BLOCK CODE 5	Terrace	Terrace	Non-attached	Non-attached	2-3 storeys	2-3 storeys	Set back
BLOCK CODE 6	Non-attached	Non-attached	Non-attached	Non-attached	2-3 storeys	2-3 storeys	Set back
BLOCK CODE 7	Terrace	Non-attached	Non-attached	Non-attached	2-3 storeys	2-3 storeys	Set back
BLOCK CODE 8	Non-attached	Non-attached	Non-attached	Non-attached	2-3 storeys	2-3 storeys	Set back
BLOCK CODE 9	Non-attached	Non-attached	Non-attached	Non-attached	2-3 storeys	2-3 storeys	Set back

Codes - Fairfield Park, Letchworth (Mid Bedfordshire District Council)

Design coding has both historical and contemporary precedents in the UK and overseas. Coding was used, for example, to rebuild London following the Great Fire of 1666 as a means to set out new sanitary, safety and amenity standards for the City. Some of the world’s most beautiful cities such as Siena have used forms of coding over many centuries to give them their distinct and unified form and appearance.

Today, many of the standards used to guide the development of buildings and the urban environment can be described as coding – of sorts. The building regulations, national and local highways design standards, and the density and open space standards used by many local authorities fall into this category. Most, however, are limited in their scope and technical in their aspiration, and are not generated out of a physical vision for a particular place.

Design codes, by contrast, are a distinct form of detailed design guidance that establishes the three dimensional components of a particular development and how these relate to one another but does not prescribe the overall outcome. The aim of design codes is to provide clarity over what constitutes acceptable design quality for a particular site, and thereby achieve a level of certainty for developers and the local community alike.

This topic explores the use of design codes in order to understand the contribution that this much talked about, and often (it seems) much derided, form of design guidance can play in shaping development processes and outcomes. It begins by summarising recent research exploring practice in England, journeys to examine experiences in four other countries around the world – the US, Germany, Australia and the Netherlands – then returns to the UK to challenge the most frequent critiques of coding, and to identify collective lessons for the future.

Particular thanks are due to Commission for Architecture and Built Environment and the Department for Communities and Local Government who funded the original papers on which the international articles in this issue are based.

MATTHEW CARMONA AND JANE DANN

DESIGN CODES IN ENGLAND, WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Matthew Carmona and Jane Dann summarise the findings of their research



THE NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

Although reflecting clear historic antecedents, the introduction of design codes in national policy in England is new. Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) now provides explicit endorsement to design codes. The guidance relates to the Government's long-term ambition to create sustainable communities in order to meet the increasing demand for new homes in England. The policy builds on the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan, an implicit assumption in which is that to achieve the challenging targets for housing, new delivery mechanisms are required.

Following the launch of the Sustainable Communities Plan, the Government, working in partnership with CABI and English Partnerships, instituted an action research programme that ran throughout 2004 and 2005 to allow design codes to be tested in practice. The programme included the detailed monitoring and evaluation of nineteen development projects of three types.

- A series of pilot projects enabled by CABI to produce design codes.
- Eight advanced coded projects, where codes had already been prepared and used independently of the pilot programme.
- By way of comparison, four non-code projects that utilised other types of detailed design guidance.

The whole programme was evaluated by UCL's Bartlett School

of Planning and Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design, with detailed analysis presented in *Design Coding in Practice, An Evaluation*. In this article, a number of the headline findings are drawn out for discussion.

Newhall, Harlow, design coding setting quality benchmarks, Photograph Tibbalds

A FOCUS ON DESIGN QUALITY

The research suggested that overwhelmingly those involved in design coding are involved for one reason, the potential to improve development quality. Whether the intention is to establish a springboard to excellence or simply a safety net below which quality will not fall, varies, and often both motivations are apparent. In this respect, the real potential of codes rests in their ability to coordinate outputs from different developers/designers across large sites and to integrate different design elements with a forcefulness that other forms of design guidance cannot match.

Codes are not viewed as vision-making



Newhall, Harrow
Photographs Tibbalds

documents, but as delivery mechanisms to help deliver a vision expressed in a masterplan or development framework. Codes interpret and articulate the vision, shaping it and developing it in the process. Therefore, to be of real practical use, codes need to build upon the firm foundation of a technically and financially robust physical vision.

The advanced case studies suggested that where codes have been used through to fruition on site, they have generally received a strong endorsement from those who have been involved and have helped to set new quality benchmarks in their locations. They are having a beneficial effect in:

- Helping to deliver a more coherent public realm
- Resisting inappropriate development
- Generally raising the importance and profile of design

- Encouraging the appointment of better quality designers than would otherwise be the case
- Overcoming undesirable roads-dominated highways solutions.

Unfortunately, to achieve these benefits, coding requires the commitment of considerable time and resources up-front. Fortunately, where codes are being implemented on site, most schemes have been delivering enhanced sales values and increased land values, more than off-setting the initial investment in coding.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Turning to questions of speed, although formal development control processes do not take longer for coded schemes, it seems that the periods running up to the outline planning consent and subsequent (first) reserved matters application are typically time consuming. This was not considered out of the ordinary by many stakeholders who today expect to prepare detailed design guidance of one form or another for all large sites. Nevertheless, the process of securing consensus over detailed design issues inevitably takes time, and when this occurs prior to outline planning consent, it represents a risk for development interests.

In coded schemes, as with other projects, a wide range of bottlenecks can occur at critical junctures in the development process, many tied to the failure to develop a convincing partnership approach, or a strong well tested vision from the start. Experience nevertheless shows that in coded projects the process of applying for and obtaining reserved matters consents becomes more efficient over time, and at that stage the planning processes can be streamlined. The pay-off is therefore an increase in certainty for developers applying for reserved matters permissions as long as their schemes are code compliant.

Another important benefit of coding has been the ability to challenge the status quo of development (particularly housebuilding) processes, from concept design through to procurement and construction. Codes do this through a number of means:

- As an important feed into the process of procuring design / development services; for example as part of the phase briefing process or as the basis for limited design competitions.
- Setting quality aspirations that not all designers and developers are able to meet, and in so doing weeding out such players early on.
- Helping to establish a level playing field for developers when tendering for projects, enabling an efficient tendering process based on clear quality benchmarks.
- Helping to guarantee that the different phases of a development reach a consistent level of quality.

In so doing design codes play an important part in safeguarding the investments of developers and purchasers alike.

GETTING THE PROCESS RIGHT

No single definitive coding process was apparent from the case studies, and the sequence of key stages can vary. A typical process nevertheless incorporates:

1. A decision to code – clarifying motivations and defining the processes
2. The coordination of inputs – skills and resources, roles and relationships
3. Understanding the context for coding – in policy and guidance, the site and any existing physical vision i.e. the masterplan
4. A code design process – devising content and expressing it, and refining through stakeholder engagement and adoption processes
5. Delivering the code – using the code for parcel design and development procurement, and for the assessment and regulation of resulting proposals

6. Managing outcomes – via monitoring and enforcement, code evaluation and project aftercare.

Coding is also an integral part of wider development processes. However, the sequence of key development stages will vary depending upon circumstances, including how the development is to be procured, for instance whether and when development partner selection and/or land disposal take place. Code design may also take place either before or after outline planning processes.

A strong commitment to partnership working between partners and within organisations is a pre-requisite for successful and efficient coding, although the case studies confirmed that the decision to adopt a coding process will not, by itself, generate successful partnership working. A clear management structure can help if established early on in order to drive projects forward. Clear leadership is also critical to successful coding, something that in different projects has come variously from landowners, developers, local authority officers, and code designers.

More often than not, successful examples of coding seem to be characterised by one party or another being strongly motivated to achieve quality, acting in effect as a code champion. But a wide range of generic, disciplinary and specialist skills are also required to produce and use design codes, and coding is certainly no substitute for a lack of design skills on either side of the development process. Where used, coding has often had the added benefit of encouraging authorities into a more pro-active role, front-loading their input into the development project.

PLANNING CONCERNS

The formal planning status of a code determines the weight that will be attached to its provisions through the planning applications process. A wide range of approaches have been successfully used to give codes status:

1. adoption as supplementary planning guidance
2. planning conditions, tying the use of a code to the outline consent
3. legal development agreements incorporating a code
4. control of freehold rights, exchanged on the basis of code compliance
5. as briefs for design competitions and phase tendering
6. through the formal planning applications process
7. various combinations of the above.

In the future, formal adoption as part of the Local Development Framework will be the most effective means to give a code status as a material consideration for planning purposes. Formal recognition for highways purposes also seems to be particularly desirable to avoid any highways and drainage adoption problems during implementation. Indeed, the research confirmed that the highways authority is a key technical stakeholder that should always be involved from the start of the coding process. Generally, the failure to engage all key technical stakeholders, can quickly undermine trust in the work of coding teams and in design codes themselves.

Full-scale community consultation, by contrast, is difficult and is likely to be undesirable, reflecting the nature of design codes as largely technical documents. Instead, community engagement should occur prior to coding when the site-based physical vision is being defined (eg. the masterplan).

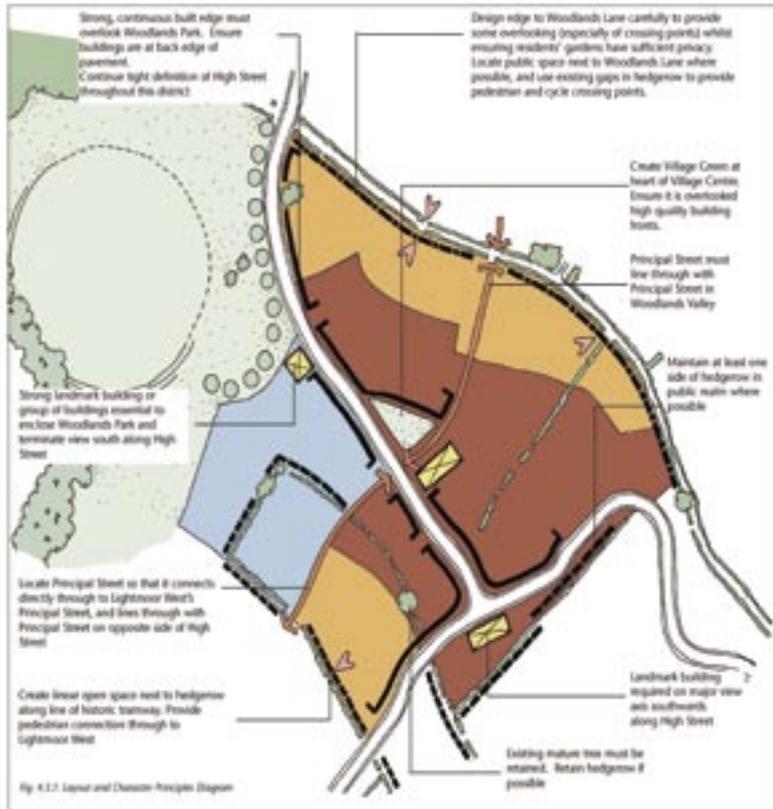
Later assessment of development phases against the content of design codes have been successfully undertaken by a range of parties – the local planning authority, landowner / master developer, code designer or other design advisor, or by various combinations of the above. At this stage, bringing all key regulatory, funding and landowner / master developer stakeholders together to make an assessment of parcel proposals has the benefit of delivering a single coordinated decision-



To be of real practical use, codes need to build upon the firm foundation of a technically and financially robust physical vision

making process. Experience has shown, however, that this may be resource intensive.

By contrast, where separate processes of assessment are undertaken (eg. planning officers, the master developer, and the highways authority acting independently of each other), parcel developers can sometimes feel trapped in the middle or may seek to weaken the code by exploiting potential differences in views. Sometimes landowner or master developer assessment has been used as a prior approval mechanism before reserved matters applications are submitted so that each application has already been through a private quality check against the code. However implemented, codes are perceived to be robust tools for controlling design that are difficult to challenge at appeal.



Lightmoor, Telford - Codes take different forms with different levels of detail and different styles of presentation (Tibbalds)

THE CONTENT OF CODES

The content of the design codes analysed tended to reflect a comparable set of design aspirations: mainly traditional urban design with perimeter block urban forms, an attempt at integration with surroundings, and the pursuit of a high quality public realm:

- Streets are typically coded as a series of generic hierarchical types with different profiles and standards.
- Parking courts are favoured as the dominant means of taming the impact of parked cars on the street scene.
- Codes for built form and townscape concerns are typically extensive, serving aesthetic, urbanistic and functional purposes, including the pursuit of natural surveillance.
- Open space issues are usually coded on the basis of specific spaces clearly identified in the masterplan.
- The adaptability of buildings to different uses is prioritised, alongside attempts to influence unit sizes and types.

Issues of land use and unit mix seem rarely to be coded at all and coding for sustainability remains problematic, with existing codes being high on aspiration, but low on actual content. By contrast, the evidence from the research showed that coding for architectural design is both possible and popular, and is often based on an analysis of local context. Where covered, such matters are usually advisory, whilst the styles pursued through coding range from historic/traditional to contemporary.

Coding teams are often adamant that any design guidance that allows too much interpretation will lead to conflicts that need to be resolved through time-consuming negotiations. Therefore, most codes are designed to be deliberately prescriptive tools, primarily meant for a professional audience. However, because coded projects are often large scale and developed over extended periods of time, codes also need to be flexible enough to deal with changing circumstances.

In this regard many argue that code principles should not be set in stone, but through due process should be capable of negotiated interpretation, for example where conflicts become apparent between different aspects of the code. Moreover, a willingness to update codes in the light of early experience of their use seems to be beneficial. An approach favoured in some projects has been the use of mini codes for each new phase of development. These sit on top of the more strategic site-wide design code and act in effect as code supplements.

CONCLUSIONS

Best practice has long suggested that large complex sites should benefit from detailed design guidance, which should be produced as a means to help deliver design quality, certainty of process, stakeholder coordination, and (potentially) enhanced value. Codes seem particularly suited to this role.

But, contemporary experience of design coding – at least in the UK – is still limited, and a period of experimentation and learning will be required if the use of codes is to become more mainstream. Achieving good design is dependent on having a range of important factors in place: the right design skills; developers who are committed to quality; an enlightened highways authority; and consensus between key stakeholders concerning the vision for the site and the strategy for its implementation. Codes can play an important part in helping to deliver these things, but they will never represent a substitute for them.

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THE KENTLANDS CODE

Mike Watkins pays homage to a master developer and to the city fathers of Gaithersburg

Joe Alfandre, the original master developer of Kentlands, wanted to build a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly neighbourhood in Gaithersburg, Maryland but it was illegal in 1988. I write this from a seat at my local diner in downtown Kentlands just a few blocks' walk from my home. I am, along with 2400 families and over a hundred businesses, grateful to Alfandre for his vision and grateful to the City leaders of that time for making the realization of this vision possible.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT FOR DESIGN CODES

Through changes in its zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, the City of Gaithersburg had inadvertently made it illegal to build the traditional American neighbourhood and instead mandated single-use, automobile-dependent sprawl. In fact, if Gaithersburg's own downtown were to have burned to the ground it would not have been possible to be rebuild it under the zoning ordinance in place at the time of Alfandre's request to build Kentlands.

Alfandre agreed to write new chapters for the City's zoning ordinance to permit the traditional neighbourhood and the accessory apartments, and a road code waiver to permit a palette of traditional streets and alleys. He also agreed to set a higher standard for the architecture, offering to prepare a design code and attach it as a covenant to the land so that all subsequent landowners would be required to comply with its requirements.

Generally, the zoning ordinance controls the permitted uses and densities, the subdivision ordinance the streets, and the design code what happens on the private lots.

CODING TO ACHIEVE A VISION

Virginia's first city, Alexandria, was planned around a tight grid of streets and lots but without architectural controls. John Carlisle built the first house, quite a handsome one, but he built it well back from the street. His colleagues realised that if others followed suit the result would not be the city they envisioned. So, they wrote a design code. Among the requirements: that private buildings be built across 100% of their front property line with a horizontal eave to the street while public buildings may set back and must have a gable end to the street. These simple rules resulted in a city that remains beloved to this day. Today, subdivisions may have design controls but frequently they control much less important elements such as colour and mailbox design.

Alfandre had a very clear vision of the type of place he wanted Kentlands to become. He hired Duany, Plater-Zyberk & Company (DPZ) to record the vision in a masterplan and design code. The Mayor of Gaithersburg and the Director of Planning and code Administration understood and embraced the vision and, working with Alfandre and DPZ, they laid the groundwork for Kentlands. The importance of a clear vision when writing a design code cannot be understated. Nearly anything can be coded. The challenge is clearly identifying the desired end result.

The motivation for Alfandre was his desire to build neighbourhoods in which community would flourish. Community has everything to do with the relationships that exist between individuals. Similarly, communities are about the relationships that exist between individual buildings. The Kentlands Design Code was initiated to regulate the design of the space between buildings. This is an area typically neglected by planners and architects.

Alfandre voluntarily subjected Kentlands to a design code



Coding, for designers of neo-traditional neighbourhoods, involves the selection of the best urban and architectural practices from the past

Top Kentlands masterplan (Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company)
Above Aerial view of Kentlands as built



Top Downtown Kentlands today ©2006 Sandy Sorlien
Above A mix of uses and higher density residential on Main Street ©2006 Sandy Sorlien

in order to produce the community he had envisioned and provide certainty to buyers about what would be built there. It further served to demonstrate to the city, and to purchasers, his willingness to raise the standard of design.

THE PROCESS

DPZ led a team of architects, planners, engineers, landscape architects and builders through a seven-day public design charrette in 1988 during which the Kentlands Design Code, as well as the complete set of masterplan documents, was produced. The general public, municipal staff and officials contributed to the design code, largely through clarifying the vision of the desired end result. Builders and their designers scrutinized the details of the code to verify that the requirements were consistent with market demands and their budgets, particularly in relation to the cost of materials.

Consultation with all affected parties during the preparation of the code at the charrette allowed its implications to be assessed fully from all vantage points. Although builders did find loopholes as they began building Kentlands, a provision in the code allowed the developer to make changes to the code, so the loopholes could be closed. Provision for such flexibility in a design

code is essential. While it may seem risky to some, allowing an unscrupulous developer to weaken the code, there are many good reasons for allowing it that outweigh this minimal risk. New materials and techniques become available, and additional building types may be added to meet changing market demands.

While the process of writing a code may be similar from one instance to the next, the end results may vary greatly. Early on, as Alfandre shared his vision, DPZ quickly identified local precedents. Several English precedents were also studied. Public spaces and the surrounding buildings were carefully documented. Coding, for designers of neo-traditional neighbourhoods, involves the selection of the best urban and architectural practices from the past. Certainly, the early neighbourhoods that first accommodated the automobile, such as those by Raymond Unwin and John Nolan, demand careful study. The best of the desired models are retained but also transformed into the newly envisioned place.

THE DESIGN CODE

Most design codes consist of a plan that identifies exactly where in the masterplan particular requirements apply and urban regulations which generally control building type placement and the location of parking. Design codes also dictate building materials and how the materials are used. Design codes may dictate a specific style or styles but this is not essential – it depends on the vision. The most widely accepted practice is that the materials and methods of construction grow out of local practices which have a demonstrated record of success. This was certainly the case in Kentlands.

The Kentlands Design Code consists of two 24” by 36” pages. The first, the Urban Regulations, is based on lot size and controls, where a building sits on its lot, the height of the building and the location of parking. The second, the Architectural Standards, identifies the permitted building materials and the configuration and techniques for the use of those materials.

It makes a distinction between “requirements” (expressed using “shall”) and “recommendations” (expressed using “should”). Both requirements and recommendations may be expressed in written text, drawings or both. The Kentlands Code did not provide examples or illustrate the architectural code requirements, so as to avoid the problem of identifying one acceptable solution and that solution then becoming the dominant one, while also inadvertently limiting creativity. Instead, the code establishes criteria within which any number of possible solutions exists. Kentlands’ Urban Regulations are a combination of drawings and text, while the Architectural Standards are all text.

ENFORCING THE CODE

Initially the developer was responsible for enforcing the code then, after occupancy of a building, this role passed to the Kentlands Citizens Assembly (KCA), to which all landowners are required to belong. Gradually the developer relinquished control of the KCA Board to the residents and then the KCA took over control of the code.

The Kentlands Code is written in such a way that compliance can be verified administratively. However, it is beneficial to have someone with a design background serve as the Town Architect and, in fact, the KCA documents require this. The code was privately administered by the Town Architect, who was employed first by the developer and then through the KCA. DPZ has served as the Kentlands Town Architect from the beginning.

An economic downturn led to Alfandre turning control of the project over to the Chevy Chase Bank whose subsidiary completed the development. The relevance of this to the design code is two-fold. First, the design code prevented the lender from reverting to conventional suburban development. In fact the lender chose to continue developing Kentlands because its

GREAT KENTLANDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION		THE KENTLANDS CODE URBAN STANDARDS						TOWN PLANNING ANDREW DUANY & ELIZABETH PLATER-ZYBERK BY 2001	
	TYPE I A,B MID-RISE OFFICE	TYPE II A,B MID-RISE RESIDENTIAL	TYPE III A,B,C MID-RISE RESIDENTIAL	TYPE IV RESIDENTIAL	TYPE V RESIDENTIAL	TYPE VI RESIDENTIAL	TYPE VII RESIDENTIAL	SPECIFICATIONS FOR MATERIALS CONSTRUCTION	
HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Text]
FLOOR COVERAGES	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Text]
ROOF HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Text]
SET-BACKS REQUIREMENTS	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Text]
OFF-STREET PARKING	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Diagram]	[Text]

unique market position - that of a traditional neighbourhood surrounded by stalled sprawl developments - commanded an 11% premium from buyers compared to nearby subdivisions. Second, with changing control, the design code ensured the realization of the original vision in the absence of the visionary.

Some architects and designers will complain that a design code stifles their creativity. In fact, the opposite is true. When anything is possible, a designer is hardly needed, precisely because anything is possible – a condition evident in the American suburbs. When some constraints are in place, the challenge is greater and good designers rise to the challenge of demonstrating their ability to design an excellent building within these constraints.

Initially builders submitted plans to the developer who forwarded them to the Town Architect for comment. The developer then negotiated compliance (or not) with the builders. When control reverted to the lender, builders submitted plans directly to the Town Architect who negotiated compliance with the builders and wrote a review letter indicating compliance (or not) to the City Planning Commission for their consideration at the time of their architectural approval.

After a property is occupied, the code is enforced by the KCA via the voluntary Board of code Compliance, a group of residents appointed by the KCA, which issues fines pursuant to the KCA documents each owner signs at the time they purchase their property. The KCA also has the right to restrict benefits of membership in the KCA if necessary, for instance, access to the community pool!

MANAGING THE RESULTS

One major weakness in the system at Kentlands was the lack of inspection of the built work for compliance with the Design Code. The City routinely inspects buildings prior to occupancy, primarily for compliance with life/safety codes and, to a much lesser extent, compliance with the approved design drawings. DPZ lobbied for post-construction approval prior to a Certificate of Occupancy, but it was not until the last two years of construction that such a provision was implemented.

However, it is widely recognized that Kentlands is clearly a different place, a community, not just another subdivision development. Kentlands is a single community of several neighbourhoods, each with a mix of uses and residential types assembled on a network of pedestrian-friendly streets. The

masterplan supported by the code has certainly achieved Alfandre’s vision for a built environment that fosters community. Is it as beautiful as it might have been? No. Design codes cannot replace talented designers.

LESSONS

Among the important lessons learned from Kentlands and the nearly 200 other design codes that we have written:

- Build consensus around a clear vision. With this done, precedents can be identified and documented and a new place codified.
- Code only what matters then hire good architects. Surprisingly little is essential to code most great places. As the list of rules grows in an effort to outlaw kitsch, the opportunity to produce truly excellent buildings may diminish.
- Enforce the code with an eye toward exceptions. The importance of enforcing the code is obvious. While enforcing the code, permit exceptions which make the place, well, exceptional.

Design codes for New Urbanist communities give priority to choices that benefit community, at times at the expense of our individual choices. For those who value community, a design code is an excellent tool to balance the physical requirements of community with the individual needs of its citizens. Design codes have proven to be successful in this part of the country for over 200 years.

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Kentlands Urban Regulations (Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company)

THE B-PLAN IN GERMANY

Katja Stille considers the relative role of plans in German housing developments



Left Vauban, Freiburg
Aerial View of a residential court
Right Kirchsteigfeld, Potsdam Aerial View



The German *Bebauungsplan* (B-plan) is often referred to as a role model for the use of design codes in England with the quality of recent housing developments being cited in support of the effectiveness of the B-plan. To what extent can best practice in German housing be attributed to the B-plan and the planning process and what other factors play a key part in their success?

In general B-plans are prepared for inner city areas, areas of change where development pressure is high or where there is a need to stimulate development. They designate urban development, acceptable land uses and development form, and make provision for infrastructure. They are prepared by local authorities themselves or in partnership with private developers and they are legally binding for any landowner who seeks planning permission.

In both Freiburg and Potsdam, the local authorities shared an aspiration to create new settlements of high ecological value and to avoid low-density, land hungry suburbanisation. Freiburg is unique in terms of an extraordinarily engaged local authority, which, together with an active general public, provided the driving force behind the Vauban project. Freiburg City was in the fortunate position to be able to acquire the land and therefore retain crucial control over the development. In Potsdam, the local authority also maintained a high degree of involvement throughout the development process at Kirchsteigfeld by forming a legal partnership with the master developer.

PREPARATION OF THE B-PLAN

Local authorities take the decision

to prepare a B-plan for a certain area in response to specific developer interest or to prevent unsuitable development taking place. Developers become involved in initiating, funding and preparing B-plans on behalf of local authorities in order to gain certainty, by setting detailed principles for development form and density. This is especially important as detailed planning applications in Germany incorporate all aspects of planning and building control.

The preparation of a B-plan takes up to two years and follows procedures formally set out in the federal building law. Depending on resources, the local authority prepares B-plans either in-house or commissions external consultants. Generally local Authorities throughout are better staffed than in England with skilled architects and urban designers. The approach to a particular B-plan can vary and depends on the local authority, their aims and local planning law. However, the B-plan always takes the same form, a format that is generic and regulated throughout Germany.

In Vauban, after the decision to prepare a B-plan was taken, the local authority announced an urban design competition to establish the best possible design solution for the site. This approach is common in Germany. Design teams are invited to submit proposals in accordance with a brief written by the local authority whilst a jury selects the best submission. It is best practice for the jury to consult resident representatives, landowners and landscape architects. The selected scheme then provides the basis for the B-plan.

Unfortunately, this approach does not necessarily ensure consistent design quality as the competition winning team is frequently not chosen to translate the design into the legal B-plan documentation. In Potsdam, by contrast, the developer chose to initiate a workshop with ten invited architects to design the scheme. One of these subsequently prepared the B-plan and thereafter retained a long term involvement with the project.

THE FORMAT OF THE B-PLAN

Any B-plan must set out the use for land and buildings, designate land on which development may take place and areas that are reserved for infrastructure. The B-plan is also permitted to address issues such as plot sizes, building lines, building heights, roof forms, areas for communal facilities, affordable, sheltered or assisted housing, areas of private and public open space, the maximum number of dwellings, and more recently, ecological requirements.

The key mechanisms to control urban form are: site coverage, maximum building height, and the *Baufenster*. The *Baufenster* sets out the area within which any development has to be located. It is defined by two different boundary conditions: *Baulinie* (build-to line) and *Baugrenze* (building boundary). The former describes the line on which a building has to be located and the latter the maximum footprint it may occupy.

The federal building law sets out a broad list of possible designations that define the scope of a B-plan and beyond which no requirements are permissible. It also defines the format and graphic conventions to be used. A B-plan comprises a regulating plan accompanied by a written statement explaining the context, setting out objectives, and justifying the requirements. This statement can vary in length and detail, but the regulating plan follows a standard format. Scale and notation are defined; for example, particular categories, colours and hatchings for specific land uses. This enables an immediate understanding and minimises any opportunity for misinterpretation. Illustrative elements, such as 3-d visuals, may be attached but do not form part of the legal document.

The requirements of a particular B-plan, including both the regulating plan and the written justification, allow no room for interpretation. However, a local authority may tailor their plan to their specific needs, deciding on the level of detail and prescription. For instance, the Potsdam B-plan comprises a very prescriptive regulating plan, whereas Freiburg focuses on the textual justification.

In Vauban a number of objectives had been established at the outset and the B-plan was tailored to ensure their delivery: offering housing opportunities to young families, creating a variety of built form, encouraging mix of tenure and unit sizes and counteracting suburbanisation. The plan gives little guidance on the architectural approach, and it only uses the highly prescriptive 'build-to' line along the main avenue, with a more flexible building line requirement elsewhere. However, it prescribes detailed plot sizes and is very specific about environmental targets. Mandatory plot sizes are significant, because, when sold as small sites, they allow small developers to become involved and so promote built form variety.

Each developer appointed an architect, and the result is variety in design and the feeling of a naturally grown built environment. The local authority's aims were successfully translated through the B-plan, whilst retaining a degree of flexibility.

By comparison, the B-plan for Kirchsteigfeld is more prescriptive. It combines strategically placed 'build-to lines' with minimal sized *Baufenster*. It allows for little flexibility and virtually dictate the location and footprint of each building. It also strictly controls roof forms and the location and nature of car parking. Both B-plans set out building heights, densities, land uses, location of streets and open spaces and ecological requirements.

The primary purpose of a B-plan does not include architectural control, as Germany has a basic law that protects the freedom to build. Nevertheless local authorities may enact regional statutes containing detailed aesthetic regulations for certain areas. These may be embedded in a B-plan, giving them the same legal weight as the plan itself. They may include guidelines on roof forms, roof slopes, windows, dormers, materials, boundary treatments and colours.

APPROVAL PROCESSES

The adoption of a B-plan by a local authority follows set procedures of public and stakeholder consultations and formal adoption by local authority members. After a B-plan is formally adopted the public can make no objection to individual proposals that conform to it. The legal status of the plan results in a high level of acceptance and the previous consultations with



The B-plan has no room for interpretation, so the process is not dependant on the skill or opinions of planning officers or members

Top Vauban, Freiburg Detail of B-plan

Middle Vauban. Homezone implemented by the local authority. Buildings by individual plot owner using an architect.

Above Vauban Roof forms (other than a pitch between 0 and 30°) and architecture are not controlled



Top Kirchsteigfeld, Potsdam Extract of B-plan
Middle Kirchsteigfeld Street implemented by the developer on behalf of the local authority. Buildings by developer using different architects
Above Kirchsteigfeld, Potsdam prescribed roof form (pitched roofs between 30-45°)

developers and the general public during plan preparation preempt later debates and disagreements. Reviews of B-plans are not mandatory, and some areas are covered by twenty-year-old plans, many of which are now out of date.

Where there is an adopted B-plan, the approval process for applications is an administrative procedure, checking against the B-plan and the technical building regulations. The B-plan has no room for interpretation, so the process is not dependant on the skill or opinions of planning officers or members. In practice the legal status of the B-plan results in numerous lengthy legal battles, whereby development approval may result from a legal loophole rather than the merits of the proposals.

Generally, however, where a B-plan is adopted, development must comply with it, although two procedures allow for development to be given permission without compliance with the B-plan, Exceptions and Dispensations.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

B-plans are implemented by a variety of parties. Local authorities generally implement infrastructure in advance of plots being developed and developers build out the plots. Potsdam is an exception in that the developer provided the technical infrastructure on behalf of the local authority.

Householders play a key role in German housing development because a volume housebuilding industry does not exist and much housing is effectively self-build. The largest public and private sector developers of Vauban Phase One built 36 and 48 units respectively out of a total of 386 units. These numbers reflect a series of initiatives set up by Freiburg to prioritise individual or cooperative development over housebuilders.

Potsdam was procured differently because a single master developer was involved. This procurement route is uncommon in Germany. It also differs from England in the sense that the developer retains a long-term interest as the landlord of rental properties. As a result the developer has an active interest in achieving a high quality of design and construction, and in creating an attractive place. To achieve these aims the developer retained a close working relationship with their architects who took on a supervisory role throughout.

CONCLUSIONS

Vauban and Kirchsteigfeld are both successful in achieving their particular aims. However this is as much a result of the procurement and development process as it is of the B-plan. Any plan has its limitations and Vauban would not be the development it is today if the local authority had not been able to support private building cooperatives and if the local community had not been so active. Kirchsteigfeld on the other hand mirrors a developer led process.

However, neither is typical of practice in Germany. A large number, if not the majority, of B-plans have not been designed to create forward-thinking developments or to push the boundaries of sustainable design. All too often, B-Plans have resulted in monotonous, land hungry developments of single-family homes that are unsustainable in terms of access, mix of tenure and use. The mechanism of a B-plan only leads to high quality development with an enlightened local authority and good designers to prepare it.

Katja Stille is a Senior Urban Designer with Tibbalds Planning & Urban Design

THINGS ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT DOWN UNDER

Adam Davies draws lessons for England from the Queensland new planning system

In 1998 a new regulatory system for planning in Queensland began with the commencement of the Integrated Planning Act 1997. This act introduced a code based planning system in Queensland. A new set of approval processes was also established, which included:

- Exempt development – does not require approval before a commencement of use or works,
- Self-assessable development – does not require approval, but which an applicant must determine satisfies a code or codes,
- Code assessment – development requiring approval that must satisfy the requirements of a code or codes. The scope of assessment is limited to the matters contained in the code, and
- Impact assessment – development requiring approval that must be assessed using a broad range of criteria (not limited by any code).

The new Act required all local authorities to prepare new planning schemes in line with the reforms and to provide for the new assessment regime. This led to local authorities investing heavily in code based planning schemes suitable for meeting a wide range of assessment types. Typically, they developed performance based codes that could satisfy the requirements for different approval processes. Performance based codes generally establish performance criteria, or standards, that must be met and, if able to be defined, an acceptable solution that is deemed to satisfy the performance criteria.

The performance criteria (see box on next page) establish the requirements to be satisfied, in this case the provision of continuous shelter and its form and relationship to street planting and landscaping, whilst the acceptable solution identifies one way in which these can be achieved. Where a proposal meets the acceptable solution it is deemed to satisfy the performance criteria. However, a performance based approach allows for alternatives to the acceptable solutions, provided any alternative solution can be demonstrated to meet the performance criteria.

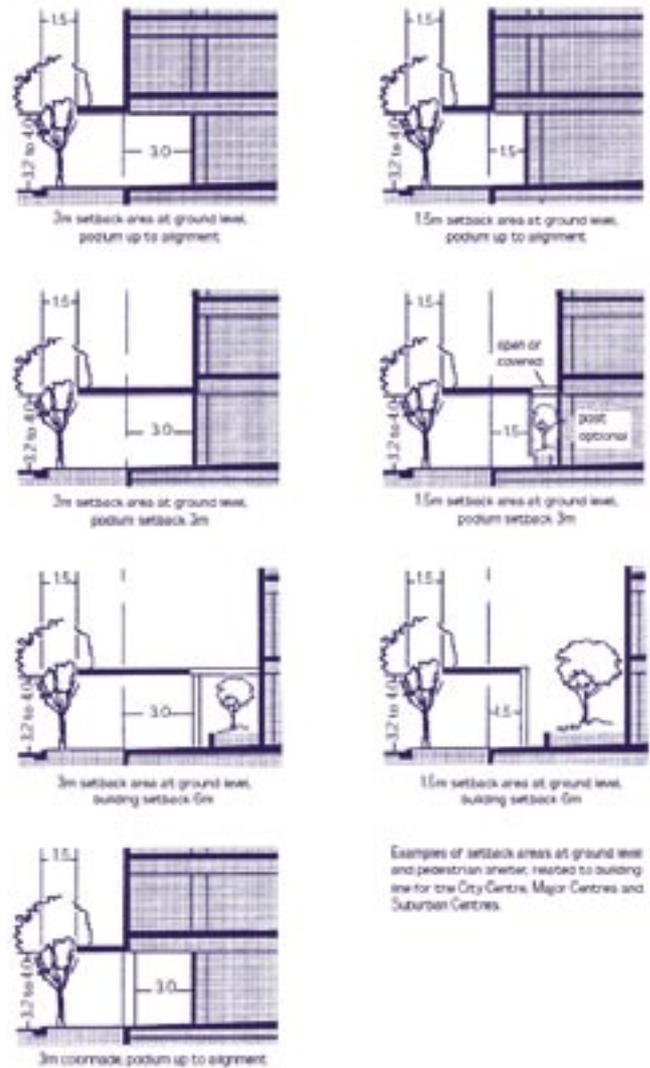
SELF-ASSESSABLE CODES

The Act allowed for development to be deemed self-assessable by local authorities. If a development falls within a defined category, it can proceed without assessment by a local authority, provided it is deemed by its proponent to satisfy the requirements of a code or codes. Self-assessment has therefore seen the development of codes where there is no discretion or ambiguity in relation to determining compliance.

This has been used primarily for small-scale development with minor effects, where codes can easily be defined to meet land-use, sustainability and design policy and to mitigate any potentially harmful effects. Examples of code requirements for the development of housing in certain areas of Brisbane are shown on this page. Performance criteria are still identified, as a proposal would be subject to code assessment should any of the acceptable solutions not be able to be met.

LESSONS FOR ENGLAND - THE PLANNING SYSTEM

Clearly there are major differences in the legislative and operational framework governing the use of codes between the Queensland and English planning systems. Coding in Queensland is much broader than that being considered in the English planning system, where design codes have generally



focused on the urban design aspects of development. In this respect, codes in Queensland generally identify all the requirements for development, with no provision for the consideration of reserved matters as allowed in England.

In Queensland, codes are almost exclusively prepared for local authorities. However, given their size, with populations ranging from 700,000 to less than 400 people, and the consequent availability of skills and resources, a high proportion of code based planning schemes are prepared by consultants. The preparation of code based planning schemes is lengthy and complex. Since 1998, approximately 37% of planning schemes have been adopted by local authorities. The remaining schemes are all nearing completion but it has been a resource intensive period.

In England, the preparation of design codes is not mandated, and their use

Brisbane City Council performance criteria establish the requirements to be satisfied

EXAMPLE OF PERFORMANCE CRITERIA AND ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Pedestrians, footpaths and pathways must be protected from rain and sun by shelter that:

- is continuous and compatible with existing pedestrian shelter
- allows for street trees and other landscaping

Any pedestrian way covered by an awning must be adequately lit to ensure pedestrian safety and amenity while not causing nuisance to surrounding residents

ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION

Pedestrian shelter is by awnings, consistent with the character of the Centre, and:

- abuts footpaths
- is provided and maintained by the building owner on their premises
- includes under awning lighting
- protects the normal flow of pedestrians
- is continuous across the frontage/s of a site
- aligns to provide continuity with shelter on adjoining sites
- is a minimum 3.2m and generally not more than 4.2m above pavement height
- extends from the face of the building or the property line
- does not extend past a vertical plane 1.5m inside the kerbline to enable street trees to be planted and grow or 0.6m inside the kerbline where trees are established
- has 0.5m clearance to any tree trunk and main branches
- aligns with existing awnings where the footpath has been widened
- is cantilevered from the main building with any posts within the footpath being non-load-bearing

is at the discretion of local planning authorities and/or developers. The formal planning process for assessing proposals is the same irrespective of whether a design code has been prepared or not, but in practice design codes are seen, and are being promoted, as informal mechanisms that can lead to more efficient development control assessment times through a more transparent and accountable system of detailing requirements for the built environment.

Design coding is also being associated with Local Development Orders (LDOs) as a local authority tool to allow for the delivery of new development through the assignment of permitted development rights. Using this approach, permitted development rights take effect where a proposal satisfies the conditions of requirements established through the order. No assessment is required to ensure that a proposal satisfies the conditions or requirements of the order, although a design code attached to a LDO would identify the requirements that must be satisfied before permitted development rights take effect. In this sense, LDOs are comparable to self-assessment in Queensland. However, it is worth noting that self-assessment in Queensland has predominantly been used for small-scale development where a local authority can confidently define all the requirements to be satisfied in the absence of an approval process.

In England, LDOs are being promoted as vehicles for the delivery of large-scale development. In the context of assigning permitted development rights it is questionable whether a local authority can code for all the requirements to the degree of specificity and clarity to allow proponents to determine whether they comply with the code. The risks associated with this approach are:

- Code drafters will need to identify all the mandatory requirements to a degree which removes any discretion in their application,
- There are no provisions allowing for design solutions that exceed the requirements of the code, therefore limiting innovation and creativity, and
- There is no provision for checking to ensure that the development complies with a code, which potentially could increase pressure on planning enforcement.

It is possible for LDOs to set conditions that must be satisfied prior to permitted development rights taking effect. Theoretically it would be possible for a local authority to require the submission of drawings to demonstrate compliance with a design code, therefore allowing a compliance check before permitted development rights take effect. However, there is a high degree of uncertainty in relation to determining disagreements as there is no provision for appeal where an LDO is in force. These uncertainties will need to be clarified and appropriate solutions identified before design codes associated with LDOs can be used by local authorities with confidence.

LESSONS FOR ENGLAND - CODE DRAFTING AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

Although the new planning system in Queensland is still in its infancy, some problems with the new coding approach have already been identified. These issues have particular relevance for the future use of design codes in England. To a large extent these problems are a result of the skills required and resources given to drafting and assessing codes.

Wypych et al¹ identifies a number of problems with some of the new performance based codes in Queensland:

- Performance criteria lacked specificity and the manner in which they could be met was poorly defined. This led to applicants experiencing difficulty in understanding what was required of them and assessors having difficulty in determining whether the required standard or performance could be met,
- Where codes were highly specified it could lead to poor development outcomes, where the dumbing down of standards to allow tick and flick assessment resulted in a lowest common-denominator form of regulatory provision and design,
- Applicable code requirements were not clearly identified, resulting in proponents not being aware of all the performance requirements to be met,
- In some cases there was conflict and inconsistency within and between codes. This was particularly problematic where

an applicant was required to satisfy incompatible requirements from different codes.

The skills of development control officers are also integral to a code based planning system, particularly when using a performance based approach. Early experience in Queensland has shown a tendency to over-rely on compliance with acceptable solutions, with local authority officers often defending acceptable solutions over alternative solutions that sought to demonstrate compliance with performance criteria. There is a clear need to ensure that development control officers are trained in assessing proposals against performance based codes. Failure to do so can lead to increases in assessment times and proposals being refused on inappropriate grounds. Applicants also need to prepare a clear rationale to demonstrate how proposals meet performance criteria.

CONCLUSIONS

The experience of coding in Queensland has shown that coding is complex, requires specific skills for its use and is resource intensive. However, if a code is based on clear principles and founded on a thorough investigation of a place there are clear benefits in relation to accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency. Potential users must prepare themselves for using codes to gain the benefits of such a process.

Some of the key actions required to increase the effectiveness of codes and reduce any risks in the English context include:

1. The most appropriate mechanism for enforcing codes (either through planning or land ownership mechanisms) must be determined early in the coding process. Extreme caution should be exercised in using LDOs for large scale development. The risks associated with defining mandatory and non-discretionary elements to such a degree as to be able to assign permitted development rights with confidence, are high. Failure to account for the limitations of using an LDO could potentially reduce the quality of development and place undue pressure on planning enforcement.
2. Local authorities must be clear in their determination of local design, infrastructure, traffic and sustainability policies. Failure to do so increases the risks of inappropriate code requirements and undermines the effectiveness of codes in achieving efficiency gains where determinations against codes do not reflect the requirements which have been codified.

3. Local members and professionals must be engaged in the coding process, particularly to ensure that local policies are upheld through the codes.

4. Code drafters should adopt a consistent approach to code drafting. Codes should be consistent in their structure, layout, language and treatment of mandatory and advisory elements. Failure to do so can lead to ambiguity in relation to the operation of codes.

5. Local authorities must provide adequate resources, including professional resources, to ensure that assessment processes can achieve expected efficiency gains. This includes investing in the skills of development control officers to use design codes.

6. Proposals should clearly identify how they satisfy code requirements. Clear and succinct plans, elevations and an analysis of the proposal should be prepared to demonstrate compliance with code requirements.

The experience of coding in Queensland has shown that coding is complex, requires specific skills for its use and is resource intensive

Further clarity is needed to determine how design codes can effectively be used with LDOs, how they can promote innovation and creativity, and their relationship with sustainability measures, particularly where these overlap with other approval processes and legislative requirements. A coding approach does offer benefits to developers, local authorities and communities. However, code preparation and use must be: undertaken on the basis of sound principles, resourced appropriately by skilled, multi-disciplinary professionals, and given appropriate time for formulation, adoption and implementation.

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1. Wypych, S., Sipe, N. & Baker, Douglas, 2005, Performance-based planning in Queensland, *Australian Planner*, 42 (3), 26-31.

DESIGN CODING IN AMSTERDAM – BORNEO AND SPORENBURG

Graham Smith describes the application of codes to developments in Amsterdam



Lampenistenstraat, housing by Atelier Zienstra van der Pol (left) and DKV Architekten (right)

Dutch planning has benefited from a vision with a strong design emphasis throughout much of the 20th century. Recently design codes have been introduced as an informal mechanism in the evolving planning and design process. The experience is reflected upon here, based on an interview with Martin Biewenga of West 8, who was responsible for the code at Borneo and Sporenburg in Amsterdam.

In 1989, the plan for the Eastern Harbour District in Amsterdam laid the conceptual framework for 8000 new dwellings. Significant government grants were made available, provided the development met certain requirements for density, housing mix and programme. By the time the development of Borneo and Sporenburg was being planned in 1992, the requirement was for a density of 100 units per ha, 70% owner occupied housing, and an aspiration to provide family units with ground level entrances to counterbalance the earlier phases.

THE USE OF CODES

Design codes exist in the Netherlands within a complex system of planning policy and guidance, although, unlike other documents, their preparation is not mandatory. The primary motivation is the desire to achieve quality or character in the design of particular places. As such,

design coding is always site based.

For Martin Biewenga, the design code is a tool that mainly relates to the design of buildings rather than to layout or public space issues. As such it is quite distinct from the *Bestemmingsplan*, the official zoning document which parallels the B-plan used in Germany. Instead, codes are typically only used in the larger more ambitious developments, and act as a starting point for detailed design, the intention being to inspire the urban designers and architects involved.

Nevertheless, as in the UK, codes in the Netherlands are not without their critics. Indeed, debate on the subject of codes in the planning system was heightened in 2001 by an outburst from Carel Weeber, architect of the Paperclip housing in Rotterdam Zuid, who called for *Wilde Wonen*, or in sober translation: code-free development.

The Local Authority and/or developers determine that coding will take place, although designers can also instigate discussions leading to a decision to code. Codes themselves are subsequently prepared by an urban designer on behalf of the developer, which may be a development company or the Local Authority or a hybrid. The funding for coding therefore derives from either public, private or a combination of sources.

Whilst the content of the code is site specific, there is a common structure for code documents:

1. Objectives: the characteristics sought
2. The content: How to establish the desired character
3. The process: such as roles of key individuals, lines of responsibility, etc.

THE ROLES OF DIFFERENT PARTIES

Responsibility for the design of developments is shared. Towns in the Netherlands have had a long tradition of appointing a Supervising Architect; an individual responsible for aesthetics,



The 'Whale', one of the Meteorites Frits van Dongen of Architecten Cie., 150 public sector dwellings, 64 private sector rental dwellings, 1,100m² commercial space, 179 car-parking spaces

The primary motivation is the desire to achieve quality or character in the design of particular places

quality, character and sense of place. The masterplan is typically prepared by the Local Authority as part of a structured planning process, with or without a commercial partner. At a second more detailed level, developers are involved at which point the design may be adjusted and coding begun. Developers base their commercial calculations on the resulting proposals. Thus there needs to be some willingness on both sides to compromise although, in the end, schemes cannot go ahead without a developer.

For Borneo Sporenburg, initially six architects were given the exercise of designing 100 houses, each with a parking space and a street-level front door for a notional 1 hectare site. The exercise revealed that the design aspirations were achievable, albeit with the use of back-to-back dwellings. The next stage involved three specialist practices, one in urban planning, one landscape architect and one architect, in generating concepts for the total development of some 600 houses. The coding resulted from this process.

The supervisor has a very important role in coding, and typically works with the developers' urban designer to devise the code and with scheme architects to ensure it is delivered. As with many planning issues, design coding in the Netherlands is not solely a technical process, but has a local political dimension. The supervisor has a duty to encourage politicians to participate, and to represent resulting schemes to the design review committee – the Welstand.

THE CODES THEMSELVES

Coding in the Netherlands is not standardised. The vision for a code can be achieved through a series of simple objectives. Biewenga explains, 'We do not produce a design for the architect but ...cartoon-like principles. For example, principles could include:

- 1 short plot widths (eg. to avoid a large retail box)
- 2 a proposed ground floor height, (eg. if the ground floor is 2.7m, only residential can easily take place whereas a height of 3.5m makes other uses possible)
- 3 a demand for variety in (individual elevations'

In the case of Borneo Sporenburg, West 8 devised a scheme with simple rules:

- 1 houses should all have a front door on the street
- 2 a flat roof
- 3 the same height at the eaves.
- 4 no construction of more than three storeys,
- 5 the first of which must be 3.5 metres high
- 6 despite the absence of space for gardens, the houses must have their own outdoor space, integrated into the dwelling in the form of a patio, roof terrace or loggia
- 7 because of the density of the area, dwellings must be built with a compact, private outdoor space and considerable privacy
- 8 attention had to be devoted to the 'roof-landscape' in order to make the neighbourhood interesting from the three high rise blocks
- 9 a limited number of materials from which the houses could be built
- 10 to create a varied street scene the dwellings in the neighbourhood should be designed by a diversity of architects, from 4 to 100 dwellings².



Top Seinwacherstraat, 'introverted dwelling' by Höhne & Rapp
Middle and above Free parcels, Scheepstimmermanstraat waterside and streetside, individually designed dwellings
 All photographs for this article by Graham Paul Smith

In Borneo Sporenburg, the selection of architects for the low-rise buildings was made collectively by the urban designer, the developer client and the Supervisor. The architects were asked to investigate different house types, and to report back in workshops. The aim was to arrive at several standard types of dwelling, and to 'convert ideas into patterns'².

The workshops also defined a palette of materials, which were to be used for all dwellings. These were:

- 1 A dark red mixed brick
- 2 Oregon pine & Western Red Cedar
- 3 Steel lattice gates
- 4 Robust materials to make sturdy buildings, with connections to the old maritime architecture

A small area of Borneo island was sold as 60 individual freehold plots, although the architects chosen by the parcel owners also had to adhere to guidelines for building height, alignments and building width. The intention was to encourage variety, but within a coherent framework provided by the code.

THE STATUS OF CODES

Different weight attaches to different documents. The plan that has gone through the legal adoption process has the most weight. However, codes are not generally legal documents, making it more challenging for Supervisors to achieve their vision.

Nevertheless, once a proposal is submitted, the Supervisor has a role in assessing it for compliance, before presenting it to the Welstand for review. For developers, codes generally imply greater certainty, and therefore typically carry their support. This may be encouraged by the view that the process of coding in the Netherlands speeds up the overall development process by bringing all parties together to agree on design outcomes.

CONCLUSION

In the case of Borneo Sporenburg, design coding has been successful in achieving what it set out to do so, creating a better quality, innovative, built environment. One of the most important lessons from the Netherlands experience is the benefit derived from employing a Supervisor designer to oversee the development of a basic plan, and to drive forward the case for the code.

On reflection, one should recognise the danger that a code may become too restrictive, a danger that could be multiplied by the involvement of a poor supervisor. However, with the right supervisor in place, the code can play an important role in helping to deliver the vision. The overall aim must be to create an atmosphere where stakeholders can share the enthusiasm for design and strive together to create a better quality development. Coding encourages this to happen, and, as in Borneo Sporenburg, can play an important role in helping to deliver clearly very contemporary architectural and urban design solutions.

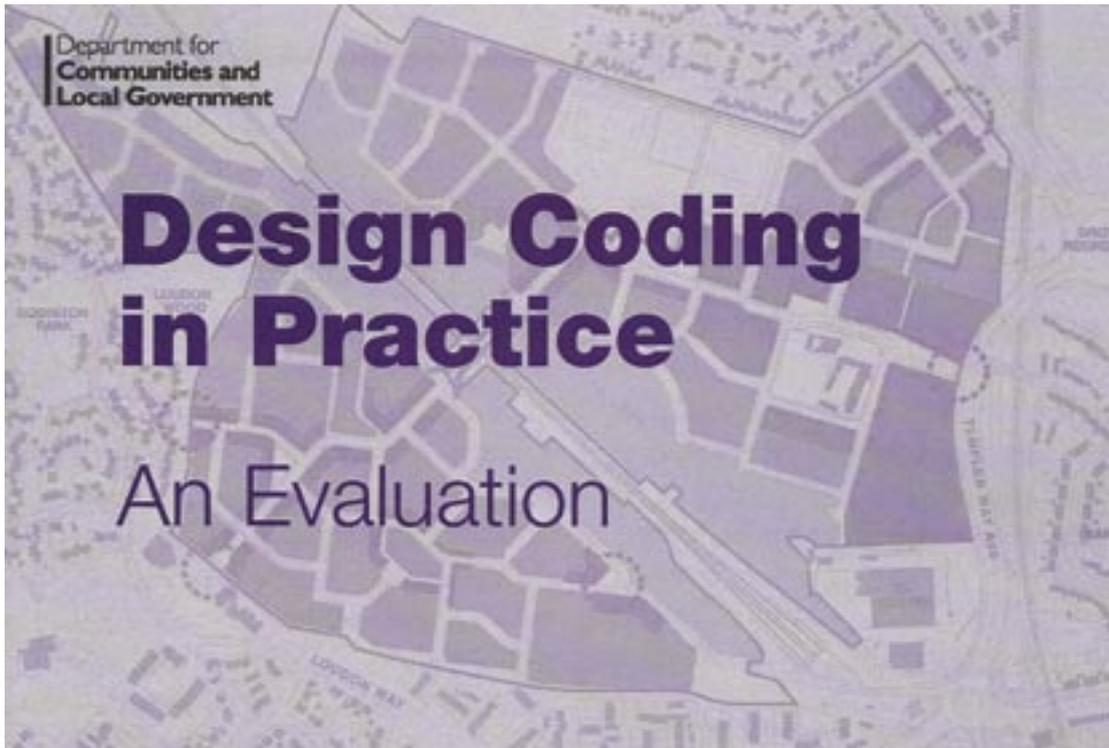
Graham Paul Smith is an urban designer and an artist who works as an independent consultant and lectures in the Joint Centre for Urban Design at Oxford Brookes University.

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DESIGN CODES IN ENGLAND, WHERE TO NOW?

Matthew Carmona and Jane Dann draw lesson for the future of codes



THE EVIDENCE, ADDING VALUE THROUGH CODING

The evidence base on the potential of design codes is now substantial, having been greatly added to by the Government's own action research programme.

As a particularly robust form of design guidance, design codes can play a major role in delivering better quality development, and this should be the major reason for opting to use them. They also have a significant role to play in delivering a more certain design and development process, and – if properly managed – can provide the focus around which teams of professional stakeholders can integrate their activities, delivering in the process a more coordinated and consensus driven development process.

For this they require a significant up-front investment in time and resources from all parties, although the evidence suggests that for commercial interests this seems to be compensated by the enhanced economic value that better design and a stronger sense of place can deliver. Although codes make no discernable difference to the length of the formal stages of the planning process, the process of applying for and obtaining reserved matters consents can, over time, be more streamlined and predictable if based on design coding.

The research therefore concluded that – in appropriate circumstances – design codes are valuable tools to deliver a range of more sustainable processes and built developments.

DESIGN CODES, MISCONCEPTIONS AND REALITY

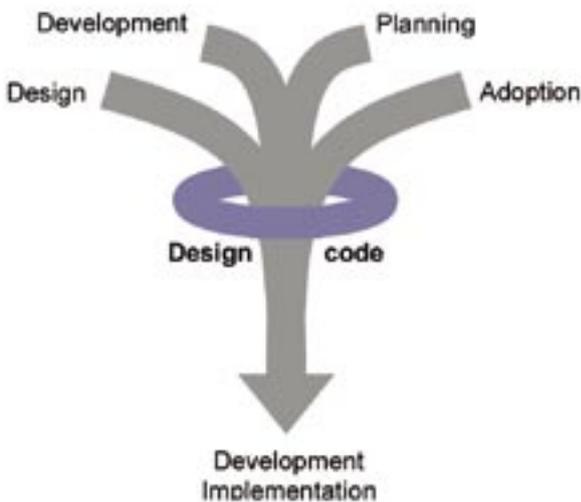
However, discussions about the use of design codes (both in the UK and overseas) have often given rise to conflicting views about their use and potential. Arguments against codes tend to focus on a limited range of critiques, typically advanced by those with little direct experience of their use, and seemingly based on the association of codes exclusively with neo-traditional design solutions. As such, a number of misconceptions are common.

Some argue, for example, that design codes stifle the creativity of designers and give rise to formulaic design

solutions. In fact, design codes, building on a masterplan, cannot be prepared without creative design skills, a point confirmed repeatedly in the international experiences explored in this topic. By contrast, most volume housebuilding in the UK (so far the main target for design coding) has typically occurred without significant design input by architects and urban designers.

Instead, much volume housebuilding has been based on the formulaic solutions dictated by developers' standard house types, the standard road types and layouts of highways authorities, and the amenity space standards of planning authorities. Design codes represent an opportunity to break away from these by encouraging stakeholders to think holistically and together about each development in its entirety as a unique place. The evidence suggests that even within the most detailed codes there is scope to produce dramatically different designs, whilst still retaining the essential coordinating elements of quality.

Another frequent complaint is that design codes are concerned with delivering traditional architectural solutions. The reality is that although in recent years design codes have been associated with neo-traditional architecture, for example Kentlands in the US, experiences in places such as Greenwich Millennium Village and Newhall in the UK, and those in Germany



and the Netherlands, suggest that coded developments can also promote innovative contemporary architecture.

Other critics suggest that design codes lead to excessively bureaucratic decision-making. In fact design codes are simply tools to represent the various design components of a particular development, and their use need not be any more or less bureaucratic than any other design tool, including masterplans, design frameworks, or development briefs. Experience in the US, and in many recent examples of coding in the UK, demonstrates that design codes are often used as private control instruments, completely outside of the statutory planning process. Equally, experience in Europe and Australia demonstrates that codes can have an important role within the public planning process, helping to establish the common parameters within which private developers can be liberated.

A related point is that design codes are excessively prescriptive and restrictive. In reality, each code is different and decisions concerning their relative prescription will be made in the light of local circumstances and the vision of the code's designer and those who commission it. Typically some aspects are prescriptive (eg. building lines), whilst others are more flexible (eg. architectural treatments). This reflects the key role of design codes to establish and fix the 'must have' design elements of a development and, in so doing, providing consistent quality across large sites and over time.

Finally, some critiques focus on the perception that design codes are cost cutting devices, designed to cut out the work of architects and planners, leading to design and decision-making by rote. In reality design codes cannot be prepared without a considerable up-front investment in design time, skills and resources, and the positive engagement of all key stakeholders (one of their key benefits). Only rarely, such as in the particular case of Queensland in Australia, have systems of coding been introduced to by-pass formal planning approvals processes; in that case, not wholly without problems.

In England, if codes are attached to Local Development Orders (LDOs), effectively to extend permitted development rights to everything covered in the code, the implication may indeed mean less time spent by local authority planners at the stages of scheme design and project implementation. The corollary of this will be more time spent up-front, involved in formulating and agreeing the code in the first place. This idea of front-loading professional time (both planning and design) was a key objective of the 2004 planning reforms. It is inherent in positive, proactive planning, and if achieved should represent a major benefit for all those concerned. However, we would be right to explore this option with extreme caution.

The international experience explored in this issue and, increasingly, evidence from the UK, helps to confirm that the misconceptions have little basis in fact. Indeed, the Government's action research suggested that used correctly, codes have an important role to play in helping to deliver high quality design in development sectors that have lacked it in the recent past; particularly to deliver better quality large-scale predominantly residential developments. In other sectors they are less tested, although they have also been used successfully to deliver both commercial and mixed-use developments in the UK and overseas.

Of course, just like any other form of detailed design guidance, if codes themselves are poorly formulated, or used inappropriately, then they can be as much part of the problem as part of the solution. The experience of using B-plans in Germany seems to confirm this point.

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

So should we all be producing codes? The short answer to this question is no. As design codes are just one possibility amongst a range of detailed design guidance options, it is important to

understand where they should and should not be used. In this regard, they would not normally be of value for small sites, or where only one developer and design team is involved. Conversely, codes seem most valuable when sites possess one or more of the following characteristics:

- Large sites (or multiple smaller related sites) that will be built out over a long period of time
- Sites in multiple ownership
- Sites that are likely to be developed by different developers and/or design teams.

This reflects the key benefit of design codes, namely their ability to coordinate the outputs of multiple teams and development phases across large sites in order to realise a design vision. Delivering new development entails a series of linked but often disparate processes. Design codes have a potential role to play in each, but more than that, they can bring together these processes and those involved in them, requiring an engagement in detailed discussions to resolve issues that may otherwise cause tensions and undermine the quality of the built result:

- Design processes – design codes are tools to set the detailed urban design parameters of projects across the different scales of design intervention, from street and block sizes and layouts to landscape and architectural concerns, in order to help achieve a co-ordinated vision for a place
- Development processes – design codes provide a means through which stakeholders can explore and negotiate detailed design options, and allow these concerns to feed into costing models and development options from an early stage
- Planning processes – design codes provide a ready means to consider, establish and adopt design parameters in a more objective manner, and then to regulate and monitor design solutions through the development control process
- Adoption processes – design codes allow adoption considerations i.e. highways, open space and drainage, to be coordinated at an early stage with design, development and planning matters, and provide explicit standards for rigorous enforcement where necessary.

However, design codes do not sit in isolation and are certainly no panacea for delivering better quality development. Instead, a number of pre-requisites are necessary for success:

1. getting the process of coding right
2. getting the right coding team in place
3. being prepared to make the necessary up-front investment in time and resources
4. building a commitment to design quality across the team and between public and private interests
5. delivering on the basis of a strong site-based vision (typically a masterplan)
6. possessing the necessary design skills and leadership to drive the coding process forward.

Detailed advice on these aspects of design coding is provided in the supplement to Planning Policy Statement 3 – *Preparing Design Codes, A Practice Manual*.

The experience of using design codes in England suggests that none of this will be simple. A steep learning curve will be required for those new to coding. Nevertheless, as has been the case elsewhere in the world, coding can become a mainstream part of the design and development process for large sites, and a tool for public and private sector partners alike. The evidence suggests that the investment will pay dividends over the long-term.

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Opposite page top and middle Upton, different design approaches within a code, HTA Architects Ltd and Tibbalds

Opposite page bottom Design Codes, an integrative force

Above top Contemporary and innovative architecture at Vauban. Germany Forum Vauban e.V.

Above Greenwich Millennium Village Proctor Matthews Architects

If codes themselves are poorly formulated, or used inappropriately, then they can be as much part of the problem as part of the solution



The Renfrew Riverside Story

Lawrence Reville recounts a tale of private sector regeneration in Scotland

By 1997 the Clyde estuary west of Glasgow had become a wasteland. The big shipyards had closed, the docks lay idle and the coal fired power stations had gone. And the people had gone with them. In Renfrew, the only development proposed was a beautifully designed but nevertheless conventional out-of-town retail mall in a large car park, given planning permission at appeal, designed to exploit the accessibility of the M8 that ran nearby.

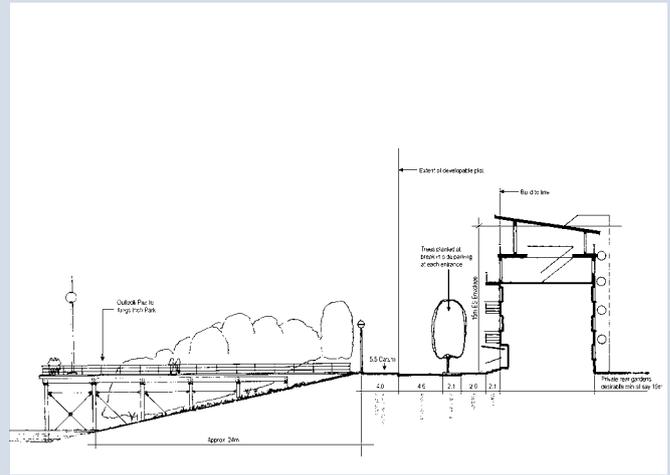
In that year, Capital Shopping Centres (CSC) bought the heavily contaminated 113 hectares site. They acquired the right to build the shopping centre and they took ownership of a large part of the barren and contaminated wasteland, including a mile of waterfront to the River Clyde. As a well-informed developer CSC had followed closely the arguments (still on-going, but now nearing completion) put forward by David Lock Associates that the Merry Hill Shopping Centre in the West Midlands could be transformed and integrated through regeneration and development of surrounding land to become a new town centre, with all that that means in physical, economic social, and political terms and, most important in the light of PPG6, planning status. They believed that Renfrew Riverside could follow a similar route.

David Lock Associates (DLA) were commissioned in 1998 to prepare a development framework for the wasteland area alongside the shopping centre that would use the land to create new homes and jobs and leisure facilities within a web of new streets and public open spaces. These would, over time, integrate the new shopping centre much more effectively with the community of Renfrew, providing that community with new facilities and, for the first time, access to the river banks.

DLA's tender for the work contained a first impression of the character and volume of development that might be realised on the site. This initial concept placed greatest emphasis on the transformation of the main road through the site – King's Inch Road – into an elegant boulevard that would also provide a traffic by-pass to Renfrew from Glasgow Airport to connect to the M8 and would open up the land for development with improved traffic and public transport access.

The centrepiece of this initial framework was to be a park (an obligation from the original planning permission, but relocated) with a new public frontage to the river, properly connected to the town for the first time. There was to be a major leisure attraction to complement the shopping centre, several hundred new homes well integrated with the existing town, and areas of office based employment to create a rich mix throughout the area. These components have survived several iterations of the plan and are now being implemented.

CSC worked closely with Renfrewshire Council to develop and to refine the overall plan, not just for its own site, but for other derelict land in the area. A detailed and complex transport model was developed for the whole riverside area to ensure that the proposals, and in particular the new street network and the quanta of development, were robust. The Council ensured that flood protection was dealt with, that sustainable travel patterns were established early and that traffic impacts were minimised, and that the benefits of new development to the whole community were realised. This resulted in a second framework plan which demonstrated a simpler and more robust



Opposite page Renfrew Riverside, Aerial view 1998
Left top Renfrew revised aerial
Left Masterplan 2000
Above Typical section

approach to the new street network with a clear emphasis on the key public spaces related to the river.

Outline planning permission was granted for the whole of CSC's land in 2003. The main components were: an Xscape leisure complex with real snow slope, multiscreen cinema and associated places for eating and drinking and for shopping related to extreme sports; new office development adjoining the river; more than 2000 homes - high density housing next to the river, medium to high density housing south of a new Boulevard; a new public park (Clyde View Park, the first in Renfrew for more than 40 years); and a completely new network of streets and other spaces with fully renewed infrastructure. This was accompanied by a revised master plan that sits within the overall framework but is confined to the CSC land.

The planning permission imposes a complex system of sequential planning conditions that require implementation of the overall framework and the development of parcels in a rational manner, each phase preceded by a detailed development and design brief. This has been the main source of planning control exercised by an enlightened planning authority, Renfrewshire Council. CSC as master developer has used this process to impose high quality requirements on new developments in recognition of the potential to raise land values through good urban design. David Lock Associates have been retained throughout to prepare the necessary guidance documents prior to sites being sold to specialist development partners.

CSC has invested in the creation of a new, high quality public realm and has undergrounded powerlines to transform very negative

perceptions of the area. King's Inch Road was once a part of the Glasgow conurbation to be avoided for fear of crime and of the effect that it could have on a car's suspension, but now it is an elegant boulevard that provides the primary address in the Renfrew Riverside area. The Xscape leisure complex, a joint venture between CSC and Capital and Regional Developments, is now open and trading very well. Several hundred homes have been completed on the site near the waterfront, all sold off plan, attractive because of the setting and their unique offer in a crowded market place. Detailed planning consent has been granted for the rest of the housing areas. And CSC have been so convinced of the commercial soundness of the plan that they have purchased more land - primarily the redundant distribution centre in the heart of the site - to integrate that development opportunity with the rest of the land.

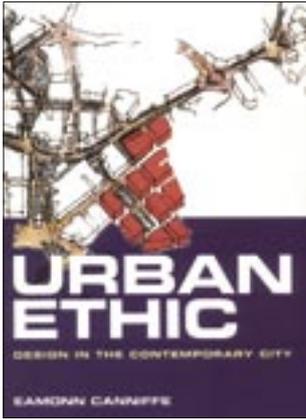
The process has been a catalyst for the redevelopment of other sites, notably at Renfrew Ferry where the High Street meets the river. Here Clydeport has committed itself to a high quality residential redevelopment on land adjoining CSC's in a much more positive economic and political context. David Lock Associates have been retained to advise on this project also.

Ownership and control of all of the land and infrastructure has been the key to accelerated implementation. Uniquely in Scotland this massive regeneration project has been carried out entirely by CSC and its partners with no call on public sector funding.

Lawrence Revill is a director of David Lock Associates

URBAN ETHIC, DESIGN IN THE CONTEMPORARY CITY

EAMONN CANNIFFE, ROUTLEDGE, 2006, £35



ISBN 0415 34865

A renewed search for theories of the urban environment are perhaps the consequence of a perceived confusion and lack of direction in the current planning and design of cities. This book comes shortly after Shane's *Recombinant Urbanism* (reviewed in UD 98) but while the latter tries to base urban theory on pure sciences such as biology, Canniffe connects his to history and reflects on the movements of the past quarter of a century to try to build a methodology.

The first part of the book summarises several centuries of urban development divided into three periods: the Historic City from Antiquity to sometime in the 18th Century; the

Industrial City which ends shortly after the second World War with the failure of Modernism; and the current and problematic Post-Industrial City. Summarising several millennia in such a short space is a feat of synthesis and somehow Canniffe manages it through the selection of significant examples and by making perceptive connections.

The current post-industrial period is the butt of Canniffe's critique: the two apparently opposing movements – Neo-modernism exemplified by Rem Koolhaas, and the New Urbanism of Duany and Plater-Zyberk – are similar in that they reinforce inequalities and exclusion, one through its idealisation of the images of limitless capitalism, the other through its backward looking and elitist nostalgia.

The development of a methodology takes the second part of the book: the four elements which comprise this 'model of urbanism' are given a chapter each: Patterns, Narratives, Monuments and Spaces. The first of these is fairly straightforward interpretation of the current canon of urban design, more concerned with urban morphology than with architectural styles. The chapter on Monuments is also relatively easy to comprehend but the approach and the examples seem surprisingly narrow in

scope and British-centred.

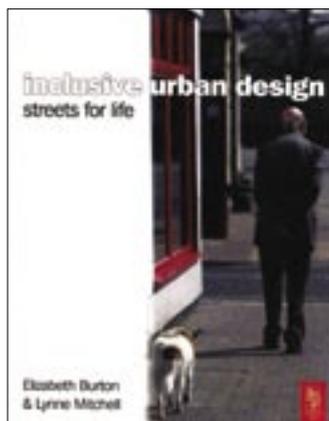
It is the other two elements that are particularly difficult, partly because of their abstract character and partly because of the way they are considered. In the first of these, a lengthy discussion of the Situationist movement seems strange, particularly when someone like Patrick Wright is ignored. More fundamental is the lack of clarity of how narratives can be useful in practice. The chapter on Spaces is fortunately easier and makes some valid points. But the principal test of the method must be the conclusion, where the author should give an indication of the potential applications of his ideas and in particular how they may achieve a better urban environment. Unfortunately the last chapter sounds utterly pessimistic regarding the role of urban design without a change in mentalities and in society as a whole.

A fundamental problem is the parsimony with illustrations and a less than perfect sub-editing. These flaws do a disservice to the author whose text, if not altogether convincing, is often very perceptive and stimulates a different way of thinking about the city.

Sebastian Loew

INCLUSIVE URBAN DESIGN; STREETS FOR LIFE

ELIZABETH BURTON AND LYNNE MITCHELL, ARCHITECTURAL PRESS, 2006, £24.99



ISBN 075066 4584

There are some apparently modest books on modest topics that bring within them a profound message beyond their weight. This is such a book. Derived from work carried out by Burton and Mitchell in the Wellbeing in Sustainable Environments research unit at Oxford Brookes University, this slim volume

focuses on the relationship between the external environment and those who are older and suffering from dementia. By 2020, the authors claim, half the UK population will be over 50. To understand the needs of this part of our population is essential, if we are to create satisfactory environments for future users.

Streets for Life is divided into three parts: the first concerns the results of research into the interaction between older people with dementia and their environment, the factors that influence how they deal with the external environment and the sort of guidance necessary to create satisfactory environments.

Part two looks at six key design principles needed in order to design satisfactory environments. They are known to most urban designers: streets should be

- familiar,

- legible,
- distinctive,
- accessible,
- comfortable and
- safe.

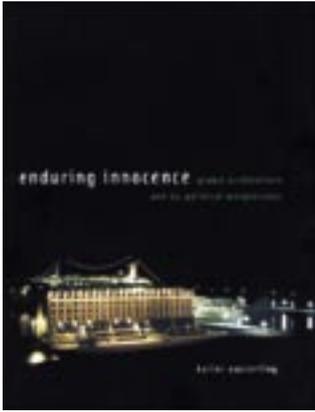
Aspects of this section would be better served by clearer diagrams. Perhaps the most revealing section relates to accessibility. It reminds the readers that not all members of society are fit 30 year olds, but that some people have limited stamina and facilities should be located accordingly.

The third part looks at putting the principles into practice. It is a helpful starting point and should be compulsory reading for all master planners. This book is a clear reminder that urban design must take account of a wide range of needs if it is to be successful.

Richard Cole

ENDURING INNOCENCE, GLOBAL ARCHITECTURE AND ITS POLITICAL MASQUERADES

KELLER EASTERLING, MIT PRESS, 2005, £16.50



ISBN 0 262 05079 X

This stimulating and thought provoking book is constructed like an epic poem, often in an esoteric language. It discusses spaces and their design which Easterling calls 'teflon formats of neo-liberal enterprises'. Sporting global currencies and duty free legalities such spatial products are found anywhere in the world. They have in common their jurisdictional marginality used by rogue states, cults, diplomats and footloose impresarios. Her ambitious project is linking geo-political power

games to architectural styles. It rests on the premise that due to their inherent contradictions, regimes depend on deception, as they have to rely on an enemy for their legitimacy.

The first part deals with cruise tourism and high-tech agriculture but its message is about unavoidable segregation without which these selective economically necessary intrusions into existing practices and fabrics could not exist. Cruise tourism brings vital income to North Korea on the condition that it does not pollute it with outside values, while migrant cheap and illegal labour sustains intensive high-tech agriculture in Southern Spain without sharing in local life.

The second part shows the dominance of conventional commercial formulae whether run by commercial franchisers or by spiritual cults. Again all these spatial products rely on total segregation. They operate on the margin of legislation as enclaves granted special conditions or free port status.

The third part opposes cyberspace to material destruction. A detailed account of (tele-) communication systems shows

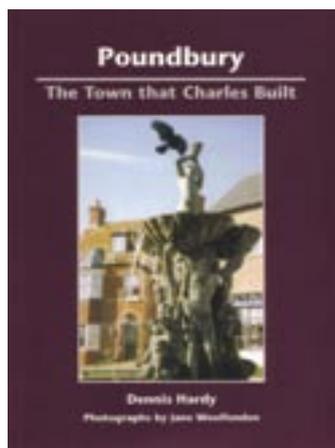
the unfulfilled dream in India where segregation increases between those who have access and the excluded who fall further behind. Finally the example of a global demolition company discusses demolition as precondition of re-construction, providing spaces for new architecture and design.

By choice, her spatial products operate on the margins of legality. Although they are not embedded in the host territory, they do interact through mediation and negotiation at the frontiers of their respective territories. Easterling claims that their respective landscapes have fluid connections while their architectures tend to contrast. Does she imply that these spatial products are benefiting from experimentation and innovation uninhibited by conventional constraints and could positively influence mainstream architecture? Judging from the selected pictures which look remarkably like conventional architecture produced and reproduced anywhere in the world the jury is still out on that one.

Judith Ryser

POUNDBURY, THE TOWN THAT CHARLES BUILT

DENNIS HARDY, TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ASSOCIATION, 2006, £14.99



ISBN 090279 7409

As the town settles down and the next phases of development unfold, Poundbury has continued to intrigue its observers. By contrast, its residents have made the place their home and got on with life. This book describes life from their perspective.

However, the book appears confused – is it for the local residents and admirers to appreciate the depth and meaning in the concepts and designs that have shaped the places that they use on a daily basis? Is it an account of everyday life in Britain's new model town? Is it an account of the design, planning and delivery of a new development project? Or, is it a piece of empirical research – a post occupancy evaluation?

My interpretation of this book is that it is a mixture of these, and this makes it frustrating. The background is that the author, Emeritus Professor of Urban Planning at Middlesex University, visited the town and liked it so much that he moved in. This seems to have coloured his judgement and made his critique and observations less sharp, as though local feelings needed to be carefully handled.

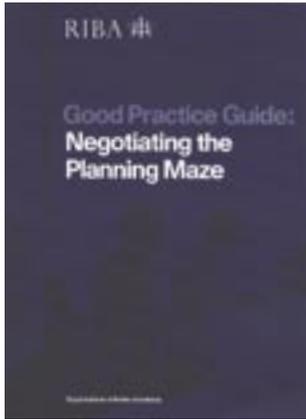
Hearing him talk at the Congress of New Urbanism 2006 conference, Hardy was far clearer about what worked and didn't work about Poundbury, citing the responses of both formal interviews and casual observations. He described the problems encountered by those for whom Poundbury did not feel right, and the social 'codes' that accompany the design and management codes.

Nonetheless, the book offers a different angle on Poundbury and is written with a sense of pride, love and almost honour at being involved in this great experiment. The issues that it touches upon have been researched in more depth (and with no doubt more rigour) by Oxford Brookes University; and there is an interesting chapter giving the residents' perspective, perhaps revealing Poundbury as a prosperous, middle-class and royalist commune.

Louise Thomas

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE: NEGOTIATING THE PLANNING MAZE

JOHN COLLINS AND PHILIP MOREN, RIBA PUBLISHING, £15.00.



ISBN 1 85946 183 2

It sometimes seems that conception and design are the simple parts of a project, funding may present some problems but the real challenge is the bureaucracy that surrounds implementation. That the RIBA has considered it worth publishing a guide to the planning system and that the guide is over 100 pages long with six appendices and an extensive bibliography seems to confirm that impression.

The challenge that Collins and Moren set themselves was to chart a course

through the system and to present a book whose contents will remain valid for at least as long as its binding lasts. First impressions are good. The guide is a convenient, but not quite pocket sized format. The layout is clear and the contents well structured. There is a useful list of planning abbreviations, which might have been even more helpful if placed on the flyleaf or marked in some way so that it could be referred to quickly. The style is clear and direct and each section ends with a useful summary. Cross referencing is simple and obvious and avoids the need for footnotes.

Sometimes the clarity is interrupted by small boxes that seem to serve the role of footnotes; quite why they are used instead of being incorporated into the main body of the text is not always clear. Perhaps the authors could not make up their minds. One of the hazards of a book about a topic as fluid as the planning system is that events can sometimes overtake publication. The authors have avoided this trap by careful wording and reference to pending consultations.

As is to be expected the longest section of the book relates to making

and obtaining planning consent. This is helpful and clearly written and is usefully supported by an appendix reprinting the English Historic Towns Forum's guide *Making better planning applications*. It is disturbing that the authors find it necessary to urge their readers to 'visit the site'. What a sad circumstance that our fellow professionals still need this reminder? A helpful checklist offers ten points for use prior to submission: these may appear obvious but are a useful reminder to all, including urban designers.

The section on the new plan making system is less successful but reflects the degree of innovation that is being introduced into the system. However it is helpful and the points about making representations are relevant to us all. Throughout the book, including the section on appeals, a co-operative approach is promoted and if applicants were to follow the spirit of the book, the planning process would benefit enormously and hopefully this would be reflected in higher quality design.

Richard Cole

THE KENT DESIGN GUIDE

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL, 2005, £30



ISBN xxxxx

The Kent Design Guide will soon be required reading for all architects, planners and developers working in the Garden of England. Produced by a partnership of Kent local authorities and representatives of the built environment professions, the guide is intended for all involved in the development process and is written in an accessible style free of jargon.

The guide summarises the basic principles of design, the value of good urban design, and what makes a good place. It introduces the checklist

as a means of evaluating proposals, an approach rehearsed throughout the document. The guide sets out to establish that good design is not an 'add on', and that the process of design flows seamlessly from an initial site appraisal to detail design. An explanation of the steps from site and context analysis to reappraisal of the design solution forms the bulk of this highly illustrated document.

Fundamental to the design process is an understanding of and respect for local context and character. Four types of Kentish character areas are identified: urban areas, coastal towns, suburbs and urban fringes, and villages. These are described and differentiated by reference to density, the way in which non-residential uses are distributed, the urban grain and how buildings enclose space. Considerable attention is paid to movement and 12 types or categories of street 'spatial types' are identified. Notably these are clearly seen as three dimensional urban spaces rather than highways. Ways in which the layout of buildings and spaces can provide

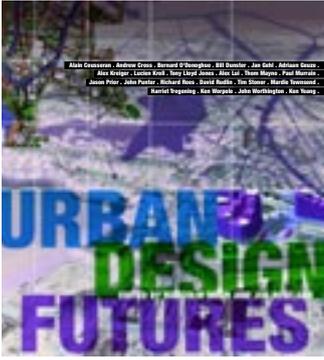
surveillance and help deter crime are illustrated, while the importance of a clear distinction between public and private areas is also emphasised.

A minor criticism is that some of the graphics lack a legend and hence lose some of their message. The Kent Design Guide is intended to be adopted as a supplementary planning document by all Kent LPAs: Tunbridge Wells has set the pace and others are on the way. It will prove more than just a valuable desktop tool for Kent's local planners; by concentrating on principles and methodology rather than style it will also make refreshing and useful reading for many others in the development field. Because it expounds a process rather than a product, this is a worthwhile book for anyone concerned with urban design, and good value at £30.

David Seex

URBAN DESIGN FUTURES

MALCOLM MOOR AND JON ROWLAND (EDS), ROUTLEDGE 2006, £ 30.00



ISBN 10 0 415 31877-7 hbk,
10 0 415 31878-5 ppb

Twenty-one international urban design practitioners and academics, and a poet contributed one chapter each to this collection of essays, book-ended by an introduction and a conclusion by the two editors. They have taken on a huge challenge: to bring together the many strands of ideas about this not easily defined discipline that is urban design; and further to give some indication of how these ideas may develop in the future

and shape its practice.

In his introduction Malcolm Moor skilfully summarises the development of the profession emerging from the crisis of its sisters, architecture and planning. He manages to cover a huge spectrum and to lead into the contributions that follow without being superficial or banal. At the other end, Jon Rowland manages to present another summary of what has come before and to group the contributions under five headings which differ from the those of the books four parts. These then lead into ideas about the future of urban design (hence the book's title), even if they are tentative as emphasised by the final sentence.

Malcolm indicates that the book is a collection of polemical essays. Anything else would have been far less satisfactory but as a result few readers will agree with all of the contributors – who fortunately do not all sing from the same hymn sheet. Urban design is controversial and ideas are not universally accepted. Some of us will reject the New Urbanists approach,

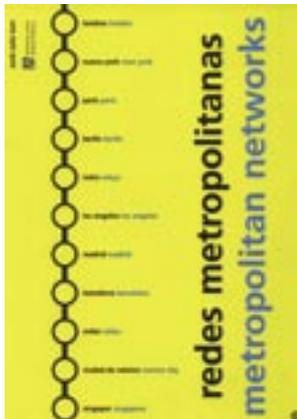
others will fine BedZed reductive and I personally would argue with Malcolm about demolishing 60s buildings without guilt. But this is part of the value of this collection which in any case, is not to be read in one sitting but to be used as source of inspiration or reference. The other reason why the text may become essential reading is that it does not limit itself to recount what is but to challenge established orthodoxies – including those of existing urban designers.

There is no room here to summarise all the essays or even to list them, some of which are more successful than others, but altogether add to a stimulating contribution to the urban design debate. Though selecting a few is probably unfair, Harriet Tregoning's view of America, David Rudlin's warning against complacency, and Richard Rees's positioning of retail as the core of urban design, are three that readers may not have encountered elsewhere.

Sebastian Loew

METROPOLITAN NETWORKS

JORDI JULIA SORT, GUSTAVO GILI EDITIONS, 2006



ISBN xxxxx

This bilingual book gives a thorough overview of transportation networks in 11 cities. Its aim was to guide the public transport strategies of the city of Barcelona and its hinterland. It was to indicate ways to build on Barcelona's already impressive infrastructure investment since the early nineteen eighties. With an urban population of 1.6 million, a metropolitan population of 4 million and still growing, Barcelona was looking for models of inspiration towards an efficient and economic metropolitan transport plan.

Turning the results into a book imposed further criteria for choosing

case studies. Despite their uniqueness, world cities like New York, Tokyo, London, Paris and, at a smaller scale, Berlin were included. Mexico City was chosen for a public transport bias still in the making, Los Angeles for its mobility based on the private motor car and Singapore for its tightly controlled mobility in a constrained geography. Milan and Madrid were selected for their more comparable scale. It could be argued that a fast growing city such as Lagos and a medium size city with a long standing sustainable transport strategy such as Zürich would have provided a more accurate picture of how public transport strategies or their absence impact on cities.

The summaries of the history and current state of their public transport networks may be of use for transport planners. However, the authors deliberately excluded integrated planning aspects, such as land-use and transportation links. They addressed only marginally how transportation infrastructure gives form to cities and their physical appearance. They also omitted other utility networks and goods transport, an important factor of urban life. They included nodes, airports and high speed railway stations, without elaborating on their impact, nor drawing

any planning or design lessons from these factual accounts.

Considering the amount of research, it is disappointing that the authors leave conclusions to the readers. The final chapter simply compiles statistics and maps for each city without comparative analysis. The very clear maps drawn at the same scale for all cities give a visual impression of their differences. In determining urban agglomerations they used labour basin criteria, but any definition of a metropolitan region outside administrative borders poses problems. For example, including the Ile de France for the Paris region but excluding medium size cities further afield cannot represent the true interplay between physical development and transportation infrastructure. The authors' inspiration was Peter Hall, but unfortunately they did not go into his work on urban catchment areas which includes Peterborough for London, for example.

Nevertheless, for those interested in public transport this book is a goldmine of information. Its clear graphic presentation could be an inspiration to many more.

Judith Ryser

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Sebastian Loew, architect and planner, writer and consultant, teaching at the University of Westminster

Malcolm Moor, architect and independent consultant in Urban Design, and co-editor of the recently published Urban Design Futures

Judith Ryser, researcher, journalist and writer on environmental and design issues

David Seex, architect and urban designer, and Senior Lecturer at the School of Architecture and the Built Environment of the University of Westminster

Louise Thomas, independent urban designer and Director of the Urban Renaissance Institute

Directory of practices, corporate organisations and urban design courses subscribing to this index.

The following pages provide a service to potential clients when they are looking for specialist urban design advice, and to those considering taking an urban design course.

Those wishing to be included in future issues should contact the **UDG, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ**
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 Contact Georgia Butina-Watson/
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Diploma in Urban Design, six months full time or 18 months part time. MA one year full-time or two years part-time.

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ENGLAND IN BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham School of Architecture and Landscape, UCE, Perry Barr, Birmingham B42 2SU
 Tel 0121 331 7755
 Fax 0121 331 5114
 Email built.environment@uce.ac.uk
 Contact Noha Nasser
 MA Urban Design. This new course enhances the creative and practical skills needed to deal with the diverse activities of urban design. Modes of attendance are flexible: full-time, part-time or individual modules as CPD short courses. The course attracts students from a wide range of backgrounds.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

Development Planning Unit, The Bartlett, 9 Endsleigh Gardens, London WC1H 0ED
 Tel 020 7388 7581
 Fax 020 7387 4541
 Contact Babar Mumtaz
 MSc in Building and Urban Design in Development. Innovative, participatory and responsive design in development and upgrading of urban areas through socially and culturally acceptable, economically viable and environmentally sustainable interventions.

UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH School of Architecture and Landscape, Oakfield Lane, Dartford DA1 2SZ

Tel 020 8316 9100
 Fax 020 8316 9105
 Contact Richard Hayward
 MA in Urban Design for postgraduate architecture and landscape students, full time and part time with credit accumulation transfer system.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

Department of Architecture, Claremont Tower, University of Newcastle, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU

Tel 0191 222 7802
 Fax 0191 222 8811
 Contact Tim Townshend
 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.

UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE Dept of Architecture and Building Science, Urban Design Studies Unit,

131 Rottenrow, Glasgow G4 0NG
 Tel 0141 548 4219
 Fax 0141 552 3997
 Contact Wolfgang Sonne
 The Postgraduate Course in Urban Design is offered in CPD, Diploma and MSc modes. The course is design centred and includes input from a variety of related disciplines.

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND, BRISTOL Faculty of the Built Environment, Frenchay Campus, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1QY

Tel 0117 328 3508
 Fax 0117 976 3895
 Contact Lee Stickells
 MA/Postgraduate Diploma course in Urban Design. Part time two days per fortnight for two years, or individual programme of study. Project-based course addressing urban design issues, abilities and environments.

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER 35 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5LS

Tel 020 7911 5000 x3106
 Fax 020 7911 5171
 Contact Marion Roberts
 MA or Diploma Course in Urban Design for postgraduate architects, town planners, landscape architects and related disciplines. One year full time or two years part time.

THE PLANNED AND THE UNPLANNED

I've been reading Malcolm Moor's and Jon Rowland's book *Urban Design Futures* (Review on page 41). It's a collection of 21 essays by writers who are each considering in which direction urban design is going to go from here. The answers are very diverse, and sometimes contradictory. It's interesting that it appeared at the same time as the previous issue of *Urban Design*, no.100, which addressed the same question. A theme which connects several of Moor's and Rowland's contributors is the idea that what we might call mainstream urban design principles and methodology, as exemplified in *By Design* and the *Urban Design Compendium*, which now have widespread acceptance, are relevant to only a small part of the earth's surface. Even setting aside the vast differences between the centres of British cities and places like Sao Paulo and Shanghai, our orthodox urban design policies have little or nothing to say about what we should do with our own residential suburbs and the growing numbers of huge distribution sheds around the M40 and M42. The photographer Andrew Cross goes further, and suggests that, as Venturi and Scott-Brown proposed of the architecture of parking lots and signs in *Learning from Las Vegas*, the urbanism of airports and distribution centres is a new kind of place which has not yet been recognised and codified.

The danger, explicitly or implicitly expressed, is that we try to apply our orthodoxies of masterplans and frameworks to locations where they are not relevant, where something else would be more appropriate. But what would that be? At the time of writing, I am running an urban design project for a group of graduate architecture students, set in Hereford. The centre of Hereford is a delightful, dense, mediaeval structure on the north bank of the Wye. A ring road curves around the north side of the city centre, following the town wall, and beyond it is about 40 hectares of land known as the Edgar Street Grid (I don't know why – there is no grid). It is a fascinatingly heterogeneous area which has never seen any planning. It contains the cattle market, the railway station, the stadium of Hereford Town FC opposite Glenn Howells' Courtyard Theatre, a mediaeval hospital and the ruins of the priory, some fragments of nice small-scaled old housing, lots of surface car parking, a Morrison's, and an astonishing number of DIY sheds, plumbers' merchants and builders' suppliers, one of which sits on the site of the filled-in canal basin. It is messy, fragmented, uncoordinated, but undeniably has episodes of real interest and character. The regional development agency and the county council have decided it needs a masterplan, and that is what our project is about.

In the city, the regeneration company has commissioned Urban Initiatives and CZWG, as urban designers and architects, to produce the masterplan. I am finding it challenging to tutor the project, because I suspect that there is a danger that a conventional urban design masterplan may inappropriately homogenise the untidy but attractive diversity that characterises the place at present. Maybe what is needed is not a plan, but a series of individual interventions, which can allow the spontaneous and unplanned growth, which has characterised the area so far, to continue. I am reminded of a talk which Sean Griffiths of FAT gave at UCE a year ago entitled *Ad Hoc Urbanism*, about this very approach. By the time this column is published, the Urban Initiatives proposals should have been completed. We look forward to seeing whether they think there is room in the plan for adhocery.

Joe Holyoak