in town and country planning, structure and local plans made way for local development frameworks, and planning policy guidance progressively replaced by replaced by planning policy statements with a growing emphasis on quality. Integrated transport and land use planning was materialised in 2000 through the Local Transport Act and the local transport plan system is now in its third iteration. The year also saw the publication of the UK Ten Year Transport Plan which, by 2004, was claimed by the press to be dead, with traffic reduction targets un-achieved, and the road network in disarray. London progressed under the leadership of Ken Livingstone with the congestion charge, the world squares schemes, and major investment in public transport including the controversial bendy bus which may have contributed to Boris Johnson’s 2008 election victory. There were rumours that Treasury held a long-standing hostility to both heavy and light rail schemes (owing to poor economics compared with road development) but the Channel Tunnel Rail link opened in 2003, and was subsequently called HS1, suggesting the UK might have a high-speed rail strategy. Budget airlines, through their questionable success, enabled the newly affluent to travel on whim and changed the dynamic on long distance internal transport. The impact has been pressure on the one hand for airport expansion, and on the other, in the face of growing environmental concerns, for less environmentally damaging alternatives, including HS2. A decisive moment for ‘place’ came in 2007 with the publication by the Department for Transport of Manual for Streets, with encouragement to balance place and movement, and to put pedestrian first in a hierarchy of road users. Along with By Design, it now forms the cornerstone of the work of urban designers. Trumpeted as ‘rule free design’ and a charter for creative professionalism, it is clear that for some it is used simply as a doctrine, having nothing to read nor understand the underlying research base, despite the demands of codes of professional conduct for competent practice. Shared space materialised in the UK, through the efforts of the late Hans Monderman and Ben Hamilton-Baillie, against opposition from the Guide Dogs for the Blind, joining forces with a Clarksonesque lobby. ‘Someone is going to be killed, you idiots,’ said Mr Clarkson with a Clarksonesque lobby. ‘Someone is going to be killed, you idiots,’ said Mr Clarkson to know it was road, or because a motorist drove down the pavement not knowing it was pavement’. In fact 2 pedestrians were killed in Ashford in 2009, not within the shared space, but while walking along the pavement of a conventional urban street, by a 24 year old driver who had lost control of his vehicle. It is uncertain why some people still think that a 12km/h kerb will protect them from a carring car. From this brief and decidedly non-exhaustive review, we have a picture of the first decade of the 21st century, getting off to a flying start thanks to all those who campaigned in the 1990s for quality and a just recognition for towns and cities. There were great achievements in revived town and city centres, and major policy changes won for place and pedestrian. But the elephant in the room is funding and economics. Tony Blair introduced us to ‘Education, Education, Education’, Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer introduced us to ‘Location, Location, Location’, and in 2008 the financial services industry introduced us to trepidation, concern and perception as we sweated to see whether our savings and pensions would disappear in a puff of derivatives and bonuses. Much has been achieved, but much remains to be done. Urban environments remain obesogenic and years away from zero carbon targets and true sustainability, and CABE tells us only 20 per cent of housing is acceptable. What is clear is that individuals with vision and persistence that make the difference. We must look to the next ten years knowing that there are people within the membership of the Urban Design Group who will continue with the cause with as much energy and conviction. Are they one of them? Are they one of them?

DIARY OF EVENTS

Unless otherwise indicated, all LONDON events are held at The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ at 6.30 pm. Tickets can be purchased at the door from 6.00pm: £5.00 non-members, £2.00 members, £1.00 students.

WEDNESDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2010
The First Urban Design Student Award The award aims to give recognition to project work produced by students in the final year of their urban design course. The winner, as voted for by the membership, will be announced at this evening’s event. Urban initiatives are acting as sponsors for the evening and Kelvin Campbell will give an introductory talk ‘Where is Urban Design Going?’

WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH 2010
Urban Design and the Council – Implementing the Vision
Tim Haygrad, topic editor of this issue, will give an overview of progress towards making urban design an integral part of local government planning. How can the processes and practices of planning be reinvented at the local level?

WEDNESDAY 24 APRIL 2010
Morphological investigations: cutting into the substratum, the web form. If urban form is a material and urban design is the craftspeople who work it, urban morphology is a tool that reveals the grain and structure of the material. Karl Kroepf examines recent developments in urban morphology and their application in urban design.

Urban Design Group STUDY TOURS
19 to 23 March 2010 – Study tour to Berlin 15 to 23 May 2010 – Study tour to Venetian Towns on the Coast of Dalmatia

Both these tours are organised by Alan Stones and more information can be obtained directly from him on 01756 713131 or e-mail alanstones@fullerton.fonet.co.uk The last booking date for both is Friday 13 February 2010.
A NEW LOOK FOR A NEW YEAR

A year ago, we reported on our readers’ survey and promised to act upon your comments. Today you can judge whether we have responded to your comments. Starting with this issue, Urban Design has a new, fresher image but it is not radically different from its former self. Readers felt that the font was not clear enough and made the text sometimes difficult to read; we hope that you like the new fonts, not necessarily larger but certainly clearer.

We have changed the way that different sections of the journal are identified, both in terms of tint and in the way the rubric appears in the margin. The rhythm of column widths has also changed and the organisation of some of the pages, most notably the contents page, has also changed and the organisation of the page is different from the norm: they believed that there should be no trade-off between quality and economic return, and that a scheme that could attract people would attract investment.

Roger commented that the careers of most architects for the Dunsfold Park scheme, selected through a vote by the UDG members. The other finalists were:

- Temple Quay, Bristol - URBED/ Jon Rowland Urban Design
- East Street, Farnham - Scott Brownrigg Regent Quarter King’s Cross – Planit.ie
- Clearwater, Lower Mill Estate – Richard Reid & Associates
- St Petersfield, Ashton-under-Lyne – Planit.ie

All finalists have certificates to place upon the entrance walls of their offices, and the gratitude of the profession for their commitment and energy in helping to raise the standard of urban design. It may not be easy, but it is worthwhile. As Jon Rowland commented: “It can be an emotional and painful experience – steel yourself before you go for it. If you have found something with a bit ofumph in it, it will survive having bits knocked off.” Sadly a few days after being awarded the prize, the DCLG turned the Dunford Park scheme down on appeal on grounds of traffic generation.
What is the best way to create places in the 21st Century


Cambridge was a felicitous location for this year’s UDG Annual Conference the title of which was ‘Is big Beautiful?’. Whilst not answering the question, this small, charming and cyclist friendly city was certainly indicative that small can be beautiful. And as prequel to the main event, the City and County had organized a debate on tall buildings which, if anything, showed how deeply involved in urban design and environmental matters the local citizens, organisations and authorities are.

This concern for the city future was also the theme of Cambridge City Council Executive Councillor Stan Reid, the Conference’s first speaker who commented on the challenges faced because of pressure for expansion. Welcoming the delegates, she also remarked on the high calibre of staff and advisory groups from which Cambridge benefited.

MORNING SESSION

Anthony Alexander of Alan Baxter & Associates followed with a history of British New Towns, based on his recent book (see p.49). The theme of the conference was then taken by Bob Bayley from Atkins Transport Planning who dressed the issue of major infrastructure projects and wondered whether these were still feasible from an environmental, social and economical viewpoint. His message was that rather than finding a problem to fit the solution we have in mind, we should first identify the problem that we are trying to solve. He focussed in particular on the great challenges involved in urban design and environmental sustainability point of view, the alternative design options made very little difference as they are dwarfed by the consequences of population and socio-economic change, and that changes in land use and transportation over 30 years were small compared to the existing situation. Hargreaves also remarked on the high calibre of staff involved in developing the skills needed to deliver sustainable communities (see UD 11, p.5).

Amanda Reynolds, chair of the morning session, managed to squeeze a very necessary period of Q&A before lunch, allowing the audience to raise a number of issues that had been bottled up during the preceding intense series of talks. The equally packed afternoon under the title of Small Scale Approaches was chaired by Colin Haylock.

AFTERNOON SESSION

The first speaker was Tony Burton, Director of the Civil Society Initiative, the organisation that has taken over some of the objectives of the former Civic Trust. Using real examples he emphasised the importance of civic societies in helping delivering projects that are sensitive to an area and can deliver quality, or attacking schemes that went wrong. He also outlined a number of issues raised by the societies and their contribution to democracy. Liz Kessler of EC1 New Deal for Communities followed on a similar theme with an inspirational talk on her work in Cambridge and the impact of a diagnostic, strategic approach included a diagnostic, organisational development and collaboration. In particular he mentioned their efforts in developing the skills needed to deliver sustainable communities (see UD 11, p.5).

Dr. Tony Hargreaves of Cambridge University then presented the results of research projects he is involved with, looking at three areas: the wider South East, the Tyne and Wear City region and the Cambridge sub-region. What forms of growth are more sustainable is the question being investigated and three classical options are being considered: compaction, planned extensions and dispersal. The interim conclusions of the study seem to indicate that from the environmental sustainability point of view, the alternative design options made very little difference as they are dwarfed by the consequences of population and socio-economic change, and that changes in land use and transportation over 30 years were small compared to the existing situation. Hargreaves even suggested that current policies on brown fields may be counter productive and even suggested that current policies on development may be counter productive and perhaps a theme for a future UD event. In the meantime nourishment was offered at the conference dinner in an established surroundings of Peterhouse refectory where delegates and speakers continued animated discussions on the day’s proceedings.

The conference ended on the Saturday with a number of very interesting walks around Cambridge old and new. The whole event was so rich in material that it could have filled a couple of days with additional discussion time. This summary does not do justice to what was presented but papers can be accessed on the udg website.

Duke of York Square

Guided tour, 6 October 2009

A future edition of the Good Place Guide may well include the Duke of York Square in Chelsea, the subject of a guided tour offered to UDG members by the JMP team led by Paul Smith. Most of the explanation and history of the site was given by Riccardo Bossi with professional detailed information given by various colleagues. JMP were the transport and engineering consultants to the designers, architects Paul Davis and Partners who were responsible for the master plan and the implementation of the project, with Elizabeth Banks Associates providing the landscape. The scheme had a long and convoluted history which raised a series of fascinating urban design issues and from how to combine new and historic buildings, how to deal with access and servicing in a complex mixed use scheme, issues of land ownership and management to how to deal with a voice of crierus and articulate local community (this is Chelsea) and with the Ministry of Defence which previously occupied the site. All these issues and more were discussed in detail during the walk which took the group of some 20 urban designers around the public parts of the scheme and into the private and normally inaccessible gated parts. Some of the details were impressive, such as the combination of a school drop-off area with a playground, or the placing of social housing on what would appear to be the glamorous part of the site, or the subtle treatment of service access for the shops. The visit ended with coffee and cakes in one of the shops which are part of the scheme. The JMP team were refreshingly candid about the negative as well as the positive aspects of the development and answered the many questions posed by the members of the party. This was a spontaneous offer from a group of UDG members to the others and many thanks are due to the JMP team for taking the initiative. It reminded some of us that
Urban Design Beyond 2010: Evolution or Revolution

The Gallery, London 21 October 2009

In a change to the planned event, four speakers were invited to look at the initiatives and policies that had shaped the last 18 years of urban design, and reflect on what is needed from the next government. Robert Hudson provided a useful timeline from 1992 onwards of the ideas, campaigns and movements that have become policy, and the champions that drove them through successive governments. The great ambition of the design has had in that period many aspirations have become policy, with perhaps too much control being exercised. He highlighted the dominance of the media in influencing opinion, creating myths that have become common perceptions. Urban design has missed a national figurehead to give its ideas fresh appeal and impetus. Robert concluded with a reminder of the average 9.6 per cent annual rise in house prices that has underpinned the last ten years, turning home ownership into an aspiration.

Paul Reynolds described the significance of infrastructure investment in the EU, and how this was to be funded now that land values and new development were no longer able to contribute to this. Describing the Mayor’s proposals for a new airport in the Thames Estuary, he highlighted the recycling of land as a means of generating new land values for infrastructure, and the bold leadership, whether from politicians or developers, needed to create change.

Barry Sellers reminded the audience of the UDG’s manifesto prepared in 2005 for the last election, and looked at the progress made on the eight key design principles (see the UDG website). By contrast, Colin Munie set himself up as the revolutionary in the group, describing the explosion of literature and tools now available to support good urban design. The challenge is now to turn this knowledge into common practice, and to bring their own distinctive style to art, Murray Scott, Victoria Gibbs and Paul Grundy have done this.

This exhibition of the group SHIFT explores the ability for city dwellers to reflect on the things they take for granted, namely how they live it. The repetition of people and their life stories has underpinned the last ten years, turning feel to his work. The repetition of people in his images makes you look twice, observe the details, re-look, leaving you wandering in the city. This multiple layering, morphing, is achieved.

Victoria Gibbs’s work showcases the most prominent landscape feature in London, the River Thames. By following the stretch of water between the two Tate’s, from Tate Modern to Tate Britain, attention is drawn to how Londoners have tried to use, shape and most importantly bridge this bridge of water. The river is a transport artery and viewpoint of the bridges that link this part of the Thames.

Paul Grundy’s series of photographs leads the viewer on a journey following the flight path of a plane crossing over London, from the inner city to the suburbs. It offers a transect of urban typologies as a background to the increasing imposition of a jumbo jet which slowly descends into Heathrow, as the houses get smaller and more suburban.

This was a welcome exhibition, bringing attention to an often overlooked and underestimated aspect of city life, in particular the ability for city dwellers to reflect on the things they take for granted, namely how they move about. Unfortunately it will be over by the time you read this, but you can see the work at www.shiftlondon.co.uk. 

Urban Design Interview: Julia Wallace

What is your current job and how long have you been there?
I am a Planning Manager for ATLAS, a team within Arcadis that provides independent planning and technical advice to local authorities dealing with large scale development proposals. I cover the South East England region. Although it’s not technically an urban design role, the nature of what we do relates to helping those involved in the development process to focus on the place they are creating and realise their vision for attractive, vibrant new communities. It’s about promoting urban design at different scales from the strategic to the detailed, not an add-on but integral to planning.

Can you describe the path that you followed to become an urban designer and what motivated you?
I was clearly interested in how architecture stimulates my interest in the built environment, and it’s hard to beat Edinburgh as a vibrant and architecturally rich urban environment to learn from. That, and my burgeoning interest in creating places for people, pointed me in the direction of studying planning and urban design. Planning students at that time came largely from a geography or social science background and struggled with the concept of an urban design possibility. My interest was rooted in the urban environment. The city to me was the most logical combination of skills. Latterly I have spent the last happy ten years broadening my skills and experience in planning and urban design working on the Kent Design Initiative and at Ashford Borough Council.

What do you find exciting about your work?
We are involved in the planning of imaginings and spaces they inhabit.

Where is your favourite town or city and why?
I have to declare my divided loyalties for Edinburgh as a vibrant and architecturally rich urban environment to learn from. That, and my burgeoning interest in creating places for people, pointed me in the direction of studying planning and urban design. Planning students at that time came largely from a geography or social science background and struggled with the concept of an urban design possibility. My interest was rooted in the urban environment. The city to me was the most logical combination of skills. Latterly I have spent the last happy ten years broadening my skills and experience in planning and urban design working on the Kent Design Initiative and at Ashford Borough Council.

What do you find exciting about your work?
We are involved in the planning of imaginings and spaces they inhabit.

Where is your favourite town or city and why?
I have to declare my divided loyalties for Edinburgh as a vibrant and architecturally rich urban environment to learn from. That, and my burgeoning interest in creating places for people, pointed me in the direction of studying planning and urban design. Planning students at that time came largely from a geography or social science background and struggled with the concept of an urban design possibility. My interest was rooted in the urban environment. The city to me was the most logical combination of skills. Latterly I have spent the last happy ten years broadening my skills and experience in planning and urban design working on the Kent Design Initiative and at Ashford Borough Council.

What do you think are the most important skills of an urban designer?
The ability to communicate and people at every level from local resident to senior politician or highway engineers, alongside creative ability to inspire and surprise.

What would you like to be doing in ten years’ time?
I hope I will still be excited and inspired by new places and peoples, possibly taking up the opportunity to work in another country for a while – there is still such a lot of the world I would like to see and learn from.

As an urban designer, do you have a role model?
Perhaps more inspiration than role model, but for me Italo Calvino in Invisible Cities has been a role model in providing an environment of being forward looking encouraging inclusivity and collaborative working and allowing people to grow professionally (and make their own mistakes).

If you were to recommend an urban design scheme or study (past or present) for an award, what would you choose?
If you can’t get hold of Johnny Depp, then a favourite from a distance – the East End of London. The way the community has embraced the Dockland development, the respect and pride given to the local history and culture, the possibilities of the area have huge potential.

What advice would you give to UD readers?
Take a holiday! Some people are great armchair travellers but I am a real advocate of experiencing towns and cities first hand to inspire and challenge our thinking. Even better if you can convince like-minded colleagues to invest in a study trip to Malmo, Freiburg or Stockholm.

What should the Urban Design Group be doing now or in the future?
Working with children to encourage them to learn to look at the world around them with a critical eye. Few people in the UK seem to have an eye for beauty or design quality but all are affected subconsciously by the buildings and spaces they inhabit.

Finally, you would like to see interviewed by UD?
If you can’t get hold of Johnny Depp, then a Conservation politicians coming from the bench, to show the value they place on the environment and creating quality places as an investment in the future.
New models for housebuilding

In the depths of the recession last year, the traditional housebuilders were busy explaining to government how the industry could weather the bad times and deliver the housing numbers so long as expectations of design quality were not too onerous.

The assumptions underlying this conversation needed to be confronted. So CABE seized the opportunity to look at the housing boom from that new perspective – the depths of the housing crash. In our pamphlet, No more toxic assets, in March 2009 we pointed out that an unprecedented era of economic prosperity and housing market growth had resulted in a toxic legacy.

While demand exceeded supply, housebuilders could sell whatever they built. This has resulted in consistently low quality housing developments all over the country: small rooms, poor environmental sustainability, excessive density, poor estate layout, over-engineered roads, unusable amenity space and dominant parking. Scant attention was paid to the legacy from this, which is hardly surprising when it is left to others to pick up the bill in the long term.

So in No more toxic assets, CABE asked whether we would be better off moving away from this accepted model of housebuilding. It called for a serious exploration of the potential for new development models to deliver well designed homes and neighbourhoods.

Nearly a year on, we’ve published a definitive survey of options to provide the homes we need at the quality we deserve. CABE commissioned six experts in their fields to tell us what they thought should happen to achieve better housing. Their views inform a set of CABE recommendations which together chart a new course for housebuilding and placemaking in England.

Christine Whitehead, Professor of Housing Economics at the LSE, addresses land supply and the planning system. She traces damaging volatility in the housing market to the fact that profitability comes from land trading rather than productivity, fuelling speculative behaviour. She notes the failure of the planning system, producing profits for the minority rather than addressing serious inequalities. Her solutions include incentives for refurbishing existing housing stock, more locally-based approaches to large scale development, and a change in property taxation to ensure local communities benefit directly from development.

Dickon Robinson, ex Director of Development at the Peabody Trust, analyses the potential for new forms of tenure to improve housing supply and quality. He identifies the UK emphasis on owner occupation, and the proliferation of single person households, as unsustainable twin phenomena, and suggests that a more diverse tenure mix is needed for a growing population. He believes that developers could be incentivised to build larger homes through the tax system, and mortgages redesigned to encourage shared ownership. He sees these measures going hand-in-hand with mechanisms that encourage developers to take a longer-term interest in the value of their development through a freeholder role.

Liz Peace, CEO of the British Property Federation and CABE Commissioner, writes about financing and new business models. She also promotes the potential benefits of housebuilders taking a longer term interest in the properties they develop and says it will provide a much greater incentive for them to improve design quality. In order to achieve such a shift, she highlights the need to create consumer demand for rental properties. She also suggests that financial incentives, such as changes to VAT and stamp duty could make residential renting as attractive for developers as commercial renting, and suggests that land could be designated for renting in local development frameworks.

Peter Studden, a planning director writing in his personal capacity, discusses the need to use partnerships to meet local needs. Lessons from the Continent point to the need for local authorities to play a more active role in the funding and delivery of new homes. This would require local authorities to take a lead, rather than play the regulatory role into which they have been forced by the rise of section 106 and reduced central government grant funding. He sees local authorities as being in a unique position to fund and deliver housing development, by assembling the land for strategic sites and funding and procuring strategic infrastructure.

Poonan Desai, co-founder of Biogonial, focuses on sustainable design. He notes the need to tackle climate change through design and planning at the neighbourhood scale to create places with a sustainable metabolism. He suggests that developers tackling this agenda head-on can gain business advantages through their association with sustainability as a brand. However, this will only work if backed up by a coherent offer to consumers based on a high quality way of life underpinned by sustainable principles. He seeks the holy grail: neighbourhoods that offer the potential for happiness, healthier lives at a lower cost within the context of sustainable lifestyles.

Stephen Hill, Director of Czo Futurplaners, calls for a citizens’ housing revolution. He sees potential for the self-build market to create high quality places, and increase its market share from its current 10 per cent. He suggests that the policy environment needs to recognise the value of self-builders as co-investors with public bodies, for example by integrating self-build within spatial planning as a requirement comparable to affordable housing.

CABE has drawn on this wide range of ideas and perspectives and developed a set of recommendations for government, which we believe will deliver better design quality than the current model. Our recommendations vary from supporting a more diverse range of delivery models to giving local authorities the power to borrow for and benefit from development, and allowing local authorities to enter into joint ventures with other long-term investors. We think government should fund research into public adaptation to sustainable lifestyles, reduce land tax and bring public land forward for development. Our recommendations could make a real difference to the quality of the housing built as the market recovers.

Tom Bolton, Senior Research Advisor, CABE

Stephen Hill, Director of Czo Futurplaners

The concept of a new town is not new and there are many precedents of new cities from the mid 19th century; built on large green field sites, like Oscar Niemeyer’s capital city Brasilia, the spate of post war New Towns in the UK, or Le Corbusier’s Chandigarh in India. These and other similar international developments that created large scale built environments, influenced the planning and design thinking throughout the 20th century. It is fascinating to witness the embryonic ideas of Habitat reaching fruition in Safdie’s program for the city of Modi’in, a potent precedent for 21st century urban design housing development.

THE CONTEXT

Modi’in is located mid-way between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in Israel, on a large stretch of vacant land. The development was a response to coastal crowding and an urgent need for housing caused by an influx of new immigrant populations. It is estimated that the land will ultimately house 260,000 people. There are rich archaeological remains from biblical times found on the hills around Modi’in and these are to be protected as heritage sites.

PROCES

An urban design strategy was set up for a dynamic design process rooted in history that resonates with the mood of the new century. The process is unusual since it has a philosophy of integrated development. The proposals for Modi’in, had the political commitment of central government as landowners; support from the Ministry of Housing and all stakeholders were integral to the process. Government agreed that the revenue generated from land sales to developers would finance the entire infrastructure, which opened the way for rapid progress.

THE SITE

The natural landform comprises a valley surrounded by gentle undulating hills. To the Northwest there is a man-made forest, Ben Shemesh, a rocky ridge outcrop containing a valley basin to the South and a large wadi (wetlands) with wadi ravines meander through the centre of the site. Geological studies showed that

MODI’IN NEW TOWN: ISRAEL

Arlene Segal describes the design and development of a sustainable new city

Moshes Safdie, Architect and Urban Designer became an international figure after his housing submission for the Montreal Exposition, was built in 1967. His original ideas for Habitat Housing as it was known, were based on a three dimensional Modular Building System explored as a rational idea of repetition of individual housing modules. The innate complexity of the idea resulted in a much smaller number of units being built for the exposition, but their impact was highly significant.

The concept of a new town is not new and there are many precedents of new cities from the mid 19th century; built on large green field sites, like Oscar Niemeyer’s capital city Brasilia, the spate of post war New Towns in the UK, or Le Corbusier’s Chandigarh in India. These and other similar international developments that created large scale built environments, influenced the planning and design thinking throughout the 20th century. It is fascinating to witness the embryonic ideas of Habitat reaching fruition in Safdie’s program for the city of Modi’in, a potent precedent for 21st century urban design housing development.

THE CONTEXT

Modi’in is located mid-way between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in Israel, on a large stretch of vacant land. The development was a response to coastal crowding and an urgent need for housing caused by an influx of new immigrant populations. It is estimated that the land will ultimately house 260,000 people. There are rich archaeological remains from biblical times found on the hills around Modi’in and these are to be protected as heritage sites.

PROCES

An urban design strategy was set up for a dynamic design process rooted in history that resonates with the mood of the new century. The process is unusual since it has a philosophy of integrated development. The proposals for Modi’in, had the political commitment of central government as landowners; support from the Ministry of Housing and all stakeholders were integral to the process. Government agreed that the revenue generated from land sales to developers would finance the entire infrastructure, which opened the way for rapid progress.

THE SITE

The natural landform comprises a valley surrounded by gentle undulating hills. To the Northwest there is a man-made forest, Ben Shemesh, a rocky ridge outcrop containing a valley basin to the South and a large wadi (wetlands) with wadi ravines meander through the centre of the site. Geological studies showed that
Creating a series of identifiable crowns enhanced by much larger structures that stand out along the hilly slopes, while the hilltops where the tallest buildings are located. The slope of the land has provided some variety in housing types and attention has been paid to privacy and overlooking of the units.

**Sustainability**

Since the area is arid and hot, there was much value in keeping the valleys open for ventilation by natural breezes. Solar heating is mandatory in Israel and there are guidelines for architectural integration of solar panels into buildings; drip irrigation and recycling of water are part of the sustainability program, while all units are designed for optimal orientation.

Reversible air conditioning is used, particularly for cooling, utility rooms require visual shielding, and garbage rooms are oversized to encourage recycling. All balconies have covered pergolas for privacy from the balcony above and each unit has a garden or terrace, formed by the stepping of the buildings. Corner buildings have their own typology. These conditions are all contained in the master plan that guides final architectural drawings. There is much awareness of carbon emissions arising from overuse of private cars due to insufficient employment in Modi'in and being to the west of Tel-Aviv, the town is subject to pollution from the Tel-Aviv metropolis. The new rail link to Tel Aviv together with the new highway connection and excellent bus service should provide viable alternatives to the private car.

**The Situation at the End of 2008**

The town centre is being developed, the shopping mall is complete, the commercial hub is in progress and construction is underway for a central entertainment centre that will house large-scale events, concerts, exhibitions, happenings, family fun and a range of cultural activities. The urban design framework has successfully integrated major facilities and has been successful in shifting housing demand from the coastal areas to the country’s central district. Modi’in provides the highest open space/inhabitant ratio in Israel and the landscape has given identity to the city.

The town is attracting economically mobile young residents rather than the anticipated new immigrant populations, who have been housed closer to work opportunities in older areas. In 2007 the price of housing in Modi’in was considered reasonable for young educated families of a moderately high income. 60 per cent of the population have tertiary education and the schooling system in Modi’in is consequently excellent. The average family is 3.3 children and there is very little demographic diversity.

A review of the apartment layouts, by many different architects and developers, reveal a similar typology of informal housing typical of Israeli lifestyle. Differences between social classes are small and most apartments are privately owned. Despite incentives, few developers build to rent and the rate of purchasers’ satisfaction is high. 88 per cent of residents find the city beautiful and 2.3 per cent wish it was moved to the city because of attractive unit prices.

**Lessons Learned**

A unique economic system was created for Modi’in, since the land is publicly owned the income from the sales goes to the government treasury who reinvest it back into the city. The land value is determined by a tender process in which the value is rolled over into the price of the individual units. Land parcels may go for near zero value if it is deemed necessary to maintain the quality urban infrastructure. Modi’in’s Urban Design Framework is used to detail design and engineering drawings that become the legal zoning documents for final working drawings, simplifying the planning process. Once plans are approved, the parcels of land are tendered off. These plans specify uses, building rights, numbers of units, parking ratios, grading, heights, materials, set backs and common spaces. This approach is necessary to fast track implementation since hundreds of units are built by different developers with explicit schedules that also include details of the public infrastructure.
Towards the end of the 19th century, the Argentine government recognised the necessity of providing Buenos Aires with a new port capable of managing efficiently the increasing commercial flow. Even though there was no doubt as regards new port technologies, the methods of construction and mainly the new location were debated. The resulting project, Puerto Madero, consisted of four docks organized linearly along the muddy banks in front of the politico-administrative centre of the country. Once the port had been inaugurated, strong disapproval of the project gained momentum: ‘the port was born old’ was one favourite comment. Therefore in 1969 a new port was authorised further north and designed in a sequence of five docks without locks, perpendicular to the bank. Finished in 1925 and named Puerto Nuevo, the new port quickly doubled the functioning capacity of the old Puerto Madero, which therefore fell into disuse and decayed rapidly.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT
In 1989, after several decades of abandonment, the national and local governments agreed to promote the urbanisation of the Puerto Madero area, through the establishment of a joint-stock company, Corporación Antiguo Puerto Madero, in which they were both equal partners: the former contributed to the project with the land; the latter, with the urban regulations for its development. Together they promoted a plan and laid out the necessary infrastructure, as a way to guide the development activities.

Taking as a model the experience of London Docklands, and after an intense debate, a master plan for the urbanisation of the 17ha of the former port was defined with the following five structural aims:

- The regeneration of the area and its recovery from the current state of deterioration
- The reinforcement of its character, preserving its strong evocative power
- The allocation of land for tertiary activities which require a central location
- The establishment of new and effective links between the city and its river
- The contribution to rebalancing the central area’s northern and southern sectors.

MOTIVATIONS OF THE MASTER PLAN
Consequently, the proposal sought to regain the area for urban uses and to capitalise on the demand for new equipments, increasing the value of the existing ones. From the ideas competition in which more than a hundred teams took part, one was chosen to produce the master plan which defined the lines along which the project is still evolving two decades after.

Even though this is a derelict industrial and port area, and is highly conditioned by the low accessibility of its bridges, the aspiration was to generate a prestige site as a lateral expansion of the central area and – without destituting the present urban fabric – absorb the demand for new-generation offices, requiring broad and flexible areas. The urban regulations defined morphological indicators block by block, emphasising the criterion of preserving its intrinsic characteristics.

THE SCOPE OF THE PROPOSAL
With a buildable area of 1.5 million square metres, the proposal consisted of a narrow urbanised strip along the four docks, and behind it a big park formed by natural green reserves. The connection between the project and the city is made by wide boulevards which coincide with the breaks between the impounded docks. Between these cross roads and facing the park, high-rise buildings were disposed to frame a civic axis.

The master plan included the following elements: the system of avenues and the docks offering two different networks; the solids and voids of the docks and quays, which do not respect the rhythm of the traditional city; the clusters of high-rise buildings on the intersections; and the cranes, grain mills and elevators which are reminders of the former port. Therefore the plan included the restoration of the old docks in the western sector of the port, the conservation of those buildings with heritage value, the construction of a narrow strip of seven-storey residential buildings in the eastern sector, a group of towers and a big park in order to re-establish the relation between the city and its river.

However the result is an area doubly fragmented: on the one hand its connection to the city must be done by getting across a set of railway infrastructures which cuts across it; and on the other hand, the western and eastern sectors of the new urbanised area are separated by the linear system of docks which create conflicts at connecting points. Although there have been early attempts to solve these discontinuities, the results have not been entirely satisfactory.

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE AREA
The Corporación Antiguo Puerto Madero led the planning process and the management of the area, promoting the development of the master plan and setting up the land subdivision, the port technical plots and the execution of the infrastructure works. Firstly, the rehabilitation of the brick warehouses, characteristic of the port’s identity and part of its heritage, was undertaken in the western sector of the docks.

This first regeneration process was completed in a few years and resulted in a desirable new business sector and a gastronomic district. The success of the development of the western sector strengthened the launch of the eastern sector, where parcels had greater development possibilities, free of historical constraints. This allowed buildings of a more modern architecture and the incorporation of state-of-the-art technology; it also triggered a frantic real estate speculation.

EFFECTS OF THE RENewAL OPERATioN
Now after twenty years of development, the renewal of Puerto Madero’s waterfront is reaching its final stage with the filling of the last plots. From this perspective, it is possible to evaluate some distinctive features of the operation. On the one side, a new model of land management was set up, which allowed the regeneration of derelict land unsuitable for quality urban land use. On the other hand, given its elongated character, the project triggered a transformation of the old central area with a redistribution of economic, service and tourism-related activities. Services have been brought in, streets have been opened, squares and parks have been built and urban equipment provided.

However, the development of the eastern sector resulted in a heterogeneous kind of intervention with uneven morphological results, a lack of character, and governed by the strong pressures of the real estate market. It must also be noted that a strong process of gentrification has started in the whole area of influence, resulting in displaced populations and the replacement of traditional shops with new brands stores. Finally from a global point of view, the surplus generated by the operation has been kept within the development, without any transfer to other zones of the city in need, such as the impoverished northern neighbourhoods.

Guillermo Tella, Professor at the Institute for the Conservation, National University of General Sarmiento, Argentina.
survive its Bonfire of the Quangos but regional strategies would not, threatening more delay. Could a new government reverse the trend of modern history and find ways of simplifying the planning system rather than adding to its complexities, while still ensuring it is more effective and gives a central role to urban design?

The articles in this issue provide encouraging examples of best practice. Local action on good design is possible and can take a range of measures. The impressive example of Fife Council shows that a real change of culture within a local authority is possible given time, training and leadership. Essex has led the way for many years at the county level with its versatile 25 strong design team.

But in many other local authorities, design guidance, policies and teams are lacking and this is exacerbated by delays within plan making. In August 2009, five years after the new Local Development Framework system was introduced, fewer than 20% of planning authorities had approved core strategies leaving 80% without the potential of locally adopted design policies. In England legal challenge to regional strategies and national politics compound this delay with uncertainty, while in Wales and Scotland by contrast, a more settled structure emerges of unitary authorities within a regional framework retaining the simpler format of a single local plan.

Writing here CABE’s Paul Lavelle shows how sharing design resources can offer one effective option for local authorities. CABE has published evidence that wider adoption of nationally set standards in Building for Life will also improve design. And the role of Design Panels can be firmed up by its Design Review principles.

I personally would advocate a more robust pre-application process as this is when so many critical decisions are taken and opportunities can be lost to foster good design principles. It is also the most positive and beneficial stage to engage the public. Would a new government revisit the merits of Statements of Development Principles to replace outline planning permissions?

As CABE indicate here, a more collaborative place shaping model for planning is needed at the local level. This will emphasise creativity and public engagement, and offer an informed partnership of the public and private sector. Could this accompany a shift away from current performance targets with their narrow focus on speed of decisions?

CABE has done a lot of work to prove the value of good design and the costs of bad design. Similarly a shift to a less adversarial system could save costly planning appeals if improved quality and a wider perceived sense of ownership brings greater support for new development from Nimbys turned Imbys.

As Mark Pearson notes from his most encouraging work in the south-west, turning members from ‘critics’ to ‘creators’ of development is one way of cultivating the design leadership that is needed from both politicians and professionals who are most effective when they share together a common design agenda.

Marking its tenth anniversary last year, Richard Simmons, the Chief Executive of CABE said that the main responsibility for delivering design lies at the local authority level. Evidence of how much is still to do came in their 2006 Housing Audit which revealed only 18% of developments were considered good or very good. That audit made specific recommendations for local authorities to develop design policies, employ in-house or share urban design skills and to appoint design champions.

This issue of Urban Design examines the local authority role at a challenging time with the whole public sector facing unprecedented cutbacks. How is a case to be made for investing in design resources at the local level? Or for planning reforms that allow design to come to the fore?

The government has now introduced a legal duty for local authorities to achieve good design as well as a requirement to monitor design in their annual returns. Consultation after the Killian Pretty Review seeks ways of measuring quality in planning. But will the new measures just supplement existing performance targets when it might be better to replace them altogether?

These changes may be followed by others. A change at government in 2010 may provide an impetus towards greater localism. The Conservatives have said that CABE would
THE ESSEX DESIGN GUIDE LEGACY

Peter Dawson and Barry Shaw explain how Essex County Council continues to encourage good design to work in partnership with highways, regeneration, planning, asset management and various other County Council teams to add value, skills and knowledge to a wide range of projects. During 2008/9 the team worked on 158 projects across all of the district areas and with one unitary council in Essex. The work with highways and transportation is particularly important and provides us with a great opportunity to influence design, and raise quality and is leading to a closer collaboration on standards of civic design. The urban design team worked with highways on the revised Parking Standards document and is currently working on producing a countywide streetscape manual. The current range of key projects indicates the diversity of the work and the range of partners. These partnerships have helped push the new agendas and ideas in delivering quality, dynamic spaces, streets and places. Some of these projects are highlighted below.

BRENTWOOD

Urban designers and landscape architects from the BEB were approached to assist ECC Highways in designing and delivering a high quality High Street scheme for Brentwood. Recognising that such an intervention could act as a catalyst for a broader approach to regeneration the team produced an initial vision document and helped establish Brentwood Renaissance to engage the local business community. Since then the BEB has been working in partnership with Brentwood Borough Council for over two years, providing design input into a range of major projects including the design options for the setting of the historic chapel ruins. The team has also provided design advice for some key planning applications and has started work on the development of a town centre vision and strategy. This aims to help bring together the relevant people, policy, guidance and projects to drive Brentwood town centre forward, re-establishing it as a desirable place to live, shop and work. The document covers national, regional and local policies to establish a set of principles and long term aims for a town centre improvement programme.

HARLOW

Harlow Station Vision: A catalyst for smarter growth is a study document commissioned by Harlow Renaissance to provide a realistic but imaginative vision for a key area of Harlow to highlight the likely added value of comprehensive development around the railway station and attract investment to the area. The Urban Design team study provides a basis for collaboration between landowners and other stakeholders. It covers the real potential of the area to Harlow Station and considers the implications for a further shs. of land north of the railway, in the valley of the River Stort. Because of the station’s potential mix of central location if urban development expands to the north, the study considers the wider implications of possible development in the future.

CHELMSFORD PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

The Urban Design Team, in partnership with ECC Highways and Transportation colleagues and Chelmsford Borough Council, is working on the provision of a coordinated vision to improve

Essex County Council (ECC) has supported a county design team since the early 1970s, when the Design Guide for Residential Areas was first produced. The quality of the environment was under threat from the 1960s affluence that saw a wave of new housing being built across the county seemingly lacking in any sense of local identity. The term ‘prairie planning’ was coined by the Architectural Review to characterise a certain sort of placeness for such housing developments that were dwarfed by the roads that served them. The design team within the County planning department developed a set of residential design guidelines that drew attention to massing and continuity of form, taking cues from the historic forms of rural and small town settlements that characterised the county. It was an intervention that put the value of the public realm above that of the individual house, working closely with the highway engineers the team challenged the norm by which highway design standards gave priority to the car. The resulting Essex Design Guide, still in use in its third iteration, got into the detail of highway design, building design and space standards bringing them together with wider urban design issues in one document. It was perhaps the last time that suburban received such attention before the weight of funding and planning focus shifted to the inner city.

The Design Guide celebrated its 35th year in 2008. It has been updated over the years but at its heart it’s still about more than architecture and as it is important now as it was first published. The team went on to lead the way nationally in securing the County Council’s new town development at South Woodham Ferrers as an exemplar of the Essex Design Guide, and the later Great Norley Garden Village development saw the principles embodied in the revised guide being widely used.

Despite the plethora of national design guidance the guide still provides a starting point for local planning briefs and urban design documents.

THE ESSEX DESIGN INITIATIVE

In 2005 the County Council’s Built Environment Branch (BEB) launched the Essex Design Initiative (EDI) as part of the process of ensuring the relevance of design to local conditions and local campaign to raise the quality of new housing developments, supported by the production of the Essex Design Guide Urban Place Supplement and the EDI Learning Programme. It has been further developed with the introduction of the Essex Exemplar programme aimed at helping to deliver best practice projects, supported by the Essex Design Review Panel, which is tailored to district needs and available at short notice, free, non-statutory and informal. The first Exemplar Project, Brentwood Renaissance, was announced in 2008. With a national reputation as a centre of excellence, the 25 strong ECC (BEB), is able to bring to bear a strong set of skills to influence and support local delivery. The group consists of seven urban designers, three landscape architects, two public art officers, an eight-strong historic buildings team, the document draws on the expertise and research of the EDI campaign. This represents the commitment of the County Council to raising the standards of new development and improving the quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors to the county. The ECC design champion is also the Cabinet Member for heritage, culture and the arts, which includes the urban design team. This high level support helps to raise issues and debate around the importance of a countywide design team.

The recognised benefit of a centrally located urban design team is that it provides a resource which has a wealth of local knowledge and a better understanding of development programmes throughout the county. The team has a real understanding of the disciplines involved in development in Essex can ensure that the unique identity of Essex is enhanced and retained. It supports and supplements local partners including District and Borough Councils, delivery groups and development organisations through the provision of specialist support in the disciplines of urban design, architecture, historic buildings, landscape design, public art, specialist training and consultation. This work is provided either through long-term service level agreements or through short-term support on special projects.

Within the County Council the team is positioned

the streets and open spaces in Chelmsford town centre. The work will complement the ongoing regeneration of the town centre and help bring forward new residential development. Initial vision documents including a strategic framework covering the entire town centre and a more detailed study for the Duke Street area, including key spaces such as Tindal Square and a proposed new Station Square, were produced in 2008-09.

The team has a real understanding of how all those involved in development can ensure that the unique identity of Essex is enhanced and retained.

The documents highlight key issues and illustrate a range of options to foster both confidence and enthusiasm in the proposed schemes. It is hoped they will underpin funding bids and facilitate stakeholder engagement. The documents will also inform the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy and Streetscape Manual being prepared by Chelmsford Borough Council.

CLACTON

The Urban Design Team was appointed by Tendring District Council to produce a Large Buildings and Landmarks Strategy for Clacton Town Centre. The work will complement the ongoing regeneration of the town centre and help bring forward new residential development. Initial vision documents including a strategic framework covering the entire town centre and a more detailed study for the Duke Street area, including key spaces such as Tindal Square and a proposed new Station Square, were produced in 2008-09.

The team has a real understanding of how all those involved in development can ensure that the unique identity of Essex is enhanced and retained.

The documents highlight key issues and illustrate a range of options to foster both confidence and enthusiasm in the proposed schemes. It is hoped they will underpin funding bids and facilitate stakeholder engagement. The documents will also inform the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy and Streetscape Manual being prepared by Chelmsford Borough Council.

CLACTON

The Urban Design Team was appointed by Tendring District Council to produce a Large Buildings and Landmarks Strategy for Clacton Town Centre. The work will complement the ongoing regeneration of the town centre and help bring forward new residential development. Initial vision documents including a strategic framework covering the entire town centre and a more detailed study for the Duke Street area, including key spaces such as Tindal Square and a proposed new Station Square, were produced in 2008-09.

The team has a real understanding of how all those involved in development can ensure that the unique identity of Essex is enhanced and retained.

The documents highlight key issues and illustrate a range of options to foster both confidence and enthusiasm in the proposed schemes. It is hoped they will underpin funding bids and facilitate stakeholder engagement. The documents will also inform the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy and Streetscape Manual being prepared by Chelmsford Borough Council.
The work is informing and supporting the town centre’s emerging Area Action Plan. The approach of the study, covering large-mass and landmarks in addition to tall buildings, reflects the specific context of Clacton which is a relatively small seaside town, with little distinction except a grand axial plan. After a long period of decline, the centre is currently receiving a number of applications for large buildings offering both regeneration opportunity, but also potential blight. The emerging strategy seeks to harness development pressures, suggesting taller buildings in selective locations such as along strategic corridors, co-located to the core area and station, and avoiding areas constrained by heritage. A network of building and public art landmarks is proposed to address key vistas, corners, gateways and spaces. Design guidance is particularly relevant in improving design standards with regard to large-mass buildings such as large retail units and multi-storey car parks.

SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

Nationally, Building School for Future (BSF) is the government’s investment programme for the improvement of all secondary schools in England. The aim is to develop schools for the 21st century that will inspire both pupils and teachers. The BSF programme aims to support a more diverse teaching curriculum, to provide facilities for new ways of learning and special educational needs, and to open schools up to lifelong learning students and other community uses.

The BSF programme will take an estimated 10-15 years to complete, subject to future public spending decisions. It is being rolled out in England in a series of 15 waves, with Essex recently joining the fourth wave, initially focusing on secondary schools in the south of the County as well as new build for New Model Special Schools (NMSSs). The BSF has provided consultation on outline proposals, prepared design briefs, participated in bid evaluation and procurement processes, advised on the appointment of architects and design teams, managed liaison with the client design adviser, organised design workshops for schools and BSF colleagues, and provided urban design, historic building and landscape consultation on statutory planning applications. This important role will continue as the BSF programme advances. Overall, the team is not only seeking the highest possible design quality to enable new school developments to meet current needs, and adapt positively to future requirements but also to ensure the schools can contribute fully to their local community and enhance the local built environment.

DESIGN QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAMME

In 2008 BEB commissioned a county-wide assessment of design quality in recent housing development, coordinated by the Urban Design team. A sample of housing schemes across Essex was assessed using a scoring system based on CABE’s Building for Life methodology. The results of the analysis include an informal assessment of factors that were seen to have contributed to successful schemes, ranging from working with urban designers at a County or district level, to employing experienced housing layout and landscape consultants. The study provides a baseline evaluation against which improvements in design quality can be judged in subsequent design quality assessments throughout Essex (see UD issue 113).

THE LESSONS AND THE LEGACY

We continue to work in partnership with nine district councils and one unitary council in Essex through service level agreements to provide specialist advice on historic buildings, conservation and urban design. Notwithstanding the obvious benefits of consistency that a county based urban design team can offer, urban designers and other design professionals work better as part of a team. Many of the smaller districts and boroughs find it difficult to attract candidates, who would be working in relative isolation and whose resource would be consumed within the day-to-day pressures of development control.

The real legacy of the Essex Design Guide was that it made aspects of design and development comprehensible to professionals and non-professionals alike, underpinning long term support for a county team able to supplement local resources and ensure a more positive and proactive approach to project delivery and development management. It also underpinned long term support for urban design. Richard Simmons, chief executive of CABE, has called the Essex Design Guide an icon for the UK. It’s about leadership. It’s about civic pride. It’s about local people setting out the terms on which investors will be allowed to add to their most precious assets: their sense of place, identity and community. CABE has always argued for local communities to insist on maintaining their local distinctiveness. The Essex Design Guide is the cornerstone upon which Essex will remain Essex. That it will be somewhere, not a nowhere place.

RESOURCES TO DELIVER A PLACE-MAKING AGENDA

Paul Lavelle argues for a holistic approach to urban design by local authorities

‘It is clear that the future will be different from the past… Local authorities will have a greater role in place-shaping and economic development’

Homes and Communities Agency

While there is nothing new about local authorities having a responsibility to secure better design, the emergence of the language of place and the prominence of localism suggests their remit is shifting. They are now expected to lead in bringing disparate building environment disciplines and public service responsibilities together in a more holistic approach to place. Whether we are talking about place making, place shaping or strategic planning, it is clear that urban design needs to be a core part of this. This should lead us to examine whether our local authorities have adequate capacity and support in urban design to meet the challenge.

Few organisations will be in a position to be able to invest heavily in design-related functions in the near future. Alternative ways of strengthening approaches to design could therefore be of great benefit to many local authorities. CABE’s direct experience through our enabling programme gives us some insight to this issue. Improving design outcomes for an organisation may well be a question of design resources, skills, education and training, but it is just as likely to be a organisational structure, governance and leadership that will determine its effectiveness as a champion of good design or positive shaper of place.

INTERNAL SUPPORT FOR GOOD DESIGN

CABE can back up Tim Haggard’s observations (in UD110) that more resources for design and more training are only part of the issue for local authorities. Blaming poor quality outcomes on design education alone misses the point. For every enabling project and every client, we ask whether people with strong design skills are employed. We also question whether the remit of those individuals is appropriate; whether ‘good design’ is properly understood; and whether quality of place and the need for a clear strategy for the future of a place is properly championed by those in senior positions.

An organisation’s success in achieving good design outcomes often depends on how those with design skills are valued and employed. There are some exceptional people working within local authorities and many are at the forefront of thinking about how urban design and design-led processes contribute to the place-making agenda: this includes transport planners and highways engineers, as well as staff specialising in urban design, architecture and landscape architecture. Many multi-skilled planners can provide an understanding of how good design can be applied to a range of issues across the scales, from tackling climate change to improving public health. But they will have little influence over a broader place agenda without being given the opportunity to engage in areas such as strategic planning, procurement and setting investment priorities.

Barry Shaw is the Head of Essex County Council’s BEB and Director of the Essex Design Guide. Paul Dawson is a senior urban designer.
GOOD DESIGN IN LOCAL PLANNING

The most obvious way in which an urban design-led approach to place can be embedded within a local authority’s policies and processes is through spatial planning. Good planning and good place-making are inseparable. If the statutory planning framework provides a supportive environment for good design, then the organisation is more likely to make positive use of the design skills possessed by staff and, ultimately, make good decisions.

In the past, the focus has been on using design guidance to help do this, bridging the gap between national guidance and local contexts and aspirations. Many authorities have written excellent documents based on a thorough understanding of place. Good recent examples include Bolton, Salford, East Staffordshire and Blackburn with Darwen where character studies of the built and natural environment have informed adopted design policies.

CABE has found through LDF workshops with local authorities that a good approach to design within planning is not about possessing a stand-alone design policy or a document about design. The core strategy - in setting out clearly and succinctly the profile of a place and a vision for its future - is where the real opportunity exists to take a design-led approach. It should permeate deep into the culture of an organisation.

Following the workshops, CABE has recently published Planning for Places to share these learnings. The core strategy has to communicate an understanding of how a place is going to respond to future demands and opportunities across a variety of sectors and themes. Expectations about design and quality of place cannot be considered in isolation from their socio-economic and spatial context. The visioning stage is where staff with urban design expertise, trained in thinking about these kinds of relationships can really help. A strategy that has a strongly embedded design ethos for both planning and corporate working offers a supportive context for future conversations about place-making and investment in place.

DESIGN TOOLS

A supportive strategic context for design still requires the right tools to be used in defining, promoting, recognising and delivering good design. One well-known approach led by CABE is design review. This is a proven way for local authorities to access expert advice to enhance and deliver better design outcomes. The recent affiliation of regional design review panels to the national panel is a great opportunity: a more coherent network and a more extensive resource for accessing design expertise.

CABE, in partnership with the Home Builders Federation, has been particularly active in recent years promoting Building for Life, which aims to raise the quality of urban design in new housing schemes. Over the years, it has evolved from an awards programme to a widely-recognised benchmark and evaluation framework. CABE and others are currently engaged in training a national network so there will be at least one accredited assessor working in every local planning authority in the country.

Accredited assessors are required to have a previous qualification in architecture, planning or urban design, and are expected to work closely with the local authority’s development management directorates. The aim is for Building for Life to provide a consistent framework for evaluating design quality throughout the development process. Assessments can be made during pre-planning and in final development stage. Assessor reports are not binding. They can be considered later by the planning committee. Assessors can then return to a built scheme to prepare a post-completion report for the authority’s Annual Monitoring Return. In this way, there is a feedback loop which means the design process can be checked against delivery. It can help to identify issues for resolution through planning policy and guidance, frame negotiations about design with future applicants, and define the role of officers with the skills to understand and apply Building for Life.

It is exactly this approach that has framed North West Leicestershire Council’s enthusiastic championing of Building for Life. CABE assisted the council with a local authority’s new build housing in 2008, helping officers make the case for a new, positive approach to design. This led to the authority’s own design guidance in 2009, using Building for Life to structure discussions about good design. From the Chief executive downwards, there is an understanding of the framework and how it can be used to improve processes and make better decisions. The council is now working on embedding Building for Life in design assessments formally through pre-planning and planning processes and training staff.

SHARED DESIGN RESOURCES

If policy, strategy, tools and processes help to provide a supportive environment for good design thinking, there is still a need to have the people in place to apply it and for those individuals to be properly supported. Often this is simply a case of being creative about the procurement of design skills and looking beyond the usual outsourcing model. The government’s own document World Class Places, is now advocating sharing resources and developing joint services in design and planning.

‘The planning policy framework now exists to enable local authorities and their partners to take an active lead in shaping development in their areas...’ [There is considerable scope for local authorities to better deploy skills, by drawing on external expertise and sharing their own expertise with others, for instance by developing joint services.]

A number of models of joint services already exist. These range from simply sharing resources between two authorities and developing joint approaches, to more complex and wider-ranging systems of collaboration and pooling of resources.

Such arrangements can be based on strong incentives for collaboration in order to overcome entrenched institutional and political barriers. In North Northamptonshire (Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Daventry) the council in a local audit of recent new-build schemes, inability to plan collectively in a complementary rather than competitive way, led to the establishment of a joint planning unit in 2004. The unit includes staff with urban design skills and their resources can be accessed by all four authorities. Perhaps more importantly, they can also be applied to collective endeavours at the sub-regional level. The level of collaboration across boundaries in this area is impressive and continues to be involved in making the strategic approach to planning and design better still.
DESIGN REVIEW AT THE LOCAL LEVEL
Anne Stevenson evaluates the role of Design Review Panels

Achieving design quality in the planning process has been a central focus of countless government initiatives, publications and training events in recent years. One model that is currently gaining ground in the effort to improve the quality of new developments is the design panel. Popularised through CABE’s Design Review service, the panel concept is now widely used at the regional, sub-regional and local level. This article traces the development of the design panel model and draws from a recent survey to provide a snapshot of current practice. The practicalities of running a design panel are then considered in light of new best practice guidance and a case study of Haringey Council’s Design Panel. A discussion on further challenges and of these being internal audits conducted by the team, and observers are generally welcome to attend. In roughly two thirds of cases, the panel’s comments are made publicly available.

There were equally shared challenges in the management of the panels. Monitoring of their activities was found to be inconsistent, with only 49% conducting reviews of their work, and most of these being internal audits conducted by the panel manager themselves. Maintaining panels independence was also highlighted as a major challenge for managers, particularly in terms of mediating between the panel’s comments and those made by other council officers. Achieving a good skills mix on the panel and encouraging referrals from other departments of the council were also highlighted as common difficulties.

NEW PANEL PRINCIPLES
Following the completion of this study, the steering group worked to develop updated design panel guidance, which was due to be published in November 2009. It aims to address the issues raised through the study and provide a solid framework for the operation of design review panels.

The most significant element of this new guidance is the setting out of ten new design review principles. Similar to the ten tips for success in the original publication, these principles set out more rigorously the founding objectives that should guide the work of panels. An important aspect of these principles is the reminder of the relationship between the panel and the LPA it serves. The principles of Independence and Advisory make very clear the principles of independence that the role of the design panel and the LPA, stating that the review should be conducted apart from ‘the scheme promoter and decision maker’ and that the panel ‘does not make decisions’. Accessibility is also focused on ensuring the panel’s views are presented using language that can be understood and used by decision makers, stressing the importance of consistently relaying panel feedback to the LPA decision-makers in order that their views can contribute to the decision process.

While not offering prescriptive details on how to organise a panel, a number of the principles do provide the foundation for best practice in panel management. The Expert principle clearly sets out the need to have panel members with strong professional qualifications and an understanding of how to conduct constructive reviews. The Accountable principle further emphasises the need to ensure panel managers are aware of, and transparent about, any potential conflicts of interest. Proportionate and Timely principles emphasise the need to bring schemes of real significance to the panel, as well as ensure the review takes place at an early stage. This provides helpful rules of thumb for panel managers in their selection of schemes to be reviewed.

This practice helps ensure objectivity in the assessment and is successful in helping to avoid personal aesthetic opinions from dominating the conversation.

The final principles provide insight into what are the overarching goals and responsibilities of panel members themselves are. The need for balanced and well-reasoned assessments is highlighted in the principle of Objectivity, reminding reviewers that comments should not be based on personal style but rather principles of good design. Rule 3 focuses on outcomes for people is another reminder about what the end result of panel comments should be, namely tangible improvements in the usability and benefits of places for people. Focussed on Improving Quality equally emphasises the need to provide constructive feedback that leads to the delivery of better places in all aspects: the building, urban design, highways, landscape and town planning issues. An essential aspect of this is providing precise comments that can be translated by design teams into reality.

PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE
These new principles will have a number of implications for existing panels. Taking as an example of an existing design panel in Haringey Council, this section will explore how these new principles will impact on its running.

As only 18% of LPAs with access to design review panels have their own panel, this suggests that provision at the local level is lacking.

In addition, the study also conducted in-depth questionnaires with 56 LPAs. A number of commonalities were also identified and they provide insight into practice in the delivery of design review sessions. A majority of panels meet at regular intervals, with on average seven members attending each meeting. Almost all schemes are presented by the applicants or applicant design team, and observers are generally welcome to attend. In roughly two thirds of cases, the panel’s comments are made publicly available.

A number of commonalities were also identified and they provide insight into practice in the delivery of design review sessions. A majority of panels meet at regular intervals, with on average seven members attending each meeting. Almost all schemes are presented by the applicants or applicant design team, and observers are generally welcome to attend. In roughly two thirds of cases, the panel’s comments are made publicly available.

A number of commonalities were also identified and they provide insight into practice in the delivery of design review sessions. A majority of panels meet at regular intervals, with on average seven members attending each meeting. Almost all schemes are presented by the applicants or applicant design team, and observers are generally welcome to attend. In roughly two thirds of cases, the panel’s comments are made publicly available.

A number of commonalities were also identified and they provide insight into practice in the delivery of design review sessions. A majority of panels meet at regular intervals, with on average seven members attending each meeting. Almost all schemes are presented by the applicants or applicant design team, and observers are generally welcome to attend. In roughly two thirds of cases, the panel’s comments are made publicly available.
The principles also help refocus panel management on key points. Accessibility is a reminder of the importance of relating feedback to the design officer promptly and consistently in order that comments can be incorporated into the planning process. Accountability calls for more consistent reporting on panel activities to the wider council management and elected members, which will help raise awareness of the panel’s role and impact. Monitoring allows panel members the opportunity to see the influence of their work and the positive role their feedback can have. This is particularly helpful in maintaining the motivation of these voluntary members.

The new guidance does leave some gaps that may require further thinking by local panels. The Proportionate principle does not address the question of what role a local panel should play in major applications that are already being reviewed by CABE or other sub-regional reviews. It is felt by some that it is a waste of the panel’s expertise to have them doubling up on schemes already receiving detailed design review and that greater impact could be made by the panel if more modest schemes were focused on.

Also, although this has yet to be a significant problem, it is unclear what should be done if there is conflict from the different levels of review. Although final judgement always rests with the development control case officer, contradictory advice may be seen to undermine the objectivity and value of the review process and may be another reason to avoid duplication.

A more specific challenge that has been faced in recent months is how to maintain regular meetings as the frequency of major applications has slowed down as a result of the recession. One approach Haringey has taken to tackle this problem is to involve the panel in more strategic planning issues such as the Core Strategy and emerging Sustainable Design & Construction guidance. There has also been discussion of using their expertise in developing site briefs and area master plans, which would help ensure design values are incorporated in Council strategies from the start.

CONCLUSION
While the benefits of a design panel can be considerable, both CABE’s research and Haringey’s experience show that a number of fundamental issues must be in place in order for the panel to work effectively. A skilled and diverse panel with a clear mandate and rules of operation are crucial aspects in ensuring quality outcomes from the design review process. Integration with the wider planning process is also essential. Maintaining a strong connection with development control can help drive the right schemes and ensure the right issues are raised in the planning process. The new guidance from CABE, the RTPI, RIBA and the Landscape Institute provide valuable advice on these issues, helping to support the design planning process and the ongoing success of existing and future panels.

Haringey’s Panel was set up in 2005 to help supplement the capacity of the then new and relatively small in-house design team. Since its inception, it has seen on average eight developments per year, ranging from small medium-sized schemes to major regeneration projects of over 100 units. Haringey’s current practice already positively addresses a number of the principles set forward in CABE’s new guidance. The panel is made up of a range of professionals from the built environment, including architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, engineering, conservation and town planning. Reviews take place only at the pre-application stage, helping to ensure that feedback can be incorporated at an early point in the design’s development. The panel also uses the Building for Life criteria as a framework for the Design Panel’s work in helping to avoid personal aesthetic issues and can help ensure the right schemes are referred for planning applications. The chair and vice-chair and panel members have a clear mandate and rules of operation are crucial aspects in ensuring quality outcomes from the design review process. Integration with the wider planning process is also essential. Maintaining a strong connection with development control can help drive the right schemes and ensure the right issues are raised in the planning process. The new guidance from CABE, the RTPI, RIBA and the Landscape Institute provide valuable advice on these issues, helping to support the design planning process and the ongoing success of existing and future panels.

In 2006 Fife Council was awarded a commendation in the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning for its Fife Urban Design Action Plan. The judges were impressed with the 19 service improvements demonstrating strong commitment to raising design quality, highlighting in particular the proposed officer and elected member training. This charted the development of different approaches to design management and reflected on the effects that officer and member training has had on practice. The evaluation is based on written questionnaires distributed at the conclusion of each training session as well as interviews with officers and members between one and three years later.

CONTEX T
Fife is a historic unitary coastal authority in the central belt of Scotland, containing both urban and rural areas and diverse landscapes. It has a growing population of 162,000 within 50 sq miles and typically receives about 4,000 planning applications a year. It is divided into three areas in terms of service provision: St. Andrews and East Fife, Kirkcaldy and mid Fife and Dunfermline and West Fife. Scotland has been promoting urban design in a broadly similar way as elsewhere in the UK. Fife has been one of the more proactive local authorities in terms of initiatives to raise design quality. These aspirations were motivated by the judges were impressed with Fife’s research andHaringey’s experience show that a number of fundamental aspects must be in place in order for the panel to work effectively. A skilled and diverse panel with a clear mandate and rules of operation are crucial aspects in ensuring quality outcomes from the design review process. Integration with the wider planning process is also essential. Maintaining a strong connection with development control can help drive the right schemes and ensure the right issues are raised in the planning process. The new guidance from CABE, the RTPI, RIBA and the Landscape Institute provide valuable advice on these issues, helping to support the design planning process and the ongoing success of existing and future panels. 

While the panel has always maintained a strictly advisory role, a number of community groups have recently approached the Council to request representation on the panel. The panel managers felt this would be inappropriate as the panel was intended to be a specifically design-oriented advisory group and community input could be more meaningfully captured through other existing forums. The Independent and Expert principles in CABE’s guidance lends support to this position and helps reaffirm the panel’s role in the decision making process.

FIFE COUNCIL URBAN DESIGN TRAINING
Marilyn Higgins and Leslie Forsyth wonder what difference training makes to the quality of design

In 2006 Fife Council was awarded a commendation in the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning for its Fife Urban Design Action Plan. The judges were impressed with the 19 service improvements demonstrating strong commitment to raising design quality, highlighting in particular the proposed officer and elected member training.

This article charts the development of different approaches to design management and reflected on the effects that officer and member training has had on practice. The evaluation is based on written questionnaires distributed at the conclusion of each training session as well as interviews with officers and members between one and three years later.

CONTEX T
Fife is a historic unitary coastal authority in the central belt of Scotland, containing both urban and rural areas and diverse landscapes. It has a growing population of 162,000 within 50 sq miles and typically receives about 4,000 planning applications a year. It is divided into three areas in terms of service provision: St. Andrews and East Fife, Kirkcaldy and mid Fife and Dunfermline and West Fife. Scotland has been promoting urban design in a broadly similar way as elsewhere in the UK. Fife has been one of the more proactive local authorities in terms of initiatives to raise design quality. These aspirations were motivated by the judges were impressed with Fife’s research andHaringey’s experience show that a number of fundamental aspects must be in place in order for the panel to work effectively. A skilled and diverse panel with a clear mandate and rules of operation are crucial aspects in ensuring quality outcomes from the design review process. Integration with the wider planning process is also essential. Maintaining a strong connection with development control can help drive the right schemes and ensure the right issues are raised in the planning process. The new guidance from CABE, the RTPI, RIBA and the Landscape Institute provide valuable advice on these issues, helping to support the design planning process and the ongoing success of existing and future panels. 

While the panel has always maintained a strictly advisory role, a number of community groups have recently approached the Council to request representation on the panel. The panel managers felt this would be inappropriate as the panel was intended to be a specifically design-oriented advisory group and community input could be more meaningfully captured through other existing forums. The Independent and Expert principles in CABE’s guidance lends support to this position and helps reaffirm the panel’s role in the decision making process.

FIFE COUNCIL URBAN DESIGN TRAINING
Marilyn Higgins and Leslie Forsyth wonder what difference training makes to the quality of design

In 2006 Fife Council was awarded a commendation in the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning for its Fife Urban Design Action Plan. The judges were impressed with the 19 service improvements demonstrating strong commitment to raising design quality, highlighting in particular the proposed officer and elected member training.

This article charts the development of different approaches to design management and reflected on the effects that officer and member training has had on practice. The evaluation is based on written questionnaires distributed at the conclusion of each training session as well as interviews with officers and members between one and three years later.

CONTEX T
Fife is a historic unitary coastal authority in the central belt of Scotland, containing both urban and rural areas and diverse landscapes. It has a growing population of 162,000 within 50 sq miles and typically receives about 4,000 planning applications a year. It is divided into three areas in terms of service provision: St. Andrews and East Fife, Kirkcaldy and mid Fife and Dunfermline and West Fife. Scotland has been promoting urban design in a broadly similar way as elsewhere in the UK. Fife has been one of the more proactive local authorities in terms of initiatives to raise design quality. These aspirations were motivated by the judges were impressed with Fife’s research andHaringey’s experience show that a number of fundamental aspects must be in place in order for the panel to work effectively. A skilled and diverse panel with a clear mandate and rules of operation are crucial aspects in ensuring quality outcomes from the design review process. Integration with the wider planning process is also essential. Maintaining a strong connection with development control can help drive the right schemes and ensure the right issues are raised in the planning process. The new guidance from CABE, the RTPI, RIBA and the Landscape Institute provide valuable advice on these issues, helping to support the design planning process and the ongoing success of existing and future panels. 

While the panel has always maintained a strictly advisory role, a number of community groups have recently approached the Council to request representation on the panel. The panel managers felt this would be inappropriate as the panel was intended to be a specifically design-oriented advisory group and community input could be more meaningfully captured through other existing forums. The Independent and Expert principles in CABE’s guidance lends support to this position and helps reaffirm the panel’s role in the decision making process.
OFFICERS

Feedback at the end of the training courses was very positive. After the training had been completed, officers formed a group to support each other in promoting learning from the course in their daily work. Officers contacted recently unanimously confirm that the training has resulted in greater motivation and job satisfaction.

Three years after the first training, participants from the policy team report that greater understanding about the principles of built form and open space has strengthened their ability to convey constructive information to colleagues, developers and other professions. They highlight the importance of communication and working together; the recognition of the importance of design by everyone involved in the process, including managers; and the production of well-articulated design policy, guidance and briefs to justify decisions. A result is increased confidence and assertiveness in challenging proposals and defending professional opinions on design matters. The training directly spawned activity resulting in improved policy and increased guidance. The Council commissioned Gillespies LLP to produce the Fife Masterplans Handbook to guide major settlement expansion, which won the Commendation for Development Management in the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2007. The latest drafts of local plans include diagrammatic strategic development frameworks for major land allocations that are in line with urban design principles discussed as part of the training.

Development management officers report that the practical nature of the training has meant that they are able to apply the principles in their daily work, insisting, for example, that in housing layouts streets join up, open space is well defined and overlooked, front doors face the street, a mixture of house types is included and cars are not allowed to dominate. A significant shift occurred after the first training course, when, for the first time, a housing development was refused on design grounds in Cupar, a suburb on the new Design Guide. The decision was appealed by the developer but the Council won the public inquiry. This success set a precedent and it gave other officers in that increased confidence to ensure that the principles in the guidance are being adhered to, resulting in a number of cases of improved applications. Officers had considerable input in terms of urban design in a new housing development at Balcomie Green, Crail.

There was a clear expectation that participants would need to be involved in considerable work, both during the sessions and in between.

The training is seen as an initial grounding in urban design, from which a continuing programme is being developed by the Council. A new workshop about contemporary design versus a historicist approach aimed at both officers and members is currently being planned. Members are also being briefed about a newly developed FIFE Sustainable Communities Checklist and recent urban design trips (Poundbury, Upton, Freiburg, Greenwich Millennium Village) undertaken as part of the Council’s Designing Sustainable Communities Initiative.

MEMBERS

Members were also positive about the training immediately afterwards. The vice-chair of the planning committee notices that basic urban design messages about a sense of place are beginning to take root, becoming more ingrained in daily discussions. He cites the example of the urban design framework in the new plan for St. Andrews and East Fife, which aims to promote connectivity, amongst other design principles, and believes that guidance is essential early in the process for large capital projects. The vice-chair of the planning committee states that the training helped councillors think about how proposals conform to urban design principles, not just how many people objected. Both believe that the role of the three permanent specialist urban design officers has been important in raising the profile and co-ordinating action. However, they acknowledge that councillors are learning about many things all at once and more needs to be done to engage members. One suggests that the slowdown in the economy is a good time to upgrade skills and improve guidance. The chair and vice-chair of the planning committee are mentioned as the Council’s Design Champions. Both agree that this role has remained underdeveloped, with the chair asserting that promoting good quality urban design is integral to his position in any case.

CONCLUSIONS

The example of Fife Council illustrates an authority which has taken the urban design agenda very seriously. It has created a set of documents providing excellent information for developers which have been recognised nationally, established positions to lead urban design initiatives, promoted a programme of learning for officers and members and is beginning to see evidence that these measures are leading to improvements in the quality of development on the ground. The role of specialist officers in promoting urban design and co-ordinating action across the whole authority has been important, especially where officers are scattered across geographical areas.

Officers acknowledge that a culture change has begun, including amongst some councillors. One policy officer moved from Fife to Moray Council in Scotland and was instrumental in initiating similar training there.

However, the ultimate value of the whole exercise is in what is happening on the ground and it is that which will eventually define the real success or failure of the training. Urban design is complex and culture change takes a long time. There is evidence that the culture has started to change in Fife but much remains to be done, with officers, members and local communities. For example, transportation officers took part in the urban design training.

There is a growing confidence to ensure that development proposals conform to basic urban design principles and the Council has started to revise policies but their translation into practice will define their worth. There is an urgent need now to put new design policies and guidance into practice so that more good examples are produced on the ground. The Fife case shows that a firm foundation of training initiatives can instil confidence, facilitate dialogue and promote change. But it is not in itself a guarantee of significant change: this depends on strong and sustained leadership and commitment from both officers and members, if quality is to be consistently raised in the long term.

urban design principles, an exercise applying these principles in decisions about planning applications and a discussion about the role of members in relation to other participants in the planning process.

There is a growing confidence to ensure that development proposals conform to basic urban design principles and the Council has started to revise policies but their translation into practice will define their worth. There is an urgent need now to put new design policies and guidance into practice so that more good examples are produced on the ground. The Fife case shows that a firm foundation of training initiatives can instil confidence, facilitate dialogue and promote change. But it is not in itself a guarantee of significant change: this depends on strong and sustained leadership and commitment from both officers and members, if quality is to be consistently raised in the long term.

However, the ultimate value of the whole exercise is in what is happening on the ground and it is that which will eventually define the real success or failure of the training. Urban design is complex and culture change takes a long time. There is evidence that the culture has started to change in Fife but much remains to be done, with officers, members and local communities. For example, transportation officers took part in the urban design training.

There is a growing confidence to ensure that development proposals conform to basic urban design principles and the Council has started to revise policies but their translation into practice will define their worth. There is an urgent need now to put new design policies and guidance into practice so that more good examples are produced on the ground. The Fife case shows that a firm foundation of training initiatives can instil confidence, facilitate dialogue and promote change. But it is not in itself a guarantee of significant change: this depends on strong and sustained leadership and commitment from both officers and members, if quality is to be consistently raised in the long term.

However, the ultimate value of the whole exercise is in what is happening on the ground and it is that which will eventually define the real success or failure of the training. Urban design is complex and culture change takes a long time. There is evidence that the culture has started to change in Fife but much remains to be done, with officers, members and local communities. For example, transportation officers took part in the urban design training.

There is a growing confidence to ensure that development proposals conform to basic urban design principles and the Council has started to revise policies but their translation into practice will define their worth. There is an urgent need now to put new design policies and guidance into practice so that more good examples are produced on the ground. The Fife case shows that a firm foundation of training initiatives can instil confidence, facilitate dialogue and promote change. But it is not in itself a guarantee of significant change: this depends on strong and sustained leadership and commitment from both officers and members, if quality is to be consistently raised in the long term.
DESIGN CONTROL IN WELSH AUTHORITIES

Anna Lemon reports on research undertaken in Wales

Much has been written about design control in England but little about Wales. While elements of planning remain similar, the two planning systems are gradually changing at different paces and in different directions.

A clear national framework for design in Wales is set out in the Welsh Assembly Government’s Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (2002) including revisions such as the Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement (MIPPS) C1/2008 on Planning for Good Design, and Technical Advice Note 12: Design (TAN 12) (2009). In contrast to Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1) TAN 12 (2009) describes in detail, design and how it should be considered and implemented. This is through detailing the elements of design (access, character, community safety, environmental sustainability and movement), or being guided to consider design at all stages of the planning process and in different environments, in different types of development, in detailed matters (biodiversity, public realm, public art, signs and advertisements) and by local authorities in their design policy and advice and development management. The 2009 TAN 12 also explains how development should be climate responsive.

As in England, national policy feeds into the development plan, which in Wales will be the Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP will be one document containing area-wide, strategic and detailed policies for each authority. It is a more straightforward approach than the English Local Development Framework with its multiple layers of documentation.

Wales differs from England in other ways. Its 22 local authorities are all unitary authorities, and there are three National Park authorities. The larger urban areas are in South East Wales (Cardiff, Newport, Swansea) and North East (Wrexham), with the remaining areas being predominantly rural.

RESEARCH

In 2005 the Design Commission for Wales (DCfW) in partnership with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Cardiff University School of City and Regional Planning sponsored a PhD to research the design control processes of Welsh local authorities. The result was a comprehensive review of the 22 local planning authorities (LPAs) and three national park authorities. Interviews were conducted with all 25 Chief Planning Officers, 24 chairs of planning committees and at least one officer (selected for their design literacy) per LPA. The data for this article arises from this research, as do the initial findings from the next stage of the PhD research which looks more closely at the involvement of elected members in the design control process in two Welsh LPAs.

The research revealed that PPW and TAN 12 (2009) resulted in improved design control in Wales through the broadened definition and objectives of design and the attaching of equal importance to urban design, sustainability and resource efficiency. The publications increased public and LPAs awareness of design and provided confidence for good design to be pursued through the planning process. However the research also identified that in 2006/7 despite the majority of interviewees considering themselves to be design literate, Welsh LPAs were not implementing all aspects of design: 61 per cent of interviewees considered their authority had never refused an application on grounds of poor urban design quality; 83 per cent of LPAs had never or seldom used them.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

An investigation of the development control functions in all 25 Welsh LPAs found that despite greatly varying structures of development control teams in Welsh LPAs, the problems and weaknesses cited were similar. Positively 76 per cent of Welsh LPAs offered a pre-application discussion service, although staffing and workload levels were found to impact on this. However the pre-application service occurred even though the Welsh Assembly Government has not linked the Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) to the eight week determination target for planning applications. Despite this, the Wales Audit Office still uses this target in their reviews of sustainability; and only 36 per cent of LPAs were able to say outright that costs following an appeal did not deter them from refusing an application solely on design grounds. Explanations were sought for these statistics, and significant obstacles were found which prevented the implementation of effective design control in Wales. These will be considered in more detail below, and compared, where possible, to the results of a survey conducted by CABE in 2003 of English LPAs.

DESIGN POLICY AND GUIDANCE

In 2007 the status and coverage of design policy and guidance varied greatly across Wales. Only 10 LPAs had adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP). Five other LPAs were working to complete them while 20 of the 23 LPAs had begun to work towards the Local Development Plan (LDP). Design supplementary planning guidance (SPG) coverage also varied greatly, from LPAs with SPG that included a Sustainable Design (e.g. Newport had its SPG in Welsh) to those with no SPG. This was despite the Planning Officers Society Wales (POSW) having published a Residential Design Guide and Householder Design Guide to assist authorities struggling to produce design guidance. Planning briefs were also found to be an overlooked valuable resource with 44 per cent of Welsh LPAs having never or seldom used them.

DESIGN SKILLS

The picture is mixed for design skills. As would be hoped for LPAs, the skills of a Building Conservation Officer and Landscape Officer are prevalent in Welsh authorities. Disappointingly, particularly when compared with the situation in England, applications in the majority of Welsh authorities are not assessed by an urban designer, registered architect or sustainable design and construction specialist. Furthermore in the majority of LPAs any specialist skills are not considered to be under the development control team, where their primary concern may not be for development control.

In 2007 no Welsh LPA operated a local authority design panel to review current applications. DCfW operates a national design review service which reviews design pre-application (PDG) schemes a year, but in 2007 12 per cent of Welsh authorities had still not utilised the service. In comparison CABE found in 2003 that 26 per cent of English LPAs ran panels modelled on the CABE design review service. However this could be because they are partially resourced to do so in partnership with CABE and RDAs.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

For interviewees the effectiveness of targets for speed of decision making on the quality of design control practice was compounded by other obstacles such as resources and workload. Across many Welsh authorities in 2007 there were staff retention and recruitment problems. Authorities struggled to find adequately qualified staff and/or were experiencing competition for staff from neighbouring authorities resulting in a high turnover. If design control was to be improved officers considered there to be a need for design training for members and officers as well as additional staff. Lack of staff, frequent staff changes or under-qualified staff will inevitably have an impact on working conditions in LPAs and affect the value officers can add to applications. With the current recession the situation may have changed, especially the concern officers and Chief Planning Officers had in 2007 for development control officers workload levels. In two separate LPAs the interviewees highlighted that the DCLG target of 150 applications per officer per annum was being markedly exceeded.

Development control in Welsh LPAs was found to be under-resourced, under skilled and under pressure (from application processing targets and workloads) all of which inevitably affected morale and culture.

And many LPAs felt pressured by the rule. They considered its influence on design control to be negative, leading either to immediate refusal, or to approval of a mediocre application, rather than allowing the investment of time to improve the proposal. While not all interviewees felt pressured by the eight week target, concern was expressed that the value-added to proposals was not a measurement.

61 per cent of interviewed officers considered their authority had never refused an application on grounds of poor urban design quality.
However significant obstacles were identified that were preventing the implementation of effective design control:

- Only ten LPAs had adopted Unitary Development Plan
- Some LPAs had no SPG
- Few LPAs applications were reviewed by in house design control specialists
- No Welsh LPA operated a design panel to review current applications
- The development control application determination time of eight weeks negatively influenced design control
- Authorities had staff retention and recruitment problems
- There was insufficient design training for elected members and for officers
- Few community groups were identified as being active in the design control process
- Conservation Area groups in Wales are few and far between. Therefore large areas of Wales are without this form of additional guardianship.

To improve the design control process in Welsh LPAs, close attention and resources need to be focused on the following key recommendations:

- All LPAs to provide pre-application advice
- Application registration requirements in all LPAs to be strengthened to ensure applications are complete and of sufficient quality in relation to policy and guidance
- Fresh and alternative methods of performance assessment that consider the added value to design or contribution to the quality of place, rather than speed of processing applications should be developed
- A stronger focus on member and officer relations. For example shared design training should be implemented to allow members and officers to work together on design skills and awareness, helping to develop understanding and confidence in each other's perspectives and abilities. Closer working relationships will also help to fulfill the requirements of monitoring and indicators for LDPs
- Stronger links between Building Control and Planning departments. Placing Building Control and Planning under the same directorate would allow the departments greater opportunity for collaboration, especially on monitoring and indicators, and the increasingly important sustainable construction agenda
- Increase public awareness and facilitate greater engagement via design competitions, urban forums and best practice networks, design awards, guidance, advice and events.

The recruitment of design skills, for example an urban designer or planner trained in urban design to the DC team in every Welsh LPA. This will enable each LPA to upgrade all aspects of its design control practice.

**ELECTED MEMBERS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Perhaps in contrast to common belief, members were not found to constrain design control, but neither were they leading Welsh LPAs in developing higher design standards. Good communication between chairs and officers is essential for the creation of a good working relationship. However 46 per cent of chairs of planning committee in Wales said their main contact with officers was at the monthly pre-planning committee meeting for the chair, vice-chair and Chief Planning officer.

If design control was to be improved officers considered there to be a need for design training for members and officers as well as additional staff.

Encouragingly all Welsh authorities were found to provide induction training in planning for their planning committee members, but 40 per cent of Welsh LPAs had never provided their members with design training, a statistic on a par with England in 2003. There were no Welsh LPA Member Design Champions in 2006/7 and there was, and continues to be, no national encouragement in Wales for them. In comparison 43 per cent of English LPAs in 2003 had a senior member or officer design champion which was double the number that existed in 2001 many of whom had then been more junior officers. When interviewees were asked who was most influential in the pursuit of design quality, the senior officers, planning policy officers, development control officers and officers in the Conservation and Design section were rated highly, in contrast to the general public and local amenity groups. Relatively few groups were found to be active in the design control process within each LPA in Wales. There are civic groups in a number of LPAs, but not all comment regularly on applications and a large number of these public groups focus only on specific geographical areas, leaving areas of Wales without this form of additional guardianship or support. Conservation Area groups, a significant actor in the design process, are also few and far between. Whether this is because the LPA cannot resource them or because of lack of interest, it is a concern that even these areas of special architectural or historical interest do not arouse public interest and protection.

Further research into member involvement in design control is in progress, and while it was found that design training for members is not widespread, finding the time for training or championing may be difficult for members when potentially already juggling a full time job, constituents concerns etc.

**SUMMARY OF DESIGN CONTROL IN WELSH LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES IN 2006/7**

Since the empirical data was collected in 2007 a number of significant changes have taken place. These include the 2009 local government elections in Wales, an updated TAN 12 Design (2005), Design Bulletin 32 replaced by Manual for Streets, the requirement for Access Statements since 2008, and Design and Access Statements from 1 June 2009, the inevitable changes in personnel in Welsh LPAs, the appointment of Jane Davidson AM as the Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing, the economic recession and a newly announced review of the planning application process. The end of 2009 is also likely to bring the publication of a revised Planning Policy Wales.

While the updated policy and guidance is a positive step the research has revealed the varied way national policy is rolled out across Wales. It is clear that PWP and TAN 12 resulted in improved design control in Wales. They have widened the definition of design, explained the objectives and principles of good design, integrated sustainability into design, increased design awareness within LPAs and raised the profile of design, providing policy backing and thereby increasing confidence in design matters.

The research identified a number of other strengths of design control in Wales:

- In 88 per cent of Welsh LPAs, applications could be viewed by building conservation specialists and in 76 per cent by landscape architects.
- Almost half of Welsh LPAs have access to Designing out Crime specialists. (While this is a positive finding, these specialists do not necessarily have the skills to advise on all areas of design)
- Some LPAs had a good range of up to date SPG that included coverage of sustainable design; for example the three National Parks worked together to produce Guidelines for Sustainable Design in the National Parks of Wales adopted in 2007
- All Welsh LPAs provide induction training in planning for their planning committee members. Whether this training is taken up by members before sitting on planning committee is unknown, and the design content is likely to be minimal.
CULTIVATING DESIGN LEADERSHIP
Mark Pearson explains the development of design support for local authorities in the South West

The idea that all local authorities in England should appoint an elected member design champion stems from the early years of CARE. A separate leaflet explained the role in more detail, but the initiative was introduced in The Councillor’s Guide to Urban Design alongside other essential information for elected members. With the current rise of localism in politics and most parties purporting to it some way strengthen the role of local authorities and community leadership following the next general election, an updated version of this guidance would be timely. The author certainly found it to be a most useful introductory text when he was acting as the Design Action Manager for CARE in Devon and Cornwall from June 2004 to May 2006. The programme of work during those two years included a great deal of informal ‘relationship building’ alongside more conventional skills development and training with the authorities in the two counties. It probably represents the most concerted effort yet to be undertaken to recruit design champions at that geographical scale. Some of the experiences encountered then have informed a current region-wide initiative which we have entitled Design Leadership. In this short article I briefly reflect on some of those experiences of recruiting and working with Design Champions and go on to describe how Design Leadership has been conceived and to set that, attempting to fortify their role and extending their influence amongst colleagues.

EARLY SUPPORT FOR DESIGN CHAMPIONS
It would be fair to say that many within councils (elected members and officers) and many more outside local authorities are more than a little suspicious of the idea that a lay local politician could act effectively as a champion for good design. Surely you need to know a good deal about design in order to champion it? For members, at a time when resistance to the levels of development suggested in draft regional spatial strategies is high, there persists a concern amongst prospective candidates that Design Champion might approximate in the minds of the electorate to Development Champion. In over-coming these apprehensions in the Design Action programme, a rather bold tactic was employed in the nature of the offer – ‘We’ll provide a free training event if you appoint a design champion to host the occasion’. This didn’t always work, but in all cases a discussion about the advantages of working with a design champion was at least agreed as the closing item of the session. Another essential ingredient in gaining interest was making part of the training bespoke – looking directly at the particular issues regarding design practice in their authority, usually by comparing and contrasting two recently completed housing developments. This helped to bring the notion of design quality out of the abstract realm into tangible issues that they could clearly appreciate in the context of their own community. We used the building for Life framework, then in its infancy, as an accessible way to structure the informal analysis. This was undertaken directly by elected members but with officers in support. At the end of such workshops, it began to become clear to all that the role of the champion was not to pretend to be the fount of all knowledge or, worse still, opinion on design matters, but merely to act as a political focus for a wider corporate initiative to pursue good design and sustainability (and since the 2008 Act, this has become a duty for local authorities). Also, that the sort of design that was being discussed, was not of a high-level professional debate, but that which affected the everyday quality of life for residents and constituents and certainly, a legitimate concern.

In the best events we were able to identify a live site, and added brief design exercise that asked the councillors to draw upon the critical framework described in the Councillors Guide – taken, in turn, from By Design – explaining how Aspects of Development Form can be set against Objectives of Urban Design. Whilst we pointed out that we were not expecting to transform the participants into instant urban designers and architects, it was clear that the experience of being creator rather than critic was a new, enjoyable and perception-changing experience for many.

Once champions were up and running, the Design Action programme provided other collective events at which design champions from all authorities could network and expand their knowledge, sharing learning with external practitioners and other public sector officers. The two Architecture Centres in the region now lead on the support for design champions (and historic environment champions) and have been providing joint workshops on Building in Context jointly funded by CARE and English Heritage.

The publication of World Class Places highlights the need to strengthen quality of place skills, knowledge and capacity (Strategic Objective 7). The actions identified are important, yet there’s still a long way to go in most authorities to get the appropriate balance of interest/lay interest in design and the objective expertise provided by officers. Aside from absolute levels of passion, skill and knowledge in either group, our experience thus far is that it is the degree to which they pursue a shared agenda that is by far the most important ingredient in successful place-making. There is a pressing need to re-state the value of all this, given the growing tendency for the term ‘place-making’ to be used to refer to the local alignment of funding streams rather than any attributes of the physical environment, even though we are aware that the two are related.

Perhaps foremost amongst the design champions active during the period of the Design Action Programme was Cllr Tudor Evans, then leader of Plymouth City Council. Tudor was responsible for acting on the Vision for the city drafted by David Mackay of MBM architects working in collaboration with AZ Urban Studio. The Vision successfully informed the adopted Sustainable design in and for Plymouth strategy, then in its infancy, as a living document which has evolved to a degree to which it has become a duty for local authorities. Also, that the sort of design that was being discussed, was not of a high-level professional debate, but that which affected the everyday quality of life for residents and constituents and certainly, a legitimate concern.

In the best events we were able to identify a live site, and added brief design exercise that asked the councillors to draw upon the critical framework described in the Councillors Guide – taken, in turn, from By Design – explaining how Aspects of Development Form can be set against Objectives of Urban Design. Whilst we pointed out that we were not expecting to transform the participants into instant urban designers and architects, it was clear that the experience of being creator rather than critic was a new, enjoyable and perception-changing experience for many.

Once champions were up and running, the Design Action programme provided other collective events at which design champions from all authorities could network and expand their knowledge, sharing learning with external practitioners and other public sector officers. The two Architecture Centres in the region now lead on the support for design champions (and historic environment champions) and have been providing joint workshops on Building in Context jointly funded by CARE and English Heritage.

The publication of World Class Places highlights the need to strengthen quality of place skills, knowledge and capacity (Strategic Objective 7). The actions identified are important, yet there’s still a long way to go in most authorities to get the appropriate balance of interest/lay interest in design and the objective expertise provided by officers. Aside from absolute levels of passion, skill and knowledge in either group, our experience thus far is that it is the degree to which they pursue a shared agenda that is by far the most important ingredient in successful place-making. There is a pressing need to re-state the value of all this, given the growing tendency for the term ‘place-making’ to be used to refer to the local alignment of funding streams rather than any attributes of the physical environment, even though we are aware that the two are related.

Perhaps foremost amongst the design champions active during the period of the Design Action Programme was Cllr Tudor Evans, then leader of Plymouth City Council. Tudor was responsible for acting on the Vision for the city drafted by David Mackay of MBM architects working in collaboration with AZ Urban Studio. The Vision successfully informed the adopted Core Strategy (leading to an award from the RPS) and Mackay then became the inaugural chair of the Plymouth Design Panel. Tudor authorised some key early investment in the public realm in order to secure an essential link in the centre of the city and was an ardent supporter of the work of the design panel.

Another prominent champion was Cllr John Wilshire from North Devon District Council. John requested a bespoke workshop that tested a development brief for a significant site in Barnstaple. This helped to rehearse some of the key considerations for members and officers ahead of an imminent proposal from a developer. The
Topic

Design Action Workshop, members and officers alike as a helpful and ingenious and elegant ideas were developed. The skills of the architects came to bear and some the local authorities commitment to good design, (Eco-home excellent).

a different urban strategy for the lower part of the site and the design exercise provided an excellent vehicle with which to explore more general principles of urban design and place-making.

TOTNES SOUTHERN AREA – A PROJECT ‘CHAMPIONED’

The recently completed housing developments in the Southern Area of Totnes, Devon were beneficiaries of the original Design Action Programme. Councillor Anne Ward initially contacted the manager concerned to secure some form of training for her council colleagues. The workshop, arranged in collaboration with Steve Munday and other officers, ended with a design exercise looking at the fundamental moves that one might make in relation to the three sites. The workshop was supported by housing expert Alex Ely and the review of the design exercise was undertaken with architects from Harrison Sutton Partnership. That practice had just been appointed by South Hams to work up detailed designs for the sites. Unusually, the council was determined to establish a fully worked-up scheme which met with local residents concerns before attracting a development partner. Architects Stuart Kittlety and Jenny Clayton listened to the councillors aspirations for the sites as they presented colourful clay models – intentionally playful and abstract so as to avoid all detail but concentrate rather on the fundamental principles. It is interesting that, crude as this exercise was, it immediately started to set a different agenda from the site-wide master plan that had earlier been prepared by Savills (see UD Issue 99) with much more intense development suggested for the three sites of the first phase and a different urban strategy for the lower part of the site. In commissioning the detailed designs the local authority were able to insist on a high percentage of affordable units, excellent community engagement and firm targets for the environmental objectives (Eco home excellent).

Following the workshop, which helped to affirm the local authorities commitment to good design, the skills of the architects came to bear and some ingenious and elegant ideas were developed. The Design Action Manager, now regarded by elected members and officers alike as a helpful and accessible resource, was invited to assist council officers in reviewing progress with the architects. As the scheme was approaching resolution, it was suggested that it would be appropriate to gain the advice of the South West Regional Design Review Panel: the project was a substantial one for the historic core of the town, and an independent view, given the council’s role as both client and planning authority, was thought to be useful. Not only were architects and the local authority represented but also the chair of the local community alliance. They had been opponents of earlier schemes but now wished to make clear their support for the current proposals. The review was very supportive, urging only minor rationalisation of the form but identifying the potential perils of the next stage of procuring the project, which would be through a design and build contract with a development partner.

The opportunity was taken to re-visit the outcomes of the Design Action programme and provide not a further technical service but developmental support for local authorities.

Meanwhile South Hams had appointed a design champion (Cllr Sally Roberts) and established their own local design review panel. They collaborated with Teignbridge District Council to create an urban design officer post, shared between the two authorities. The Design Action Manager was also invited back to provide a further training session. The sites in the Southern Area were granted planning permission and Midas Construction chosen as the council’s development partner. Harrison Sutton were wisely retained to act on behalf of the council as client’s representative and could therefore maintain a vigilance for the design quality through the final design and construction phase overcoming the anxieties expressed at the regional design review panel. The rest, as they say, is history, with the project winning the National Housing Award for 2009.

But along the way Councillor Anne Ward re-appears, now jointly occupying the role of design champion with another colleague. She was able to convene and chair a group that explored the strategy for expending a section 106 sum for public art and was persistent in raising concerns of nearby residents about detailed aspects of the public realm as the project neared completion.

FROM DESIGN CHAMPIONS TO DESIGN LEADERSHIP

About 18 months ago the South West Regional Development Agency asked Creating Excellence (regional centre of excellence for the South West) to re-examine the regional design programme for which it was providing funding and to re-focus elements of this upon the Key Areas – those authorities where the regional economic and spatial strategies anticipated significant growth. Alongside the established South West Regional Design Review Panel, a programme of enabling was proposed. Of more significance to this article, the opportunity was taken to re-visit the outcomes of the Design Action programme and provide not a further technical service but developmental support for local authorities that built on the Design Champion concept.

The notion of Design Leadership was posited – whereby the pursuit of good design is seen more as a corporate responsibility shared amongst a group of key officers and relevant portfolio holders but with the Design Champion acting now as a clear focus for that wider group. The programme was developed by Creating Excellence in partnership with the two regional architecture centres and with support from CABE.

This gives rise to a shared progressive agenda for improvement which the Design Champion can then monitor and steer.

It is still early days but the seminars have been well received and authorities such as Bath and North East Somerset, Taunton and East Devon have begun to refresh their agendas for design. Guest speakers such as Paul Murrain and Sue McGlynn have helped to articulate the value of design to good effect alongside more structured sessions raising awareness of Building for Life or Manual for Streets, for instance. More inspiration than hard sell, the reflective session which concludes the event allows the authority to realign its own necessary programme of development.

Just as commitment and relationship building at the national level is undermined by the relentless merry-go-round of ministers, we have to recognise that local politics too produces similar frustrations with portfolios and administrations changing hands and champions coming and going. The task of inducting and training incumbents is therefore endless but none the less vital – it is only where there is strong political support for design that officers can, with confidence, draw upon wider resources such as design review and enabling services (from whatever source) and, crucially, act upon them. As David Mackay would often remark when I sat with him on the Design Panel in Plymouth “To realise a plan, the effort is fifty per cent technical and fifty per cent political...” As urban designers we forget that at our peril.
ST JOHN’S, NORTHAMPTON
Tom Barrows puts forward a master plan for Northampton cultural quarter

The site situated on the southern edge of Northampton’s town centre is currently two pay and display surface car parks owned by Northampton Borough Council. The northern car park has the entrance to the Royal and Derngate Theatre on its northern boundary with rear of properties to the Royal and Derngate Theatre on its Albion Place to the east. The southern parcel has been defined by the busy Victoria Promenade Road to the south and St John’s multi-storey car park to the east. Adjoining the northern boundary of the southern parcel and eastern boundary of the northern parcel is Bloomsbury Place, a new eight storey, residentially led mixed use scheme completed in mid 2008. The council’s vision is for a mixed use development defining their ‘cultural quarter’ and ultimately becoming an extension to the town centre.

A number of figure ground and tissue studies were carried out on the site to appreciate the context and understand what impact development would have on the area. Various parts of Northampton were dropped on to the site and assessed for their permeability, adaptability and density. The blocks around the market square, established in 1235, demonstrated the best qualities and scored the highest in the assessment criteria; their shape, mass and form also fit well into the St John’s master plan area and topography. Justification for the use of these blocks is reinforced by their historical relevance and ability to adapt with change over time.

LEGIBILITY AND PERMEABILITY

Once the blocks shape was established, it was considered important to carry out a movement assessment. The northern car park saw very little vehicular and pedestrian movement and appeared to only serve local residents in Albion Place, whereas the southern parcel sits in between the town centre and Becketts Park; this link has the largest pedestrian movement. Within the master plan the streets have been designed for the pedestrian and only cater for vehicular movement around the perimeter. This is to encourage people to continue not only to use the existing north to south link but to also use the horizontal movement created by the scheme which is quicker and more attractive; these routes are defined by tree lined streets.

Landmark buildings punctuate the site corners and their curved facades exhibit the qualities of existing vernacular within the town centre reinforcing the sites legibility and providing another subtle link to the town’s history. The fronts of the development are placed where the main footfall is expected to be, primary frontages and public entrances are mainly on the horizontal links creating active and vibrant routes, with secondary frontages being transparent and encouraging pedestrians on to the main streets.

To encourage a permeable and pedestrian friendly environment, public and private areas are clearly defined; all private areas are kept to the rear of blocks away from the public realm. The master plan incorporates three public squares/meeting places, the northern parcel has two clearly defined spaces, the first at the Royal and Derngate Theatre entrance which is currently understated and under used. Cafes and restaurants with spill out zones on to the public realm will also use the existing north to south link but to also use the horizontal movement created by the scheme which is quicker and more attractive; these routes are defined by tree lined streets.

The sites topography sloping down some 14m from north to south was a major factor when choosing the block shapes as it was important to keep the floor plates simple and avoid large complicated split level blocks. The development takes advantage of the steep topography by keeping the taller units at the rear and staggering storey heights down with the topography. This allows for views to be created out and into the site with very little overlooking within the development.

MIXED USES

The development is very much mixed use, horizontally and vertically to ensure that the majority of buildings are used around the clock and increasing the development’s longevity. The southern parcel ground floor uses are biased towards retail uses along the main footfall routes, the secondary streets are mainly commercial, with all buildings having an element of residential uses on the upper floors. With the northern parcel bordering onto the Derngate Theatre entrance, it was important that the surrounding uses reflected that of entertainment and leisure, drawing people into the area, re-establishing the theatre and defining a new entertainment district in Northampton.

In conclusion I feel the thought process and decisions made were of sound justification and the development fits within the existing context well. However, I understand that for an area to succeed it needs to address more than just scale, mass and form. If I were to be given the opportunity to carry out this master plan again, I would like to define the character of buildings through existing precedents in Northampton; the area is within a cultural quarter; architectural vernacular and character will be an important element if this scheme is to be authentic and successful. Also the hierarchy of streets have been defined through the spatial relationship between buildings; to retain the principle of a pedestrian focussed development a set of design codes would be created. 

In conclusion I feel the thought process and decisions made were of sound justification and the development fits within the existing context well. However, I understand that for an area to succeed it needs to address more than just scale, mass and form. If I were to be given the opportunity to carry out this master plan again, I would like to define the character of buildings through existing precedents in Northampton; the area is within a cultural quarter; architectural vernacular and character will be an important element if this scheme is to be authentic and successful. Also the hierarchy of streets have been defined through the spatial relationship between buildings; to retain the principle of a pedestrian focussed development a set of design codes would be created.
THE SHAMBLES – A NEW HEART FOR THE OSNEY ISLANDS

Nick Thorne develops a master plan for part of West Oxford

Osney is a riverside community located ten minutes walk west of Oxford City Centre, characterised by a series of islands surrounded by the River Thames and Oxford Canal. The islands connect into the city from Botley Road providing access to the railway station that links Oxford to London and the North of the country.

The islands to the north of Osney contain long rows of Victorian terraced buildings that once utilised the canal network for transporting materials and produce. The area is rich in character and provides a broad variety of living accommodation for families, students and the elderly within walking distance of the city centre.

Located on an island to the south is Osney Mead Industrial Estate. Primarily single use, the area consists of large warehouses and industrial units that developed over time resulting in a layout that relates poorly to the surrounding area and lacks a centre or focal point. The location benefits from far reaching views over the countryside to the south and river views looking north-east towards the city. On the riverbank opposite is an historic mill with storage barns that also include the remains of Osney Abbey.

The West Oxford master plan (group project) re-imagines the industrial estate as a location to create a new mixed use neighbourhood promoting social and physical wellbeing. Environmental responsibilities are key and feature a new waterway to reduce flood risk and create ecosystem corridors to improve the biodiversity of the local area. The waterways, which encircle the site, are brought back into use with new river views and a water taxi service terminating near the castle mound, a few minutes walk from the city centre.

The proposed master plan will convert the mill buildings into a community centre connected to Osney Mead by a new pedestrian bridge that will increase permeability from the new grid street layout to the Victorian street pattern behind the mill. The mill, including the waterway, will become part of the new heart for the Osney Islands and link the existing and new communities.

A NEW HEART AND IDENTITY

The Shambles is a proposal for the land parcel opposite the mill. The new bridge will create an important nodal point on the Osney Mead side of the river and analysis of the existing and proposed urban grain demonstrated an opportunity to respond to the new heart with a unique identity for the new neighbourhood. The existing perimeter block arrangement is morphed and broken down at the nodal point to create a plot structure that reconfigures the building lines found by the mill. The intention is to create a place that is rooted in the past but not fixed in the past and that merges creative modernity with historic and artistic references.

Graffiti located on disused warehouses along the River Thames north of Botley Road, was identified as a distinctive, abstract and creative feature of the local area. The bright colours, forms and textures provide exciting and lively riverscapes that constantly evolve in response to the changing local population. A design matrix was compiled to assist the integration of the creative motif into the key urban morphological features of block, street, plot and public realm. This was achieved by overlaying local graffiti onto the concept’s street and block layout, to develop a unique identity for the buildings and floorscapes. The concept of paint spray was applied to urban structure. In concentrated areas of paint such as the bridge nodal point, buildings turn in an almost irregular way and paving patterns become increasingly abstract. As the spray paint moves further away from the new heart, paint splatters and individual units are created giving a transition from the south towards the bridge.

RESILIENT PERIMETER BLOCKS

The proposal introduces a mix of residential types with commercial units and light industry based upon pedestrian and traffic flow. The proposed industrial areas are located within the centre of two perimeter blocks and accessed at ground level which ramp down to a lower deck. An upper roof deck provides secure space for parking and food production to encourage social interaction and surveillance. A robust strategy splits the perimeter blocks into smaller groups of plots to ensure the buildings can be replaced over time without the need to purchase the entire block or street. The plot structure is adaptable and can change from residential to retail or industry; ground floor units have removable floors to vary storey heights.

A space syntax model highlighted potential locations for commerce, retail and industry based upon pedestrian and traffic flow. The same method was used to locate a mix of residential plot types based upon traffic flow and noise levels. Apartments are located primarily along busier roads and houses along quieter roads. Canal frontages provide a greater opportunity to increase land value and provide an economic location for apartments.

Plots are orientated to maximise solar gain and active edges provide surveillance over the public realm. Each ground floor residential unit incorporates a large glazed area on the street with semi-private outdoor space that includes hedging to add privacy and defence whilst creating a dynamic frontage.

PUBLIC REALM

To promote walking and health a “naked street” (after Hans Monderman) strategy is applied to the roads beside the river. Pedestrian dominant streets will vary in width to reduce traffic speed and feature an abstract paving design. A “car free” zone is proposed to slow vehicles. The canal street scene will feature high quality architectural buildings designed to express the local material form and structure. The graffiti motif is displayed within the façade through a variety of colours and textures to incorporate resting places that incorporate resting places to promote social interaction and encourage surveillance. The floorscapes becomes a canvas for chalk graffiti to enhance sensory richness and reinforce the areas distinct identity.

The Shambles combines references to the past with the use of an abstract design motif to create a one-off exciting and distinctive mixed use neighbourhood that promotes social and physical wellbeing. The heart will provide a vibrant location for the new and existing communities to integrate and develop their own identity to attract people from Oxford and beyond.

Nick Thorne develops a master plan for part of West Oxford

— Urban Design – Winter 2010 – Issue 113

40
CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY AT GLASGOW GREEN

Piotr Mike relocates the University to regenerate Bridgeton

This project was my response to the outcomes of an analysis of the High Street Corridor in Glasgow. High Street Corridor encompasses crucial sites at the heart of Glasgow and is linked to current important developments for transport, sport, tourism and residential. It is a substantial portion of the city with great complexity but most of all potential.

The key elements of the area were the M74 extension, the East End Regeneration Route, Glasgow Green Park, districts of Springburn, Bridgeton and the Gorbals, Buchanan Street Bus Station, St. Enoch Car Park and the campuses of Caledonian University and Strathclyde University. Together with other students I carried out the analysis during the first semester of my course. We were divided into pattern groups (landscape, activities, movement, built form, habitation and image) and every group was a mix of students with different backgrounds (architecture, planning, engineering and social policy). My background was civil engineering and I was allocated to the pattern of activities in the High Street Corridor.

After the analysis, we re-formed into strategic groups. Each of the new teams included one expert of one pattern and every group had to develop a regeneration strategy for the whole of the study area. Finally, each student took responsibility for one of the projects resulting from the strategy and designed it in detail.

My strategy group proposed to relocate Caledonian University Campus to the eastern part of Glasgow Green. The primary reason was that the university needed a bigger area for expansion of its campus. The second important reason was that Bridgeton – a district neighbouring Glasgow Green, needed a catalyst of physical, economic and social regeneration. We thought that this big university would be such a catalyst that could bring positive effects even beyond Bridgeton, over the East End of Glasgow (infamous for high crime rates, unemployment, low life expectancy and illiteracy). There were also other arguments for this big move, such as:

- Low level of recreational activity in the eastern part of Glasgow Green
- Focus of the university on built and natural environment (relevant to the surrounding parks)
- Vicinity of the extended M74 and planned East End Regeneration Route
- Adjacent waters of the River Clyde.

I wanted to take the most from the course, so for my final credit, I was looking for a task which offered a big design flexibility and required a complex approach. Therefore, I decided to design Caledonian University at Glasgow Green. It was a flexible and complex project because the campus had to be new, big and located on an attractive green site at the heart of Glasgow.

In my vision, the new campus was intended to support the regeneration of Bridgeton, promote education and knowledge, propagate local history and culture, encourage a healthy lifestyle, introduce new recreational elements to Glasgow Green and be easily accessible from the whole of the city and further. The new campus would contribute to the regeneration of Bridgeton at three levels:

- Physical regeneration through modernised infrastructure, new architecture and re-landscaping of the public realm
- Social regeneration through education, as well as bringing students, researchers and academic staff to the area
- Economic regeneration through new jobs, business and education opportunities as well as increasing the land and property value.

The new Caledonian University was designed to be open and attractive not only for students. Other citizens could enter the campus to enjoy the new Botanical Gardens with the glasshouse and the amphitheatre, the library, the sports centre, the Chapel of All Religions, restaurants at the university square or the new Promenade along the riverbank. The promotion of education and knowledge were the goals of the openness of the campus.

The detailed design featured elements typical of Scottish landscape, such as stone walls in the Botanical Gardens or Scottish architecture. The Visitors Centre was meant to, among others, propagate the history of the university and Glasgow Green. The Chapel of All Religions was located in the place where infidels were secretly baptised in the River Clyde in the 16th century.

I assumed that most students would either cycle or walk to the university, so the entire campus was designed as a car-free zone and each building was allocated bicycle parking. Most car users would leave their vehicles in either the large car park or in underground car parks under selected buildings. The River Clyde would remain the arena for water sports. The Promenade and Botanical Gardens were designed for strolling, jogging, bird feeding, or recreational cycling. Most of the sports facilities were located in Richmond Park.

The main entrance to the campus on the north side, marked by the tower, was located ca. 200m from Bridgeton Cross – the main transport hub in the area. Having a railway station and a bus station, Bridgeton Cross provides the access from the whole of Glasgow and the suburbs. The on-going extension of the M74 some 300m South from the campus and the East-End Regeneration Route planned some 150m to the East of the university would provide the access to the existing network of motorways.

‘For the common weal’ – this motto motivated me when I started this project because all the parties, students and staff of Caledonian University, citizens of Bridgeton and other Glaswegians would benefit from it. The campus would integrate the East-End with the city centre, Scottish students and international students with the citizens of Bridgeton. It would enliven Glasgow Green Park and the River Clyde. The university would become famous for its incredible green setting.
A NEW CENTRE FOR EALING
Armando Delgado describes his proposal for a new mixed-use centre

The project set involved a complete analysis and re-design of a major urban area. The aim of the project was to determine and investigate how urban design can provide an input into development briefs that guide urban development in a positive way. Through the exploration of an urban design strategy, the project attempts to provide a solution and produce a planning proposal.

The area chosen was Ealing Town Centre, situated in West London and long established as a leafy suburb comprising attractive residential neighbourhoods and a commercial high street. The area benefits from strong transport connections, the Broadway shopping centre, high street shops and restaurants which make it the central hub of the borough.

ANALYSIS
A site analysis of the area included its history, council policies and previous and current developments within the city in an urban context. I analysed the area in terms of building form, movement, land use, activity and character which enabled me to identify the main issues that needed to be addressed.

The strengths and opportunities identified from the analysis included an important vibrant and diverse town centre, a suburban feeling highlighting desirability, distinctive zones of character, excellent transport links, Haven green which is a well located focal point of the town, and office and retail opportunities. However, there were also several areas needing improvement such as the lack of permeability between the park and the high street and a confused mix of architecture types but most notably a confusing and problematic pedestrian exit from Ealing Broadway station which gives no clear legibility for pedestrians.

The specific site for intervention, the Arcade Site, is a triangular plot of approximately 1.7 hectare, situated south of Haven Green and the railways and north of the Broadway. Following the analysis findings, the next stage was to create a design strategy framework for the site.

STRATEGY
Elements of focus in the initial proposal were to increase pedestrian routes and connections between Haven Green over the railways, to emphasize the commercial active frontage to the Broadway and to create a strong and clear pedestrian link with attractive public spaces at either end. This aimed to connect the heart of the commercial area with the transport interchange whilst providing a welcoming experience for pedestrians coming from the station and guide people from the major nodes and spaces to the bus and train station. Finally, the idea was to add value to the existing active frontages and to recognize important existing landmarks, such as the Christ the Saviour’s Church.

The preliminary framework proposal comprised two triangular blocks with dual uses to the south and new active frontages to the Broadway, two low-scale residential long blocks facing the park and a central sculptural building for communal and leisure purposes in the heart of the site. The first block layout included two major pedestrian routes: north-south and diagonal east-west from the station to the Broadway node with the church as focal point.

In the evolution from the initial design brief to a more refined proposal, the main elements did not change dramatically. Instead of having two major axes competing with each other, the idea of having a major diagonal pedestrian road with active frontages connecting the north and south became the strongest feature of the project. The site will effectively change from comprising four separate blocks to two triangular blocks with mixed uses and one tall land mark with an attractively designed hotel building. The density and building heights will therefore become more coherent within the immediate urban context. Also, the service areas become more diverse and practical with the use of not only the courtyards but the new introduction of a large underground car park with storage, delivery and multiple service areas for the whole site.

FEASIBILITY
An important part of the project was the market appraisal and urban typologies study. It enabled me to assess whether the proposal was coherent from the market point of view and its implications and results in terms of urban types in the Ealing and London context. Once the most demanding needs and uses were established, I determined how the proposal could best add value to the land use, for example residential and commercial or office space. The site presented an enormous opportunity for potential office and retail uses but, being more sensible in terms of social and urban issues, a balance was needed between land uses and providing mixed uses, whilst residual floor space needed to be filled.

A detailed development appraisal with floor space analysis and approximate building cost calculations allowed me to evaluate the feasibility of the project in more detail. An important issue arising from those figures was the financial implications of building over the railways. However, given the size of the scheme including a residential area, buildings above the north part of the railway, the introduction of a hotel and other considerations made it possible to have a positive financial balance with the additional value of new and well designed urban spaces. As shown on the proposal the residential uses were placed facing the park and new Boulevard whilst the retail and office spaces were planned to face the high street. The final allocation of floorspace included around 100,665sqm of office space, 61,100sqm of retail mainly on the ground floor, and over 220,000sqm of residential of which 25% would be affordable housing.

In summary, this exercise highlighted a range of challenges that urban designers contend with on a regular basis. The proposed urban design solution for Ealing Town Centre gives a clear indication of the benefits a project of this nature can bring to a local area. Furthermore, it proposes solutions to the urban design issues that arose from the site analysis and clearly addresses the issues in a viable and concrete proposed urban plan, a sensible urban vision for the future Ealing Town Centre as a new attractive spot in the city.
The Situationist International (SI), a small group of artistic and political thinkers, disbanded in the 1960s left a wealth of notoriously avant-garde theories rooted in painting and cinema. This immediately presented itself as a challenging if not contentious foundation from which to work.

Distilling Situationist thinking to its key elements of détournement, psychogeography, flux, unitary urbanism and drift (or dérive) demonstrated that although dealing with urban matter, the theoretical content of the SI does not directly occupy spatial or physical dimensions. This determined that in order to legitimately reflect these principles, the establishment of an unorthodox development framework was necessary, without existing conventions. This took the form of a Manifesto for the City of Nantes - a statement of long-term strategic objectives, not explicitly political in content, but rather dealing with the construction of everyday life. However, in order to progress to the generation of a master plan for the island, whilst maintaining Situationist beliefs, it was inevitably necessary to make a leap from ‘Manifesto’ to ‘Manifestation’. This essentially required the interpretation of the powerful ideals of the SI through the conception of agendas for built form, open space, movement and activities, which then in turn facilitated the process of design.

**URBAN STRUCTURE**

In order to support the Situationist notion of drift, the city structure must offer the opportunity for spontaneous choices of route. The grid system offers the individual maximum capacity for different routes and achieves decentralisation of the built form and functions that the SI purports to. However this theoretical basis also calls for a fluid, non-architectural landscape and so in order to deconstruct the rigidity of the grid, the urban blocks are offset and displaced according to the existing structures, allowing their incorporation within the rejuvenated urban fabric.

To further deform the structure of the grid, curves are introduced in the form of two sinuous paths flowing east to west, connecting public spaces. Again disturbing the construction of the grid, inlets of water cut angles through the fabric from the coast.

The element of soft landscaping adopts the role of the antithesis of the grid. Its random organic form collides with the urban block rather than perpetuating the orthogonal structure of the grid and continues both between and within the urban blocks.

**MOVEMENT**

Supporting drift, the city grid maximises opportunities for spontaneous choices of route. Layered over the linear movement system, open courtyard typology allows varied fixed routes through each city block, further facilitating the individual’s prospective drift.

Finally, woven within this are variable, unfixed paths, mown through the meadows of soft landscape, regularly and indiscriminately re-directed.

**URBAN BLOCK**

Situationist thinking requires a city of flux that can react and change quickly. For this rapid transformation to be possible the urban building blocks must support this facility and be able to accommodate a range of functions. The most adaptable typology is the city block. The city block also combines with the point typology that currently exists within the master plan area.

Dévourment then requires the collision of activities so the block must be composed of generic units that can be occupied by commercial, residential or civic activity. This collision also infers a blurring of the boundary between public and private spaces so the city block is inverted, transforming into courtyard typology, where the central space is accessible to the public. From this courtyard and tower combination there are many permutations of the block that can then be employed to create a varied and rich urban fabric.

**FUNCTIONS + ACTIVITIES**

All new built form responds to the Situationist ideal of an adaptable city of flux so each unit within the urban block is constructed as a generic unit that can accommodate any function. The location of activities within the urban environment becomes a fluid conception, transient and evolving to a different state of existence at any given point.

This also inherently connects with the notion of détournement - the city’s activities are de-centred within the urban fabric and collided for their mutual benefit. No restrictions are made regarding zoning activities – anything can happen anywhere.

An extension of this is the collision of public and private space. This is articulated through the inversion of the urban block into courtyard typology and with a direct interface existing between the built form and the street. Within the open space the détournement of functions leads to a strategy of integrating public spaces and movement channels.

The result is a city of playful urbanism, de-centred and fluid, inspired by the Situationist International’s notions of détournement, dérive, unitary urbanism, psychogeography and flux. The individual is free to drift, functions and landscapes change, public/private boundaries are blurred, and anything can happen anywhere. Meadows of tall grasses blanket the areas of soft landscape, traversed by ever-changing mown footpaths and seeded with wild flowers. Silver birches create strong vertical elements, resolving the human scale of the landscape and new structures with the extra human scale of the retained Beaulieu towers.

**SITUATIONIST CITY**

Lucy Montague’s design is inspired by the Situationist International

---

The element of soft landscaping adopts the role of the antithesis of the grid. Its random organic form collides with the urban block rather than perpetuating the orthogonal structure of the grid and continues both between and within the urban blocks.
Our book review editor Richard Cole relishes the variety of books relevant to urban design even if not all of them are entirely satisfactory.

The Everyday Resilience of the City: How Cities Respond to Terrorism and Disaster


Whether through ecological breakdown, terrorism, pandemics or crime, cities are now widely perceived as permanently under threat. Consequently, creating resilience has become a key concept in public policy, and increasingly, in urban design. One high profile example is the master plan for Dingdong Eco-City in China which aims to ‘manage risk and maximise resilience’. The resilience approach is being formalised with a Counter Terrorism (CT) supplement added to Safer Places, with CT measures becoming a material consideration in planning.

Part of the series New Security Challenges, this book offers an overview of current policies and the organisations charged with creating multiple strands of resilience. Its main appeal lies in fleshing out some of the history and issues behind the emergence of resilience. There are some useful insights, but also some limitations. The authors rightly argue that the core concepts of resilience emerged before 9/11. The historical overview contains some interesting material, but unfortunately emphasises historic continuity over specific factors at work today. It is unclear, for example, why factors relating to public space and surveillance of suspicious activity today are never quite explained, for example, why factors relating to terrorism, pandemics or crime, the fear of crime continues to rise.

The authors have distilled from the schemes, this book offers an overview of current resilience. There are some useful insights, this book is a very useful reference for potential clients and for practitioners looking for inspiration and reassurance of what is possible. The title seems carefully selected: these new urban landscapes give the public a chance. Finally the book allows us to evaluate what good urban design has achieved in the recent past.

The Public Chance


This super-size and bi-lingual (Spanish-English) book is a collection of 36 public spaces realised in the past few years, almost entirely on brown field sites. They are grouped thematically depending on their location: Pe-Ripheral voids, Waterfronts, Industrial areas and infrastructures. The book is lavishly illustrated and the amount of text is limited, but it is there for a specific purpose and cleverly utilised. So for instance on a spread of two pages there are ten ‘opportunities’ for the sites and ten for the public; this is presented in a simple and attractive manner and makes the point effectively. Equally the twenty strategies that the authors have distilled from the schemes, are summarised in a few words and many illustrations.

All the necessary information for each of the schemes is given, in addition a page of ‘layers’ introduces each project and these are activities, rooms, routes, buildings, vegetation and where appropriate, water; diagrams at the same scale show how these layers interrelate. There are always layout plans, frequently an aerial photograph and several images that give a good idea of what the scheme is about and how it relates to its surroundings. The geographical coverage of the book is wide though not universal; there are schemes from Austral-ia to Turkey, many from Spain and the US, none from the UK. Some are of a very large scale and a few small, in these suddenly austere times, of what grand vision and public investment can do to a city. These public spaces will outlive most of the current decision makers and the financial crisis, and will be a legacy for future generations.

Though not cheap, the book is a very useful reference for potential clients and for practitioners looking for inspiration and reassurance of what is possible. The title seems carefully selected: these new urban landscapes give the public a chance. Finally the book allows us to evaluate what good urban design has achieved in the recent past.

Vigo Waterfront


This book recounts the changes made along a key section of Viga’s waterfront and provides substantial detail about the work implement-ed so far, with some further building projects to be completed. Vigo is the main city of Galicia with a population of about 300,000 with 300,000 in the metropolitan area, well known for its fishing industry, shipyard and cultural life. In 1999 the various bodies car-rying responsibility for the port area invited four architects to present ideas to ‘Open Vigo to the sea’, set within an overall framework already produced by consultants. The objec-tive was to eliminate an obsolete series of industrial structures linked to port activities and to create a new central space able to revitalise the coastal areas closest to the city. Following this, in 1994, four architects were given commissions for separate parts of the overall area. Consuegra was awarded the work involved in the overall urban landscape together with some specific buildings.

The book’s foreword summarises the objectives - a space formerly devoid of life taken up by car traffic and parking areas was set to become an area for citizens to enjoy: a new urban centre overlooking the sea. This has become possible by the essential step of building a tunnel to remove traffic from the area. Four introductory articles set the con-text for the project. The text by Peter Bucha-nan is in the main text and it concludes that it is part of a 200 year old project. There are some specific buildings.

The book’s foreword summarises the objectives - a space formerly devoid of life taken up by car traffic and parking areas was set to become an area for citizens to enjoy: a new urban centre overlooking the sea. This has become possible by the essential step of building a tunnel to remove traffic from the area. Four introductory articles set the context for the project. The text by Peter Buchanan is in the main text and it concludes that it is part of a 200 year old project. There are some specific buildings.
In GD 101 I reflected on the pleasures of quaffing a beer. I can just imagine it, a beer in hand and my body inordinately warm from the sun. I will not tell you how many I consumed, or how many I intended to consume. Noise and quiet can in fact pleasingly coexist if we make the public realm welcoming and the streetscape enticing. None of these things appear to have been considered when the City Council designed the streetscape. I have designed a new roof, to keep the indoors cool and quiet, and the outdoors more atmospheric. I think the council did not understand this.

Currently the focus is on venues in Digbeth, an industrial area increasingly populated by places of entertainment and dining. New developments on and two pubs in particular, the Spotted Dog and the Rainbow (amusingly painted black). One new resident, in an apartment across the street from the Spotted Dog, has complained about the music from both pubs, and the City Council has served Noise Abatement Notices against them. The law appears to be loaded grossly in favour of the complainant. It does not state that noise must be at a level to disturb others, it only says they are happy with the music, and that is why they moved to Digbeth (they have). Legally they don’t count.

Digbeth is the kind of place that is often described as vibrant, a word that usually means there is much noise. You might think that people buying apartments here would know what environment they could expect. You might also think that housing developers would put in high levels of sound insulation, and perhaps also think that housing developers would put up buildings, that usually don’t have windows, and the like.

The RDA commendably commissioned me to write a report on how they might resolve the conflict between music venues and new residents, which contains a series of recommendations. It remains to be seen whether the City Council will decide to take advice from the RDA.

I have designed a new roof, to keep the public realm cooler and quieter, and the streetscape more atmospheric. It is obvious that nobody complained. Apparently nobody complained. There may be a similar reason why the City Council designed the streetscape. I have designed a new roof, to keep the public realm cooler and quieter, and the streetscape more atmospheric. It is clear that nobody complained. Apparently nobody complained.