Atkins' interdisciplinary approach allows us to develop multi-layered solutions to complex urban problems that encompass vehicle, pedestrian and spatial issues – on schemes of all scales and sizes. By embedding best practice and exemplar design in all that we do, we have developed a strong track record in facilitating the delivery of some of the most successful and award-winning public realm schemes and masterplans.

Our offices in the UK and across the Middle East are working with public and private sector partners to improve the fabric of towns and cities around the globe – designing and delivering schemes that encourage cycling and walking and put sustainable travel at the heart of the built environment.
VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

It is customary for an incoming Chair to use their first column as an opportunity to set out their aspirations for the two years of their tenure. However, I find myself writing this as we are approaching the mid-point of the Games of the XXX Olympiad, and as we are constantly reminded, it is a once-in-a-generation event, I don’t want to miss the opportunity to write about it, which means I will try to cover both!

However, I want to start by paying tribute my predecessor Amanda Reynolds (and no, we are not related – I know it’s a question on many people’s minds!) for all her efforts over the past two years. Together as a group we have achieved a lot in this time, and I hope that is something I can continue.

So what are my aims? I want to look at strengthening links with the other built environment professions, expanding our relationships to work together in devising solutions to the challenges our towns and cities will face in the future – starting with a joint event on Water Sensitive Urban Design in the autumn. We are also going to be undertaking a major review of the membership in the coming months, so please keep an eye out for more information about that, as we want to hear YOUR views on what we do and what we should be doing.

But back to the Games. We were told that London would put the city before the sport when it came to designing the Olympic Park. This was a reaction to the unused, leftover buildings from past games, and came with a promise that London would not be left with similar white elephants. But what of the urban design legacy? Barcelona is normally hailed as the first Games to leave a lasting urban design legacy, but will we see the same? Is the park more than a collection of iconic buildings in a nice landscape? How does it function as a place, a community, or a new piece of the urban fabric of London?

I am not sure that we have the answers to many of these questions yet, but no doubt we will in time. Once the afterglow of the Games success has faded, many of the athletes will soon be getting back into training and looking forward to Rio in four years time, but I suspect that our own Olympic journey will just be starting.

Paul Reynolds

UDG NEWS

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON URBAN DESIGN 2012
The UDG’s 30th conference will be its biggest and most ambitious yet. Tackling the core issue of the Value of Urban Design, we hope to attract developers, house builders and politicians so that they can see what quality urban design has to offer their businesses and communities.

With over 30 speakers and workshop leaders, the conference will bring together the latest and most in-depth thinking on the value of urban design. Many thanks to Louise Thomas and Georgia Butina-Watson (Oxford Brookes University) for putting together the programme.

SHOULD ALL COUNTRIES HAVE A POLICY ON PLACE-MAKING?
Francis Newton, co-convenor of UDG Scotland, recently attended a workshop at Architecture and Design Scotland on the draft policy on Architecture and Place-making issued by the Scottish Government. The image presented by such policies is often dominated by ‘top-end’ buildings on capacious plots but, to have wider relevance, they must address quality in the places where the bulk of the population live and work. Function matters as much as aesthetics. The second challenge is turning place-making policy into action. Clients need to be aware of the value of place-making; politicians must take an active and visionary lead; and the procurement process needs to have place-making and sustainability deeply embedded. UDG Scotland will be submitting a response.

NEW RESEARCH INITIATIVE
The UDG has made funding available to support an applied research project. If you would like to apply, please see full details on the UDG website and submit your proposal by 9 November 2012.

INSURANCE FOR URBAN DESIGN PRACTICES
The UDG bespoke insurance scheme for urban design practices is proving to be popular.

If you are interested in receiving a quote when your renewal is due, please consult the UDG website.

UDG WEBSITE UPGRADE
We are grateful to our volunteer web designer, UDG member Ed Povey of Brightpie (www.brightpie.com), who has migrated the website to a more reliable service provider (www.brightpie.com), who has migrated the website to a more reliable service provider and added new features which will shortly be introduced to offer members a better service.

THE UDG IS ABOUT YOU
The UDG lives on enthusiasm, ideas, advice and good will. Please keep in touch and let us know if you have suggestions of things we can do to help improve the practice of urban design.

Robert Huxford and Louise Ingledow

Current subscriptions
Urban Design is free to Urban Design Group members who also receive newsletters and the directory at the time of printing.

UDG Office
Tel 020 7250 0872/0892
Email admin@udg.org.uk

Annual membership rates
UK individuals £40
UK students £20
International individuals £50
Recognised practitioner in urban design £80
Practices £250 (including a listing in the UD practice index and on the UDG website)
Education £100 (including a listing in the UD practice index and on the UDG website)

Local authorities £100 (including two copies of Urban Design)
UK libraries £40
International libraries £50
Individual issues of Urban Design cost £5
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This issue has been generously sponsored by ATKINS

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Kuwait City CBD, Photograph by Jody Sanders, Spindrift Consulting

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Unless otherwise indicated, all LONDON events are held at The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ at 6.30 pm. Tickets on the door from 6.00pm. £3.00 for full price UDG members and £7.00 for non-members; £1.00 for UDG member students and £3.00 for non-member students. For further details see www.udg.org.uk/events/udg

THURSDAY 9 OCTOBER 2012
SUDS & Green Infrastructure
An evening looking at the latest practice in making the most of water and nature in the built environment, with presentations from CIIRIA (the Construction Industry Research and Information Association) and Peter Owens of Colour Urban Design Ltd.

18-20 OCTOBER 2012
The National Conference on Urban Design
This UDG’s 30th conference will address the timely theme of ‘The Value of Urban Design’ and will take place at the University of Oxford’s Said Business School and the University of Oxford Brookes. Experts from a variety of backgrounds will examine the many different arguments around the value of urban design – including financial, social and environmental benefits – and consider how best to convey these to clients and decision-makers in the face of spending cuts and risk aversion.

The conference is being run in full collaboration with Oxford Brookes University’s Joint Centre for Urban Design (JCUD), which is celebrating its 40th anniversary, and it will also include a hands-on master class working on one of Oxford’s major development opportunities, walking tours and the UDG’s unmissable annual dinner in the beautiful setting of Pembroke College.

WEDNESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2012
Urban Design Practice: An International Review – Launch Event
Official launch event for this excellent new publication, edited by Sebastian Loew. The evening will feature speakers with diverse international experience plus the opportunity to purchase the book.

WEDNESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2012
Kevin Lynch Memorial Lecture 2012
This year’s lecture will feature speakers from the team behind the landmark publication Responsive Environments who won the 2012 UDG Lifetime Achievement Award.

DECEMBER 2012 (DATE TBC)
Urban Design Group Christmas Celebration
The UDG’s annual celebration of the festive season – as always held in a quirky and inspiring setting.

JANUARY 2013 (DATE TBC)
Mixed Streets
Picking up the theme of Urban Design issue 125, this event will look at the future of mixed streets, including long term economic and social changes and the decline in place-based retail through to practical urban design options.
Following a British summer dominated by water shortages, intense rainfall and the Olympics, two past issues of Urban Design have proved very useful in setting the context to what the country has witnessed. Issue 116 (Autumn 2010) on Olympic legacies drew together a pertinent collection of Olympic master planning tales, from London 2012 to Berlin 1936, with Kotzen and Güler following up with a critique of London’s plans in Issue 118. Given the widespread scepticism about the value of the Olympics coming to London and its impacts, it is interesting to consider the design processes and new places afterwards. Whether a spectator, visitor, competitor or armchair critic, the drama of human achievement and effort which has taken place in Stratford and other venues cannot be easily dismissed.

Has early cynicism and concern for the loss of less glamorous places been overturned by positive associations and a sense of belonging? Emotional experiences, good or bad, colour so much of how we view the urban environment, and change constantly as we do. Will the 2012 legacy include these emotional associations? And will it mean that organisations charged with making large-scale urban change be trusted to deliver, and in a way that affects people positively?

This issue celebrates the growing significance of urban design in the Middle East, from the qualitative values that it brings to development to the need for more cultural and socially-relevant design solutions. The contributors represent the rich mix that is the Middle East, from Egypt to Iran, Lebanon to Dubai in United Arab Emirates, and reflect on how social and political shifts are changing people’s expectations of how they want to live.

We are also delighted to feature this year’s Urban Design Awards entries – the six shortlisted Francis Tibbalds Practice Award case studies, and the six shortlisted books reviewed for the Publisher Award. The ideas and design quality captured in both of these categories shows that urban design continues to evolve better ways of communicating and building places.

Louise Thomas
Lifetime Communities
The Gallery, London 8 May 2012

Three speakers gave a well-illustrated view of what lifetime communities are and why we should be planning for them. The demographics of our ageing population mean that we will need to accommodate an extra 3.8 million pensioners over the next twenty-five years.

David Birkbeck of Design for Homes outlined the background to the HAPP Report Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation established in June 2009 to tackle the question: ‘what further reform is needed to ensure that new build specialised housing meets the needs and aspirations of the older people of the future?’

The panel looked at twenty-four schemes in six countries and found the best examples in Scandinavia. The Neptuna scheme at the heart of the Bo01 project in Malmö was described as a social anchor to the new community, as its older residents and friends patronised the ground floor cafe of their five-storey block, and it had become the community hub of the Western Harbourside.

Seeing the older population as social bonders for fledgling communities was a recurring theme in the innovative projects described by Andy von Bradsky, of PRP Architects. Schemes including Kidbrook (illustrated here), Lewisham and Portobello Road showed how extra care flats can be integrated within high density mixed development without feeling like a care home. Flexible layouts also include generous balcony spaces to enjoy the sun.

Community greenhouses form part of the green communal spine of the HTA designed Hanham Hall – a CLG zero carbon lifetime neighbourhood to the west of Bristol. The houses are designed with sit-out spaces alongside the public realm to facilitate neighbourliness, and the management company is charged with encouraging resident interaction. HTA’s Steven Newman emphasised his practice’s belief that a sustainable community needs a sizable stable population who wish to remain in the area. To provide a range and choice of accommodation to suit future changes in residents needs 23 of the 195 units reserved for the 50+ age group.

The well-engaged audience questioned whether Scandinavian examples were relevant to the UK situation where land prices are so high and space standards so low. The speakers argued that the market will drive change increasing range and housing types as developers follow the equity held by this older age group. Even though only about 3,000 out of the 250,000 new homes built during the boom years were specifically for the elderly, developers such as Berkeley Homes see this as a market for innovative solutions and new ways of financing projects. The view, however, that older single people living in large properties can be persuaded or inveigled to move out freeing up space for families, goes against the grain of a group with social links in their existing neighbourhoods. Perhaps small infill schemes of extra care flats in back gardens that are too big for elderly homeowners to manage is an answer. Politicians call that garden grabbing, but ‘tenure-blind intergenerational integration’ is a nicer if longer description.

Malcolm Moor

Re-imagining Garden Cities for the 21st Century
The Gallery, London 23 May 2012

Garden cities: a solution to the housing crisis, a new world of co-operation and community spirit in the context of high design quality living. These were the themes of Kate Henderson and Patrick Clarke’s joint presentation to an eager and full audience.

They presented work done for the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), and Chief Executive Kate Henderson focussed on the opportunities presented by current government statements. She saw these as providing hope for a resurrection of Ebenezer Howard’s original ideas. The TCPA has established a Garden Cities and Suburbs Expert Group to act as catalyst to joint working. The original Garden Cities movement had a philanthropic basis, while today’s government policies could act as a stimulus, given a recent mention by the prime minister.

Within a Garden City, housing alone is not enough – jobs are needed as part of a portfolio of measures. Plot by plot development is inappropriate, as are bolt-on estates. Imagination and quality are the essential principles.

Henderson identified five issues for action: vision, leadership and governance; unlocking land at the right price; investing in infrastructure and balancing risk and reward; planning ahead; and co-ordinating skills and delivery.

These require political support and long term commitment. A local development framework could give the long term view and context, and Letchworth provides a stewardship model. Even the New Homes Bonus could provide a way of de-risking infrastructure investment. Best value development should not be seen as the highest price for homes, but should include social benefits. Partnerships between landowners and local authorities would be needed, backed up with compulsory purchase orders if necessary. A fuller version of Henderson’s presentation is available at: www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Creating_Garden_Cities_and_Suburbs_Today.pdf

Patrick Clarke focused on reviewing Raymond Unwin’s 1912 pamphlet Nothing gained by overcrowding! This was an important text underpinning the Garden Suburb movement. Most significant was Clarke’s translation of Unwin’s ideas to current housing and how a higher quality of layout design could be fostered. He contrasted a typical rear parking court housing layout and the Garden City approach. In spite of the lower density achieved in the second, Clarke claimed that plot costs were cheaper in the Garden City. He claimed that with more communal open space, the Garden City presented a more satisfying living environment.

I was unconvincing by this comparison – it did not appear to be a testing of equals. If the commercial world of private enterprise is to be convinced, more work will need to be done. Herein lies the rub: we live in a different world to Howard and Unwin, gone are the days of cheap agricultural land. Gone too are the days when central government would consider compulsorily purchasing development land...

Richard Cole
How to create a quality town

The Gallery, London 12 June 2012

With uncertainties about the government’s commitment to urban design, it was encouraging to hear of continuing leadership and ambition by local authorities. All represented at the event were winners or shortlisted for the Francis Tibbalds Public Sector Awards are advocates for quality place making (see UD issues 117 and 121). The speakers’ diverse backgrounds (in economics and animal behaviour) were a reminder that place-making should not be isolated to a single department or officer within a local authority.

Simon Eden, Chief Executive of Winchester City Council, set out how ten local authorities in South Hampshire have come together in a Quality Places Charter, and emphasised that if elected members do not understand place-making, then progress will be impossible. The type of language used is therefore very important. In Hampshire, joint working across boundaries allowed urban design to be brought in strategically as part of an Economic Growth Objective with 80,000 homes and five new communities of up to 8,000 people. Design awards, engagement and a Practitioners Group of Urban Designers (Kent County Council) hold senior positions in the public sector or private consultancies practising globally.

Discussing first degrees and women’s careers, the panel asked where were the female 40% of students who study architecture in the UK, as just 15% are now practising it? Perhaps a girly attraction to the artistic side of architecture did not match the tough world of practice. Very few women become engineers – 5-10% in the engineering profession, and only a third of RTPI members are women. Landscape architecture has a more feminine edge with 45% women practitioners but only 17% in senior positions. Even in academia, less than five women are heads of schools of architecture.

According to these statistics, the glass ceiling for women professionals is real in the built environment, although most speakers had not experienced deliberate discrimination during their studies or at work. Not reaching the top had more to do with self-imposed limitations, lack of assertiveness, not aspiring to managerial heights, preferring project work to board rooms with male dominated developers. Women may also be perfectionists and never satisfied with what they produce.

A recurrent assumption was that women are good at teamwork and handling complex situations. Thus they are attracted to urban design which reaches across the built environment professions and requires cooperation with a large range of disciplines. Clients vary as well, ranging from developers to public authorities and local communities, and women are skilled in flexible and open communication. Opinions differed about whether women showed solidarity to each other in the competitive world of architecture, which favours individual affirmation over collective aims.

Perhaps the most difficult issue remains work-life balance for women with a career. Two of the speakers had husband-husbands, one no family commitments, while the other three were juggling work and family. Childcare is wanting in the UK and there is a lack of family-friendly policies. It may not be chance that practising female architects are often married to other architects, allowing them greater freedom to adapt their involvement in the firm to family commitments. Most of the speakers had strong female role models in their mothers, who were professionals or business women, giving them the drive to persevere in the profession, despite its male domination.

There was consensus that gender was not relevant to surviving the current economic climate, but being able to adapt to new current policies and change. Women could potentially help each other through mentoring and celebrating their professional excellence.

UDG Chair’s Event: Women in Urban Design

The Gallery, London 20 June 2012

Outgoing UDG Chair Amanda Reynolds ended her term in discussion with five other women about their experiences of professional education, a career in the development industry, work-life balance and their role models. The six women Amanda Reynolds (ar urbanism), Irena Merryweather (DLP design consultancy), Kathryn Firth (London Legacy Development Corporation), Tava Walton (Dar Group), Alison Peters (urban regeneration and design consultant), and Theresa Trussell (London Metropolitan University) together in a Quality Places Charter, and emphasised that if elected members do not understand place-making, then progress will be impossible. The type of language used is therefore very important. In Hampshire, joint working across boundaries allowed urban design to be brought in strategically as part of an Economic Growth Objective with 80,000 homes and five new communities of up to 8,000 people. Design awards, engagement and a Practitioners Group of Urban Designers (Kent County Council) hold senior positions in the public sector or private consultancies practising globally.

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Independent Urban Designers – Urban Design Directory entry

For the first time, the very popular biannual Urban Design Directory is inviting independent urban designers to subscribe to a new section, aimed at promoting local knowledge and building networks. Independent practitioners will be given the opportunity to list their services and provide an illustration of their work alongside key contact details in the Directory, which features the UK’s leading urban design practices. The 2013-15 Directory will be produced by Louise Thomas (joint editor of this journal) and will be specifically targeted at the development industry, public agencies, other professions, local communities, major public libraries and the usual UDG members in the UK and overseas. The cost will be £75 per entry. To find out more about deadlines and format, please email louise.thomas@udg.org.uk.

Localism

The Gallery, London 11 July 2012

Communities in charge of their own destiny! Victorian style municipal entrepreneurialism! These were the bold phrases from ministers in the first days of the coalition Government. Two years on, with the Localism Bill and a National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in place, where does localism stand?

The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development, and sustainable means ensuring that better lives for us does not mean worse lives for future generations; while development means growth. These were Greg Clark’s words in the introduction to the NPPF, and repeated by our speaker Richard Simmons to express recent changes to the English planning system. He identified the concepts that underpin localism including emergence (small-scale rules producing large-scale organisation), the wisdom of crowds, and nudge theory (influencing individuals and groups). Having introduced localism as ranging from the community being a consultee, to the community being both client and builder, he asked: who will fund community engagement? What is the role of urban designers in developing smart communities, and should they get paid for it? Will community activists promote or oppose? How will national infrastructure schemes like HS2 be reconciled with the localism agenda?

What if the potential of the web and mobile computing could be harnessed to support a local community? Michael Kohn of SliderStudio introduced the concept of hyper-local websites – using the web to be local, rather than global. He demonstrated the idea with Sticky notes – a website where anyone can add notes onto a web-based map and local photographs.

The democratisation of planning and the transfer of skills from the professional to the public was, in Joe Holyoak’s view, one of the key challenges for localism. The Urban Design Assistance Teams of the 1980s, was one attempt at local action, but his experience was that parachuting-in experts for a couple of days had failed to produce results. The issue may have been a lack of acceptance by the local community. Was there a role for the expert? He cited an article in the Localism issue of Urban Design UD123, which identified the absence of experts at the neighbourhood level as a barrier to achieving inclusive design. The future was for the community to be in overall control, but with advice from experts in a supporting role – an adjustment for the role of the urban designer towards facilitation.

The ensuing discussion got lost in Neighbourhood Plans and residential development, rather than how people can use their enterprise to turn around a local economy. Past UDG Chair Amanda Reynolds spoke about the potential for neighbourhood involvement in improving the public realm. People understand the public realm: litter, poorly maintained pavements, neglected trees and landscaping, safer attractive streets and hence a friendlier, happier neighbourhood. From these issues, perhaps a stronger local democracy would emerge that could tackle questions of long-term development, local transport, and economic development. The risk is that this vitality and entrepreneurialism will die when confronted by bureaucracy and procedure.

Robert Huxford

The Value of Urban Design

18-20 October 2012

Looking forward, on October 18 – 20 the Urban Design Group will hold its 30th Annual conference in partnership with the Joint Centre for Urban Design (JCU), Oxford Brookes University, which is 40 years old. Running over three days in Oxford, the conference will address the central topic of The Value of Urban Design, with presentations drawn from leading developers, local authorities and over 40 abstracts submitted from the UK and overseas. The JCU is running a hands-on master class offering delegates a chance to redesign Oxford’s last city centre regeneration area, with parallel walking tours around its oldest and fast-changing areas. To book your space, please contact louise.ingledow@udg.org.uk or tel 020 7250 0892.

The topics are in three areas:

• Adding economic value - addressing the value of urban design to developers on mixed use and residential schemes and for local government; green infrastructure; spatial layout and property valuations; to deliver better places, and design quality.

• Social and community value - on why communities need urban designers; building community; cycling and design-led safety; and urban design skills in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

• Better place-making - on the aesthetics that people value; empowering local communities through plot-based urbanism; sustainable urban neighbourhoods; values and choices in the 21st century suburb; and innovative urban design teaching.
Urban Design Group’s Annual General Meeting  
The Gallery, London 20 June 2012

TRUSTEES REPORT
At the end of a busy year, the UDG elected Paul Reynolds as its new chair. Outgoing chair, Amanda Reynolds contributed greatly to raising the UDG’s profile and brought her energy to its campaigns and new initiatives. Membership subscriptions were slightly down on the previous year’s figures, but featured an increase in Recognised Practitioner subscriptions and libraries in the UK and overseas. Subscription rates remain unchanged for 2012-13, making it the eighth year since the last increase.

DIGITISATION OF URBAN DESIGN
The digitisation of the journal is continuing, with scanning completed and the process of creating versions of issues 10-30 underway. The first 10 issues of Urban Design are already available on the website.

URBAN DESIGN DIRECTORY
John Billingham, who originally devised the Directory in 2006, has now stood down and Louise Thomas has kindly agreed to take over the production of the Directory from 2012. She is inviting members to become involved in the new 2013-15 edition.

NATIONAL URBAN DESIGN AWARDS
The National Urban Design Awards, first launched in 2007-08, were celebrated this year at the Awards evening in February 2012, with over 150 guests from the professions, clients and policy-makers assembled at the Royal United Services Institute on Whitehall. Awards were made in the categories of Practice, Student, Public Sector, Publisher and Lifetime Achievement, the latter going to the team behind Responsive Environments. The event was sponsored by Atkins (winner of the 2011 Practice Award), Tibbalds and Routledge, with the Francis Tibbalds Trust continuing its generous support through the provision of prizes for the Practice and Student winners.

Plans are taking shape for the next Awards evening in February 2013 at the Royal Overseas League Club, London. John Billingham, who devised and developed the Awards, is handing over to Ivor Samuels, the new Chair of the Awards Group. The UDG is greatly indebted to John for his hard work, commitment and vision in making the Awards and other initiatives such a central part of the group’s activity.

EDUCATION GROUP
The Education Group continued its work throughout 2011-12 led by Katy Neaves and Duncan Ecob with two meetings this year.

A survey of course content has been undertaken, along with a survey of practitioner’s research needs and usage. The results were sent to the Design Council in support of their design research initiative.

EVENTS GROUP
The events group, led by Paul Reynolds, has provided a varied programme of more than twenty events this year. Highlights included the National Conference on Urban Design 2011 at the University of Greenwich sponsored by Savills, entitled Cities 2030: Live-Work-Play and focusing on the action that urban designers should take now to improve the quality of urban life in twenty years’ time. This year’s Kevin Lynch Memorial Lecture featured Professor Christopher Alexander, winner of the UDG’s first Lifetime Achievement Award, in conversation with UDG patron John Worthington on his career and unique views on architecture.

UDG REGIONS
UDG’s activities in the regions take place thanks to volunteers who run events locally:
- Scotland – Convenors Francis Newton and Jo White continue to organise events in Edinburgh and Glasgow, including an evening with Collective Architecture on Integrated Infrastructure
- East Midlands – Convenor Laura Alvarez ran an evening event in March on SuDS and Urban Design, which has been developed into a roadshow for other regional professional institutions
- North West – STREET North West, based in Manchester and led by Emma Zukowski has run events in collaboration with North West Young Planners, including a networking event, A Night at the Museum, and tours of New East Manchester, Media City, Corridor Manchester and the Co-op headquarters
- Wales – Jonathan Vining and Jessica Richardson in Cardiff and student Serena Yao have been active in South Wales, and it is hoped that this will generate new events and initiatives in the future
- Yorkshire – the new regional network in Yorkshire, launched last year by Robert Thompson, was an important supporter of Sheffield Urban Design Week in October 2011.

UDG PATRONS
The UDG’s patrons have all had an active involvement over the past twelve months. Contributions of particular note include John Worthington’s central role in the Changing Chelmsford event in June 2011; Irena Bauman as topic editor of issue 122 of Urban Design on Temporary Urbanism and the event in April 2012; Lindsey Whitelaw as member of the judging panel for the 2011-12 Awards and presenter of the Public Sector Awards; and Alan Baxter who continues his long-standing and committed support of the UDG and our goals.

URBAN DESIGN STUDY TOUR
The 2012 UDG study tour visited Bordeaux and other Baroque towns in France and Germany. UDG Executive Committee member Alan Stones led a group of more than twenty participants to Paris, Nancy, Karlsruhe and Mannheim, before moving on to Bordeaux to see the highlights of this spectacular city, led by Sebastian Loew.

RESEARCH INITIATIVE
Mike Biddulph, winner of the UDG’s first Research fund, presented his findings on the impact of Manual for Streets at the UDG conference in 2011. A second round of research funding will award £5,000 to a candidate for applied research on the positive impact of good urban design.

EMAIL NEWSLETTER
Urban Update – the UDG’s email newsletter service is now received by at least 1620 individuals, and is a concise monitoring service of UK government websites, as well as research in a wide range of urban design-related areas.

STREET – YOUNG URBAN DESIGNERS NETWORK
Led by Katy Neaves, assisted by Niltay Tosun-Erdem, the London group STREET has run a series of popular walking tours around London including Chiswick, Kingston and Exhhibition Road, plus Brighton in September.

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2012

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Design Council Cabe – Australia

It may surprise some to learn that as a public sector body, Cabe was restricted to working in England only, until March 2011. Since then we have begun exploring how we can work further afield and this article describes our first foray to Australia. In October 2011, we went to Adelaide to work with colleagues at the Integrated Design Commission and talk to them about Design Review. Working overseas has only become possible due to the surgical removal of Cabe from the public sector— a procedure aptly known as declas-sification. We merged with the Design Council to form an enterprising charity in April 2011. What initially seemed like a marriage of convenience has in fact worked well in terms of bringing together two like-minded organisations, working in different sectors to form a single centre of excellence in design and innovation. Cabe, now known as Cabe at the Design Council, brought with it all of the intellectual property accumulated since its inception in 1999.

Cabe had always participated enthusiastically in the exchange of ideas and sharing of knowledge with partners in other countries. The Australian Urban Design Initiative, aka ‘Cabe downunder’, was the outcome of one such healthy dialogue. Government Architects in the Australian states still play an important role in the planning arena. However, the need for an independent view has been missed and talked about for years. Much of this discussion comes together in the report by Adelaide Thinker in Residence, Professor Laura Lee on An Integrated Design Strategy for South Australia – Building the Future. Professor Lee advises on an Integrated Design Strategy that provides a holistic framework to guide design, planning and development in South Australia.

Integrated Design Commission SA, established in July 2010, sits within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The Commission is working with State and local government and the design, planning and development sector to enhance quality of life through a multi-disciplinary, design-led approach. The Commission is a team led by Government Architect Ben Hewett, and Timothy Horton, the Commissioner for Integrated Design provides independent, strategic advice to the Premier of South Australia. Conversations between Cabe and IDC SA had been ongoing and when the opportunity arose in the summer of 2011, the partnership started to take shape. The knowledge-sharing programme would be aligned with Design Council’s charitable objectives. In addition, sharing our intellectual property for public benefit was not only appropriate, but was also in fact an obligation as it realised a return on investment.

IDC SA and Cabe entered into an agreement under which Cabe would provide practical support to set up a state-wide Design Review process using its practice knowledge, advise on the alignment of the Design Review within the SA planning process, and modify, reset and distribute a number of Cabe’s existing publications. Pulling together Cabe’s way of doing Design Review into a best practice manual as well as preparing for a three-day training programme for staff and panel members at Adelaide happened with unparalleled efficiency.

Design Review is not difficult and yet there are few that do it well. I have recently heard several reports of Cabe’s Design Review, my favourite being ‘Cabe delivers the Rolls Royce of Design Review’, which I suppose was the reason that IDC SA was keen to set this up properly—securing a licence to use our methods and knowledge. They wanted to know what makes the quality of our service excellent and the impact of our advice beneficial for all. Of course, the quality of advice is only as good as the Design Review panel members but the impact of the advice depends heavily on a robust and defensible process. Good governance and watertight policies is what makes the difference between Design Review advice that can stand public scrutiny or not.

The best practice manual starts with the principles of Design Review through to practice: what we do, how we do it and why do we it that way. Amidst other important things happening at that time, such as the mining boom, getting press coverage for Cabe’s Design Review training in Adelaide was great. But being able to see our advice having an impact on the shaping of IDC’s processes, in the short three-day visit, made it very worthwhile.

Cabe was publicly funded but it is soon going to be industry funded. This does not mean we are becoming a commercial consultancy. We continue to be an independent organisation that aims to improve the quality of design outcomes in the built environment for the benefit of the public, and we charge a fee for our good work.

These top-level changes have had an impact on our delivery processes, as they should. The transition from the Royal Fine Art Commission (1924-1998) to the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (1999 – 2011) led to transformational changes in Design Review, most notably that Design Review became a more transparent and accessible process. In the context of the localism agenda and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), there is yet another opportunity for a similar transformational change to Design Review. As a tool to assess design quality, Design Review has found a place in national policy guidance for the first time and bears far greater responsibility ‘to get it right’, than ever before. Working with IDC gave us an opportunity to rehearse and take stock of the principles and practice of Design Review in England.
The Urban Design Library # 6


Planning is rarely found on the walls of an art gallery. But from April to June 1973, Theo Crosby’s exposition of how we make our built environment was drawing 500-600 visitors a day to London’s Hayward Gallery.

The exhibition, designed by Crosby’s newly founded genre-busting practice Pentagram, featured ‘regulation avant-garde trapings’ like video tape machines for the visitors to play with. But How to play the environment game was more than an art show. For Crosby it was a strictly popular project, and he went about restructuring his brief from the Arts Council to reach the widest audience.

A condensed version of the exhibition was sent to tour suburbia in a van, accompanied by guest speakers including Sir John Summerson. Most significantly, Crosby re-balanced the £20,000 budget away from the gallery space and towards the catalogue, a heavily-subsidised Penguin pocketbook described as ‘the complete protest textbook: a 260-page crash course for environment street fighters’.

Also designed by Pentagram, the book is packed with activist black and white collages, cartoons, infrastructure, social division. It describes how the environment game is played out through complex interplays, conflicts of interest and compromises. Crosby invites the reader to join in the game.

We learn the game theory, and how it is (or isn’t) applied in practice. The tightest history of town planning so far skips from Ancient Athens to the Athens Charter in twenty-five pages. Cameo contributions from ‘urbanauts’ including Archizoom, Archigram and Buckminster Fuller offer technological utopias. Meanwhile the reality of recent post-war comprehensive planning suffers scathing criticism for its inhuman scale, lack of identity, and reliance on the car.

We learn the rules of the game, and the need to question them. Crosby condemns a system of controls that produces Croydon by default, and traces its legislative origins in nineteenth century reform. We see the unintended side-effects of different forms of taxation on urban development. The book invites us to explore and exercise our legal rights; ‘a society that accepts the workings of its bureaucracy without protest deserves to be strangled with red tape.’

We also learn how to bend the rules. A profile of infamous developer Harry Hyams analyses his shrewd tactics to extract capital value from empty buildings. Another section on monopolies in the building materials industry resulted in the London Brick Company forcing Penguin to withdraw the publication over price-fixing allegations. My own copy still has the offending sentence blanked out with a sticker.

Taken together, the dissonant voices and conflicting agendas that Crosby assembles present a planning system that ‘is a remarkable instrument, though it produces some terrible melodies… We find the process bewildering and regret most of its results.’

Crosby uses the book as a vehicle to voice his own regrets about the products of the planning system. In hindsight, these signal the course of urban development for the next few decades. We see out-of-town hypermarkets drawing trade from town centres and the continual erosion of high streets all over the country by chain stores replacing local traders. Houses are described as generally minimal in size and quality, with systems of tenure tailored to produce the maximum of social division. Development is based entirely on short-term economies and short-term profits, with increasingly powerful property developers and pension funds changing the shape and scale of the environment for the rest of society.

It was obvious in 1973 that these were destructive paths. ‘One doesn’t need a big computer to reveal that there must be limits in the foreseeable future to most of today’s particular forms of material-crunching growth… things cannot go on as they are for much longer.’ Yet they have. Almost 40 years on, and Crosby’s concerns are depressingly topical, particularly given the claim that ‘in the next thirty years we will build almost as much as has been built in all history until today.’

If the issues are clear from the book, so are the reasons for our inability to tackle them. Where Crosby’s questions remain just as relevant, the solutions he puts forward seem relatively rare. These are a schizophrenia mix of radical socialist utopias based on a belief in technology, and commonsense truisms founded in tradition. In the megastructures proposed by Paolo Soleri and Archigram we see an extrovert acceptance of new technology that reached a cul-de-sac in the hi-tech movement. In Crosby’s own call to rediscover ‘a complex language of ornament, a means of communication’ through signs, symbols and necessary monuments we see the seeds of postmodernism. Learning from Las Vegas had been published the year before.

How to play the environment game marked a watershed in Crosby’s beliefs. Having been involved in The Festival of Britain and CIAM in the early 1950s, Crosby attended Independent Group meetings at the ICA and organized the seminal exhibition This is Tomorrow in 1956. In the 1960s he acted as the hidden hand behind a young wave of progressive architects as technical editor of AD magazine and head of Taylor Woodrow’s experimental Design Group.

If Crosby had been known up until this point as an advocate of the new, the second half of his career seemed to be spent in defence of the old. Crosby championed craftsmanship, co-founded the Arts & Architecture Society in 1982, and became an influential advisor to the Prince of Wales. After a short-lived spell as Head of Architecture at the RCA where students rejected his conservative approach, his career returned once again to the South Bank where his long-running campaign for the reconstruction of Shakespeare’s Globe using traditional methods and materials was posthumously realised.

But there were constants in Crosby’s disparate career. He consistently sought to blur disciplinary boundaries, challenge establishment attitudes, and force the architecture and planning professions to engage with the popular. Setting aside stylistic preferences and outdated solutions, I think it is this last populist aspect that makes How to play the environment game still important today.

Then, as now, the planning system is a social product; ‘our buildings and cities reflect only too accurately the complex tissue of our culture, of our social attitudess. Crosby contends that changing the way we make our built environment relies on changing the public’s expectations of their surroundings, and enabling their participation in the process. As David Knight wrote earlier this year, ‘Planning must be made popular: something people understand, like and do.’

The numerous headlines on the Coalition’s reforms to the planning system suggest that planning matters and involvement are important. To avoid asking the same old questions of our built environment in forty years, we might start with an exhibition of the first products of Localism in the Hayward Gallery.

READ ON

The Urban Design Interview: Katy Neaves

What is your current job and how long have you been there?
I am currently working as Senior Urban Designer for Turley Associates heading up the urban design team in the London office. I have been working for Turley Associates for almost five years, and within this role I also coordinate the national urban design team. I am currently championing the Urban Design Group’s Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design status within our team. I am also an executive committee member of the Urban Design Group and I have a particular interest in education and mentoring young urban designers.

Can you describe the path that you followed to become an urban designer and what motivated you?
I originally trained as a Landscape Architect at Leeds Metropolitan University in the mid 1990s and went on to do a Masters in Urban Environmental Design at the same university. I am now a dual qualified Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design and Member of the Landscape Institute. I became an urban designer as I always had an interest in cities and strategic landscape planning, and found that as a landscape architect you are typically not brought into a project until the scheme has been pretty much resolved. I also love walking around and getting lost within the built environment!

What do you find exciting about your work?
I enjoy my work because I visit many great places within the United Kingdom and abroad. I recently had the privilege of visiting a Napoleonic fort which overlooked the Milford Haven waterway in Pembrokeshire. I have also had projects in a number of English cities including London, Sheffield, Birmingham, Reading and Manchester.

What do you think are the most important skills of an urban designer?
I believe the urban designer can bring two important skills to the table. The first is the ability to get under the skin of a site and understand its surrounding context. The second is to manage and draw the most out of the project’s consultant team. The latter is through an understanding of what each consultant can offer the project.

What would you like to be doing in ten years’ time?
I would like to still be working in the built environment field in some way.

As an urban designer, do you have a role model?
I have had a series of mentors who have guided me through my career rather than one role model. This has included James Gross, who introduced me to urban design in my first job at Babtie Jacobs, and Nick Pyke, who guided me through the process of undertaking visual impact assessments. I also have a fantastic design team supporting me at Turley Associates. Outside work I have learnt a lot from organising walking tours for Street:London, the young professional arm of the Urban Design Group, and lecturing at Kingston University. It is fantastic to see students being excited by the built environment as I was.

If you were to recommend an urban design scheme or study (past or present) for an award, what would you chose?
I have a love/hate relationship with Milton Keynes. For a town that is only 45 years’ old it has a very distinct character that other new towns have not been able to copy.

Where is your favourite town or city and why?
Leeds is one of my favourite cities as it is where I studied as a student. I found it very legible, which was helped by John Thorp’s vision – the now retired civic architect. I believe every city would benefit from having a civic architect, or an urban designer, who is not influenced by whichever political party is in power.

Where is your most hated place and why?
I am a glass half-full person so I do not really have a most hated place. Although the 7:29am train to Waterloo on a Monday morning would come close!

What advice would you give to UD readers?
I guess I am preaching to the converted but I am surprised at how many people do not look up and appreciate the buildings that surround them.

What should the Urban Design Group be doing now or in the future?
As an executive committee member of the Urban Design Group I have taken up the mantle from John Billingham to champion links with the various universities that have urban design courses. I would like to help the Urban Design Group to improve these relationships, whilst raising awareness on what urban design is with students that might be considering a career in the built environment.

Finally, who would you like to see interviewed by UD?
I studied at KvL in Copenhagen for a semester and learned a lot from my tutor Malene Haukner. She taught us how to pull apart a townscape into its different elements and analyse its form. Unfortunately she passed away at the beginning of this year, but she has released a trilogy of books looking at 20th century landscape architecture and how it relates to social changes. It would have been great to see her interviewed.
This reintroduction of the Middle East provides a view of its diversity from an urban design perspective, and also marks the forthcoming international conference on Urban Change in Iran, at University College London on 8-9 November 2012 (www.urban-change-in-iran.org).

Even before the economic downturn, British companies have sought out better markets in the Middle East, which has been an attractive destination for international companies for many years. The boundaries of the Middle East are blurred; the region including west Asia and North Africa, otherwise known as the Near East, is home to some of the oldest human endeavours in building cities and the origins of urbanism. It also represents a high rate of global urbanisation from 43 per cent in Egypt to 92 per cent in the United Arab Emirates, and great richness – socially, geographically, culturally and climatically.
The fast-growing trend of urban change as a result of population and economic growth, with the need for reconstruction after various damaging events (man-made and natural), ensure this region’s continuing appeal to urban professionals.

In the articles presented here, we see both the region’s variety and shared ground through the eyes of home-grown and visiting designers, journalists and academics. From Dubai, Ahmad Zohadi reviews the challenges of sustainable development in the Persian Gulf area; Fadi Shayyar gives an account of Lebanon’s open space provision through three case studies in Beirut, and its significance for local culture. Ashraf Salama presents research on people’s perception of urban spaces and centres in Doha, Qatar, as a way to understand social diversity and needs. As a western female practitioner Jody Sanders reminds us that the region is more open than the media portrays.

The growing trend of urban design projects, which we present on Iran, shows new ways of thinking, from employing urban design as the coordinator for new town development, unifying concepts for change in popular places, to post-disaster reconstruction strategies.

Paul Fraser describes changing approaches to the public realm in Kuwait, and highlights the constraints against delivering the suggested sustainable solutions. Rania Raslan and Ali Bakr consider the socio-political changes underway in Egypt and associated behavioural factors, as people begin to assert their needs in public space design and use. Becci Taylor describes the challenges that climate brings to designing better pedestrian routes in Dubai with Pedways, linking destinations and public transport services.

Lastly Iraj Etessam and Jahanshah Pakzad show the evolution of urban design education in Iran, as an independent but interdisciplinary course, which has influenced the new trend of introducing urban design to projects.

Given this diversity, there remain a number of questions for debate:
- Who is urban space designed for?
- How are end-users involved in shaping spaces?
- How is society represented when urban designers work?
- Can we interweave the aspiration of a global city with localism?
- Should sustainability be a top-down approach or build on today’s socio-economy and behavioural cultures?
- How do we change the planning system – through large-scale projects or small reforms?
- Do we get what we want or what the market thinks we need? Are our beliefs and ideas strong enough to combat market forces?

What do you think?

- Fatemeh (Farnaz) Arefian, urban designer and architect, co-founder and former head of the urban design department, Aseman Naghshineh consultancy, Iran; Director of Civitas Phoenix; PhD candidate at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL on post-disaster reconstruction Urban Change in Iran, 8-9 November 2012, UCL will bring together knowledge of the dynamics of urban change and urban management in Iran’s built environment in its broader regional context, and will explore how knowledge can inform practice.
Sustainable urban development in the Persian Gulf region is as important as everywhere else in the world, and in designing for it many factors should be taken into consideration. These can be divided into two categories: the first is the physical or phenomenal factors, and the second is non-physical factors. Both of these should be simultaneously considered and incorporated into any sustainable plan. Examples of physical factors are environmental, ecological and geographical; and the non-physical factors – traditions, religion, beliefs, and history – affect and make up the cultural identity of any society. These in turn create and shape all aspects of society including art and architecture, because our cultural beliefs shape the way that we view ourselves and perceive the world.

Therefore it is essential to take account of all of these factors: ecological, geographical, traditional, demographical, religious and more, when we are planning any sustainable urban development.

Various experts and researchers have highlighted the necessity of developing new design solutions and guidelines for urban design and architecture for the Persian Gulf region. Their research outcomes encourage further and more detailed research and practical applications of the findings by major institutions. This article offers a brief review of the latest recommendations for more environmentally and culturally sustainable designs than the current planning, design, construction practices and models that are in use today. Current practice for the most part demonstrates serious shortcomings, due to high resource consumption, urban pollution, a loss of quality and urban cohesion, as well as lacking an indigenous sense of cultural identity.

OUTDATED APPROACHES
In almost every field of urban life, Middle Eastern countries are at a critical threshold, particularly the oil-rich states, which include Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Iran and Iraq. Acquiring enormous wealth and at the same time seeing current political reform, the eastern region countries of the Arabian Peninsula in particular, are seeing extensive developments which with more advanced and broader visions could be greatly improved to adapt to the environment and cultures of this high radiant-energy gain region of the world.

In proposed building designs or those recently built, there are good intentions by all decision-makers. However the development and building models used are mostly based on obsolete and irrelevant prototypes of urban design and architecture, which will compromise their cost effectiveness, longevity and historical value. Furthermore, they will burden their governments with long-term urban infrastructure energy waste, high operation and maintenance costs, while generating significant urban pollution.

If we look at the situation on a larger regional scale, there is an ecological concern due to extensive oil and gas exploration and drilling activities, in addition to the massive oil tanker and other commercial shipping traffic, which provide the economic life of the region. As increased wealth leads to population growth along the shoreline and increasing recreational tourism, the ecological well-being of these zones and its sea life has to be preserved and protected. Added to that is global warming, and the forecast sea level rises which
will have direct impact on the future coastal developments. Therefore, there is an urgent need for an integrated land-sea strategy for sustainable growth on local and regional and global levels.

**SOCIAL NEEDS**
In addition to these physical shortcomings, there are other hidden disadvantages that will eventually rise to the surface in society when cities develop rapidly, but without consideration of the cultural identity of the people living there. This can lead to many problems, such as a lack of cohesion among residents, a loss of sense of belonging, and feelings of despair as residents feel disconnected and alienated from their culture, religion, tradition and history. These non-physical factors are as important as physical factors if we are to have real sustainable growth and development. Consequently it is essential to design a plan which is in harmony with any given society’s cultural identity. For instance, Islam is the predominant religion in the region and Islamic values and guidelines have shaped the value-system, beliefs and ways of thinking, therefore the Islamic style should be incorporated and considered in design when developing a new sustainable urban project. Of course, religion is not the only factor, other regionally and nationally specific historical beliefs and trends should also be considered.

Demographic factors should also be considered, a society can consist of many different races with different languages, customs, traditions and belief systems. In designing a sustainable urban development we need to make sure that all of these groups’ unique characteristics are taken into account and are symbolically represented in urban design and buildings. Such demographic considerations have been slow to emerge or even non-existent in current developmental plans, especially in the Arab States, where a large percentage of migrants have lived there for decades, but their cultural identity is ignored or barely noticeable. If not addressed, this may lead in the near future to social problems which will affect the future stability of these countries.

Climatic and geographical factors can also lead to diversification in customs and lifestyles, and as a result create different and unique forms of architecture. Demographic factors should also be considered, a society can consist of many different races with different languages, customs, traditions and belief systems. In designing a sustainable urban development we need to make sure that all of these groups’ unique characteristics are taken into account and are symbolically represented in urban design and buildings. Such demographic considerations have been slow to emerge or even non-existent in current developmental plans, especially in the Arab States, where a large percentage of migrants have lived there for decades, but their cultural identity is ignored or barely noticeable. If not addressed, this may lead in the near future to social problems which will affect the future stability of these countries.

Climate and geographical factors can also lead to diversification in customs and lifestyles, and as a result create different and unique forms of architecture; these should be incorporated in design, because they symbolically represent and are part of the area’s identity. For instance the hot and harsh climate of the desert region in central Iran near the city of Yazd, and in southern parts of Iran on Qeshm Island in the middle of Persian Gulf, had forced the indigenous people to invent a type of architecture suitable for those weather conditions. There we find wind-catchers built on the roofs of buildings, which help to reduce the temperature inside, making it cooler and more liveable on hottest days of summer. Seeing rows of these striking yet functional architectural elements creates a unique urban scene.

**A VISION**
There are clearly compelling reasons to undertake more extensive research in order to find, develop and apply potential new design solutions, which could give birth to more sustainable human communities and urban systems in the Middle East. My vision is not against using the latest modern methods in construction. My position and beliefs are that contemporary architecture and urban design should consider, keep and use its traditional and cultural identity, address ecological concerns, while incorporating new methods, technologies and systems where they may be more practical and suitable for today’s needs.●


↑ Naghshe Jahan, Isfahan. Photograph by Alireza Ghezelayagh
↑↑ Wind towers in Qeshm Island – traditional urban fabric.
↑↑↑ Traditions and patterns of life in the Gulf Region
REVISITING OPEN SPACE PROVISION IN BEIRUT
Fadi Shayya reports on how public space is provided and used

In a country like Lebanon with a notorious reputation of being chaotic and hectic, it might be hard to believe that the professions which promote organisation and structure, such as urban design, have considerable impact on shaping urban settings. Yet, Beirut’s reconstructed downtown is probably the model that comes to mind most often, and is praised and critiqued in public discussions.

A review of the current urban design scene in Beirut reveals insights into the intrinsic dynamics of this profession and its spatial manifestations. What might appear to be part of a global copy culture, in fact has a flip-side that reflects a range of contextual aspirations and lifestyles. Apart from images of chaos and idealism, urban design practice is capturing the vibes of the city and its residents, and transforming spaces accordingly.

New developments are thriving in post-war Beirut to serve a growing population and an increasing market demand to invest in property. Through three new projects in municipal and metropolitan Beirut, this analysis looks at the dialectic relationship between urban design and social practices, which shapes contextually adapted understandings of place, though highly dependent on western design models and influenced by global trends.

MEANDERING OPEN SPACE
In the renowned Beirut Central District, a new mixed use development is emerging under the name of District/S. With about 50,000 sqm of floorspace, the urban design of District/S claims to favour a relaxed informality to its urbanism, rather than foreign spatial development patterns and typologies such as grid layouts and high rise structures. The project’s urban design plan promotes a low-rise, dense urban form and an organic layout for pedestrian spaces meandering between the buildings.

With 129 residential units and 41 retail units, the main feature of this private development is its open space where one piazza, two courtyards and four landscaped pedestrian lanes are designed to animate the residential quarters and provide places for retail, leisure and entertainment.

District/S is marketed as a city within the city offering a variety of residential typologies within a contextual communal atmosphere. The design implies a predominantly residential scheme from the first floor upwards combined with commercial space at ground floor level. Besides the business dimension, the design aims to connect retail use with the public or privately-owned public space to create a vibrant social place. The pedestrian space is designed to operate day and night, with shops, cafés, restaurants and gyms.

LINEAR OPEN SPACE
Water front City is another new mixed use development in the Dbayeh area that is part of a growing greater metropolitan region. The private development is located along the coastal highway north of municipal Beirut and away from its demographic and real-estate saturation. The project sits on a linear-shaped area of reclaimed land along the Lebanese coast.

The developers state that the first phase of the project will provide 270 apartments, various retail units, parks and a marina-front promenade. Similar to District/S, the pedestrian walkways and parks of Water front City are directly connected with the retail and entertainment activity on the ground floors to create a vibrant social space. The
public and privately-owned public spaces of the site are designed in a linear structure following the geometry of the development, and include direct visual connections to the sea.

Once again, the prime focus of urban design is to create safe and secure communal spaces. In order to operate in diverse modes and with different intensities of use during the day and night, those same spaces (or part of them) have associated retail and leisure uses at ground level.

PAVEMENT OPEN SPACE
On the opposite side of the city, the Waad Rebuild project is Beirut’s southern suburbs’ newest and largest development to-date. Unlike the previous two cases, Waad Rebuild is a reconstruction project in the aftermath of the 2006 war on Lebanon that left areas of the suburbs and south Lebanon entirely razed to ground. The project’s main goal is to rebuild 266 buildings – mainly residential – to re-house displaced people within an integrated architectural, engineering, social and environmental vision. Pre-war Haret Hreik was among the areas in the southern suburbs that witnessed fast, unplanned growth and included many informal construction practices. The Waad Rebuild project was an opportunity to reorganise the built environment (though not comprehensively), to manage traffic and parking, and to create more public spaces ‘better than it was... without foreign claims of modernisation’ (Waad Rebuild, 2007).

The main urban design strategy entails respecting building setbacks and using parallel parking spaces in order to widen the pavements as much as possible and provide for linkages and continuity. The new pavement space will promote pedestrian activity and serve the retail and leisure uses on ground floor levels. It will also provide high-density Haret Hreik with a breathing space for pedestrian and retail activity alike, and together with good municipal governance to maintain it, it shall sustain public life in the area.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE
District//S and Water front City are both new private developments undertaken by business-oriented companies who own the development lots. The District//S project is being developed on one main parcel (Lot 1075), while Water front City occupies many parcels. Urban design can make use of a single lot’s spatial layout or the merging of intersecting and leftover open spaces from many lots to make one continuous open and landscaped pedestrian experience, with retail and leisure activities. On the other hand, Waad Rebuild is a reconstruction project undertaken by a community-based organisation Jihad Al-Binaa Association, to rebuild private lots and enhance the public space, neither of which is owned by them. Hence, their vision is about the design of the public realm in the streets.

Each of the three projects is designed for different clientele, mainly categorised by income levels. District//S and Water front City are designed for middle and high income groups, with a clear choice of prominent urban locations in the centre of the capital and directly by the seaside. Both developments are high quality projects with many complementary services, where the proposed retail use associated with the open space is expected to be high quality too. By contrast, Waad Rebuild is designed for a mix of income groups that used to live and work in the same area. All buildings are of a very good standard (some even better than they used to be), but not all buildings are necessarily high-end or have complementary services. Consequently, the proposed retail uses...
include different trades on the street level (retail, workshops) and in the basement level (light industries, parking and printers).

The manifestation of this public sphere has mainly been observed through a vibrant street life and café culture

SPACE FOR THE PUBLIC SPHERE
Beirut's public sphere has always been a liberal and dynamic one renowned for hosting diverse local and regional political thought, social practices and cultural undertakings. The Lebanese people are generally known for being proponents of political deliberations and cultural discussions that create and promote this public sphere, despite instances where deliberations ironically become armed conflict.

Together with the fact that public space in the form of urban parks is scarce and a foreign concept, the manifestation of this public sphere has mainly been observed (at least for the past century) through a vibrant street life and café culture. The modern history of the city is rich with numerous incidents about political protests in the streets and squares around Beirut’s cafés. Until recently, the media and the public were contesting the closure of two old cafés in a bustling main street of the city Hamra Street. The two cafés were urban symbols for meeting and debate on different political and cultural issues; they used to host activists, artists, actors, politicians and many others.

What is important is not the absence of public space, but rather its form and how it might or not be a host to the city's vibrant public sphere. Residents of Beirut enjoy some public urban parks and a lively public seaside corniche, but most of their socialising, free time and political and cultural deliberations take place in spaces of consumption, like cafés and restaurants, on street or inside shopping malls. Thus, many privately-owned consumption spaces in the city become meeting places for Beirut’s public – a practice that has intensified with the prevalence of the consumerist culture and building more restaurants and cafés.

Observers and professionals might agree that the resulting spaces in all three earlier developments will be exclusive or partially-accessible destinations, with District/S and Waterfront City’s high quality nature and Waad Rebuild’s political and sectarian homogeneity. Nevertheless, the practice of urban design in Beirut is understood to provide alternatives that respond to social needs, regardless of space ownership. Common among the three developments is that urban design, both in its programmatic and place-making dimensions, responds to a need for more quality open space for the growing population. The proposed typology that mixes open spaces with commercial activity is a successful model, rooted in old Mediterranean traditions of similar public spaces and not just imported western models.

CONCLUSIONS
The three projects show neither a home-grown trend in urban design nor innovative theories. However, all three design provisions of open space are model examples of how practitioners of urban design understand local culture and decide how to cater for the Lebanese love of interactivity and leisure. Unlike many cases in the United States where urban designers like Michael Sorkin describe the end of public space in light of the emergence of a mall culture, public and privately-owned public spaces in cities like Beirut can be seen as examples that promote a vibrant political sphere, in addition to retail and leisure activity, and albeit differently than in street protests.

What seems like a global trend and universal practice is in fact more contextual than it appears. The argument is not for or against a culture of consumption, but it is about understanding how urban design in Beirut can provide more social interaction spaces, even if they are political ones. Unlike New York’s privately-owned public space policy that provides open space for the public in exchange for additional floorspace for developers, in Beirut there is no such policy. Developers and urban designers understand the social and cultural importance of providing open space aside from a mere money-generation perspective. The District/S and Waterfront City projects are yet to be built, while the Waad Rebuild project was completed in May 2012. Until all three projects are fully realised and in use by urban residents, this article can only offer an analytical view of the practice of urban design in Beirut.
Cities have always been highly differentiated places expressive of heterogeneity, a diversity of activities, entertainment, excitement, and pleasure. They have been and still are the melting pots for formulating and experimenting with new philosophies, and religious and social practices. They produce, reproduce, represent, and convey much of what counts today as culture, knowledge, and politics. Urban spaces within cities are no exception; they are places for the pursuit of freedom, un-oppressed activities and desires, but also ones characterised by power, systematic oppression, domination, exclusion, and segregation. In dealing with these polar qualities, diversity has become one of the new doctrines of city planners, urban designers and architects. It continues to be at the centre of recent urban debates. Little is known, however, about how planned public urban spaces produce social diversity, which aspects of diversity can be planned for, and what can be achieved spontaneously. This article examines some of these ideas within the context of the City of Doha, capital of Qatar.

WHAT IS URBAN DIVERSITY?
In recent rhetoric, diversity denotes a mosaic of people who bring a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the groups and organisations with which they interact. However, in urban discourse it also has multiple meanings such as mixing building types, physical forms, and people of different social classes, racial and ethnic backgrounds. While some theorists attribute diversity to homogeneity within heterogeneity, social differentiation without exclusion, others associate it with socio-political aspects of assimilation, integration and segregation.

Contemporary literature suggests that urban space diversity involves the creation of vital urban places while offering functional and behavioural opportunities for different socio-economic groups. It involves three dimensions: the first is the physical, the second the social and emotional, and the third is about types of activities and use. Investigating these three dimensions gives a comprehensive insight into urban space diversity.

THE CITY OF DOHA
Historically, Doha was a fishing and pearl diving town. Today, it is home to more than 90 per cent of Qatar’s 1.7 million people, and over 80 per cent are professional expatriates from other countries. Until the mid-1960s, the majority of buildings were individual traditional houses, and during the 1970s, Doha was transformed into a modern city. However, in the 1980s and early 1990s the development process slowed, due in part to the political atmosphere, the first Gulf War and a reliance on the resources and economy of neighbouring countries.

Current pervasive development in Doha is characterised by fast-track urbanisation, resulting in new urban nodes used by different groups for different purposes. While this unprecedented urban growth continues to be the subject of discussion, little attention has been paid to other issues, i.e. the resulting spatial experience, attitudes towards emerging urbanised spaces, and whether these spaces are diverse enough to accommodate the multicultural society that the city enjoys.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY
Using an attitude survey, Doha’s urban spaces have been studied as perceived spaces and experienced spaces by different groups. The urban spaces have been selected according to the development density, commercial activity, and public accessibility, and 490 survey responses were received from Doha’s inhabitants. The methodology adopted is multi-layered and involves two investigations: first, an analytical description of...
eight spaces that are believed to represent different urban and spatial qualities for different groups; and second, an attitude survey, which explores how the identified urban spaces are perceived and experienced. Using definitions of the spaces as a city ‘centre’ or ‘periphery’, two major questions were posed:

- How does the city’s population perceive the identified key spaces – as centre(s) or peripheries, and
- How are centre(s) and peripheries experienced by different genders, age groups, and cultural backgrounds?

The term centre here means an urban node visited most by the inhabitants, while the periphery is an urban area rarely visited. The spaces selected reflect different spatial qualities, these are: Aspire/ Villagio Mall; Al-Sadd Commercial Strip; Musheireb Intersection; Ramada Junction; Water Front a: Near the Sheraton Hotel; Water Front b: Near the Main Restaurant; Water Front c: Near Museum of Islamic Art; and Souq Waqif (traditional marketplace).

Fortunately, the respondents actually represented the city’s population in their overall profile, with 260 males and 230 females; the age groups were also well represented with 12 per cent being 15-20 year olds, 47 per cent as 20-30 year olds, 21 per cent 30-45 year olds, and 18 per cent 45-60 year olds. As the population of the city is so young, the over-60 age group is just 2 per cent – the same as in the population. Cultural groups were generically classified as Africans, Americans, Arabs, Asians, Europeans and Qataris. Representation of these groups broadly reflected the figures currently estimated for the city’s population: 37 per cent Qataris, 28 per cent Arabs, 14 per cent Asians, 11 per cent Africans, 5 per cent Europeans, and 5 per cent Americans, but Qataris in the city generally do not exceed 20 per cent.

**PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

The findings based on the gender, cultural background and age group were analysed and major differences between males and females were revealed. For example, while 35 per cent of males believe that the city has one centre, only 8 per cent of the females agree. Yet, there is agreement between males and females on perceiving the peripheries, where 64 per cent of males and 69 per cent of females believe that the city has several peripheries.

Similarities were found in male and female respondents’ perceptions of the Aspire/ Villagio and Souq Waqif locations as centres. Differences were found however in responses to the peripheries – 35 per cent of female respondents identify Ramada Junction as a periphery, while only 10 per cent of male respondents agree. Strikingly, while male respondents identify each of the Water Front spaces (a, b) near the Sheraton Hotel and nearby Main Restaurant as peripheries, none of the female respondents identify them as peripheral spaces. This is due to the openness, green and tiled areas, opportunities for walking, jogging, biking, sitting and enjoying the scenic view of Doha’s skyline, and taking photographs.

The age groups revealed dramatic differences in their responses. Souq Waqif is perceived as a centre by 65 per cent in the 20-30 age group, while to all other older groups it received 100 per cent of the responses. By contrast, the Musheireb Intersection perceived as a periphery by 83 per cent of the 15-20 age group, had between 26-33 per cent of responses by the 20-30, 30-45 and 45-60 age groups. Yet the two spaces are in the same vicinity.

Amongst respondents from different backgrounds more differences exist. While 73 per cent of Arabs, 75 per cent of Qataris, and 85 per cent of Asians believe that the city has more than one centre, less than 40 per cent of Americans and Europeans agreed. Similarities were found in perceiving peripheries however; virtually all believed that the city has several peripheries.

The majority of Qataris identified Souq Waqif as a centre, which can be attributed to the historical significance of the Souq in a rapidly growing city. All Americans, most Asians and Africans identify the Aspire/Villagio urban space as a centre, due to the familiar mall atmosphere and availability of sport facilities. Respondents from Arab and Asian backgrounds identify Al Sadd Commercial Strip and Ramada Junction as centres, reflecting a tendency to favour dense urban areas, similar to the environments that they are from. Despite their geographical location, the majority of respondents from European and American backgrounds identify the Water Front spaces as centres, perhaps
due to tendency to favour open spaces and an association with natural settings rather than with dense urban fabric.

**REFLECTIONS**

The results show that urban spaces lack clear conditions amenable to creating urban diversity. Nevertheless, they corroborate the initial inquiry that urban spaces are perceived and experienced differently by different groups based on their gender, age, and cultural background. However, the lack of previous empirical studies on urban spaces in Doha represents an important limitation. While these are based on a perceptual approach, there are limits to the conclusions that can be drawn from the results of a questionnaire where there is room for subjectivity. Other approaches could be through focused interviews, systematic observations, and behavioural mapping studies.

Urban spaces mean different things to different communities within the city of Doha and are used differently. The juxtaposition of the results with an understanding of urban space diversity shows that the urban spaces lack one or more of the three important conditions that contribute to the achievement of diversity. The results reflect the dynamic nature of urban spaces identified as centres, supporting the assumption that urban spaces in the centre are not necessarily unique. The results, however, indicate that urban spaces on the peripheries are emerging to compete with those in the centre. Understanding what constitutes centres and peripheries in the minds of the city’s inhabitants will contribute to understanding their spatial experiences and attitudes.

While future development plans for the city may seem to address particular sections of the population and cater to specific age groups or cultural backgrounds, a more responsive approach to the design of urban spaces is needed. Urban design focuses on creating built environments that promote opportunities and experiences for all city inhabitants. Therefore, it is crucial that most urban spaces and activities are accepted and enjoyed by the majority of the population. Urban development processes must consider the development of spaces based on the perception and understanding of different groups, in order to make successful inclusive urban places that are relevant to the diversity of the city of Doha.
WORKING IN THE MIDDLE EAST
Jody Sanders describes her experience as a professional consultant

“So, you practice in the Middle East quite a bit? How does that work out for you?” I am asked this question a lot. Given that designers from Europe have been working in the Middle East for decades and that the use of western companies by Middle Eastern developers is common place, this might seem like an odd question, except that I am a woman and a sole practitioner. I am often asked how I find working in the region, both dealing with differing cultural attitudes to appropriate female behaviour, and with working practices that tend to favour large consultancies.

The first myth that I frequently have to dispel is that all of the work is in Dubai and that it is representative of the whole region. The Middle East includes eighteen nations as diverse as Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Yemen and Iran as well as the United Arab Emirates (of which Dubai is only a seventh). Dubai and Abu Dhabi in particular have hit the headlines for the spectacular speed and unique style of their urban development in the last thirty years, But in a post boom world, it is important for urban designers to understand that the Middle East comprises a huge range of places, all with their own approaches to business, culture, and unique design challenges to overcome. To-date, I have worked in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and Kuwait, and visited Doha and Oman and there is a huge amount more to see.

DIFFERENT SEXES AT WORK
Media representation, perceived cultural values, some personal experiences and those of colleagues have led many western development professionals to believe that it is difficult to work as a woman in the Middle East. The common themes are that a woman working in a professional capacity will be considered inferior to her male colleagues, that travel and site visits will be challenging, and that she will be subject to behaviour which will make her feel uncomfortable. None of this is entirely untrue, it does happen, but neither is it confined to the Middle East. Plenty of difficult site visits take place in the UK too. In the Middle East you should, as anywhere, research and prepare for your environment. A fact that may be surprising is that there are a lot of Middle Eastern women working in urban planning, particularly in the UAE. With encouragement to achieve academically, and access to high quality and cheap childcare, there are many local women involved in the public sector, which has proved to be one of the most interesting aspects of my experience, and has improved my understanding of the impacts of local culture and family life on design.

My own experience as a female professional has generally been positive. If we are confident but respectful of the people that we are working with, they will usually respond in kind. The majority of the Middle East has embraced western working practices and that includes women in the workplace. I have to admit however that I personally have drawn the line at working in Saudi Arabia where they think so little of my intellect that the authorities won’t even let me drive a car! Overall Middle Eastern clients are enthusiastic and keen to engage in the design process regardless. You may need a firmer handshake and learn to be very clear on the points that you want to make – but those are useful skills the world over.

Attitudes to women travelling around varies, depending on how conservative the place is. As a short-stay visitor it is too hot to walk many places, taxis are cheap and public transport is generally woeful. But there are cultural clues to follow, for example in Kuwait women do not sit in the front of taxis – which can make things tricky if you want to undertake a site visit without throwing up in the back seat over your map! Living arrangements are not dissimilar to home in the UK, save for the obsession with fast food. In some countries, people can be uncomfortable with you sharing a flat with
male colleagues if you aren’t married to one of them. The advice of more experienced ex-pats is invaluable for this intelligence.

Avoiding uncomfortable situations also means dressing appropriately, and like design parameters, you will experience a range of approaches across the region. The majority of places that I visit are quite happy for western women to have their heads uncovered provided that it is teamed with an appropriate outfit; no low-cut necklines or short hem lines. Places of religious significance are different: donning a headscarf at the mosque is no hardship to see many beautiful buildings.

When working in someone else’s offices, it pays to know the dress code; I have worked in local municipal planning offices which tend to be conservative, whereas local offices of western companies are often casual. A colleague who works in Doha has to keep her elbows covered in the office, but is allowed to wear a skirt. In Al Ain jackets were required in public parts of the office as were trousers. In Kuwait jeans and a skirt were acceptable – but sometimes with a headscarf when out walking by myself, as my blond hair attracts unwanted attention.

ALL ALONE?
I am often asked by others in small practices how to win work in the Middle East, as the opportunities are not usually publicly tendered. The answer is piggy-backing. Many projects in the Middle East are large in scale, even in the recession. All land is owned by the State and gifted to its occupier; this means that most are linked to the State either directly or through state-owned development companies who frequently partner with western businesses. This large-scale, state-controlled format means that, as so often happens in the UK, the public sector tendering process is tortuous and biased towards bigger businesses who can meet the government’s rigorous requirements. All of my projects have been working as a consultant for large multi-disciplinary consultancies, who either want someone with a particular specialism that is not available in-house – in my case marine master planning and development; or, need additional support but are still under embargoes which prevent them from hiring full-time staff; or even need someone to crisis-manage a project, unaffected by office politics and focused on results to justify their fee.

Being a sole practitioner or small business often allows you to be more flexible; travelling at short notice, and able to tailor your contract to suit a particular project. Keeping in touch with colleagues who work in large consultancies means that they call when a crisis unfolds, and by being flexible and hard-working (self employment is a fantastic motivator) you get invited back for the beginning of the next project. I have now reached the point where my business is included in tenders by larger practices because my experience of the region is understood to be valuable. The route to working in the Middle East for a small business is, in my view, through supporting larger businesses.

WORKING IN THE MIDDLE EAST
What are the key challenges of working as an urban designer in the Middle East? There is still a long way to go in terms of achieving the rigorous standards in sustainability that we are used to in the UK. Approaches to transport and utilities can be professionally challenging as there is often quite a gap between an expressed desire to achieve best practice and what will actually be agreed. Standards are stringent, but not always in a way that promotes good urban design.

The local and national governments make the UK system look lightweight. Departments are usually top-heavy and compete with each other – knowledge is power – and this can turn the decision-making process into a game of snakes and ladders (as described by Selma Hooley of Halcrow, a veteran of Middle Eastern projects). Negotiation skills akin to those at the United Nations are vital – you will spend as much time getting things signed off, as you will designing them.

Abandon all preconceived ideas about how a family/household unit uses its home, interacts with the public realm and how a house should look, and prepare to learn anew – the Middle East is diverse, and it presents the urban designer with some fascinating encounters.

Being a woman and/or a sole practitioner is no barrier to working in the Middle East. You will need to be prepared and adapt to a different cultural environment, and you will find it very different. However with patience, good manners, and a strong work ethic you will also find it challenging and rewarding in equal measure.
Iran is a vast country, rich in climatic, geographic and cultural diversity, from mild, humid and evergreen areas in the north near the Caspian Sea, to cold, mountainous snowy regions in the west, central deserts, and to hot and humid areas in the south on the Persian Gulf. Such diversity has historically been reflected in a unique urbanism and rich vernacular architecture. However since the establishment of the national planning system more than fifty years ago, Iranian cities have suffered from ruthless standardisation damaging historical identity, climatic design and urban spaces. These are the consequences of identical design codes and building regulations across the country, as well as the land use based planning system. This is changing now, and this article reviews signs of new trends in Iran today.

**NEW TOWNS: WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY**

There has been a drive to create new towns in Iran, using urban design techniques and led by the New Towns’ Development Corporation, within the Housing and Urbanism Ministry; one of the first examples is Shirin-Shahr New Town.

Shirin-Shahr uses urban design as a means to coordinate various disciplines to develop an urban design framework, in place of its previously approved master plan. It covers 1082 hectares, and is thirty-five kilometres south west of Ahvaz, in south west Iran. It lies at the heart of five important sugarcane and by-product plants and development complexes adjacent to the sugarcane fields – Shirin-Shahr is Persian for sweet city.

Since construction started in 1995, Shirin-Shahr’s broad land use based master plan has been inadequate at directing piecemeal developments to form an integrated urban environment. As a result the Shirin-Shahr Urban Design Framework (UDF) was developed in 2005-6, and the project became Iran’s second experience of using urban design at a larger scale for new town development. Qualitative urban design concepts provided coherence between discipline-based studies, and the core direction for policies and activities, from the large to small scale. The earlier experience of introducing an urban design strategy was run by the young urban design consultancy Aseman Naghshineh for AAlishahr New Town, and so the same team was commissioned for Shirin-Shahr’s UDF. However the second project faced various limitations from the outset, for example minimising structural changes from the previous master plan in order to avoid the bureaucratic ministerial approval mechanisms.

Despite these limitations the project was an opportunity firstly to localise design codes, based on contemporary interpretations of climatic and traditional design styles, restoring the continuity
of urban identity in the region; and, secondly to learn lessons from historical urbanism on the importance of urban social life and functions, at easily accessible nodes in the urban structure.

Many questions had to be tackled: What lessons can be drawn from historical/traditional urban morphology, open space and neighbourhoods? How do people interact in their immediate neighbourhoods? What kind of behaviour fills urban spaces and adds life to places? What kinds of spaces support urban life? Should shopping areas be complexes, centres or linear streets? How can traditional bazaars provide design models for new places? What lessons can be learned from environmentally-friendly architecture in the region (traditional, historical and modern)? And how realistic is this window of opportunity given existing decision-making processes?

However what brings life is people, and without them the best designed and built spaces are ghost towns. The first generation of residents in a new town are there for specific reasons, e.g. out of necessity, joining the property ladder, seeking a better quality of life with the same living costs, bigger homes, clean air, more greenery, or a peaceful life. It also means the challenge of attracting a population before urban amenities are established; incentive policies for the first generation of residents are critical. While the pace of growing a fully functioning town differs from one to another, experience shows that emphasising its regional role and branding it distinctly are the most effective factors in its success. For Shirin-Shahr, this means a service-based urban environment for the local economy and its surrounding industrial environment, the national centre of sugarcane trading and science base, with a proposed Museum of Sugarcane and its by-product development activities, plus related higher education. To allow for uncertainties, the phasing of activities was linked to population growth and triggers, rather than simple timelines.

Seeing new towns as urban nodes with the potential for organic growth from incremental development (rather than a big mega-scaled architectural project) demands design codes and flexible policies to shape them. Adequate design codes supported by briefing staff within the urban management body, who will be involved in implementing the development programme, is central to delivery of the UDF.

**URBAN SPACE AND SYMBOLISM: RE-ORGANISING TAJRISH**

The Organisation of Tehran Beautification (Sazman Zibaasazi) is a specialist independent body related to Tehran Municipality, and its role is to improve citizens’ urban life quality through innovative activities, such as looking after Tehran’s townscape, the quality of urban furniture, and large-scale projects such as Tajrish, Shemiran in Tehran.

Shemiran Province north of Tehran is a beautiful settlement in the Alborz Mountains with rivers, valleys, springs, and aqueducts nearby. Tajrish dates from 1543AD; sitting at 1607m above sea level, it is 406m above Tehran. It includes two urban nodes: Tajrish Square (now called Quds Square) and Tajrish Bridge, where three river valleys – Darabad, Golab Darreh, and Salabad – join beneath the large square.

Historically, Shemiran was a tourist destination especially during the summer. For many, Tajrish symbolises a gateway to cooler weather, quality family time and a balance of leisure and nature. People are attracted by nut sellers, and eat fresh walnuts, grilled corn, fruit and kebabs; and climbers prepare themselves for mountain climbs. It has also been a meeting point at Imam Zadeh Salleh holy shrine for religious groups, with three mosques and the traditional bazaar, where there are great tastes, smells, sounds and colours.

Tajrish today is one of the largest city centres in Tehran and one of three cultural and historical places (Ray, Tehran, and Shemiran). However, the natural and social qualities of Shemiran have been spoiled in recent decades due to overpopulation, rapid housing and office development, and damage to the mountain sides of Tajrish. The river valleys are polluted, heavy traffic dominates the area, and pedestrians are at risk, especially en route to the holy shrine, mosques, bazaar and mountain gateways.

The Beautification Organisation took the initiative to restore the identity of Shemiran, and commissioned a mountain-side urban design project for the Tajrish area from consultancy Raz Andishan Omran (RAO) in January 2012. The work will be concluded in January 2013, but the key objectives are already emerging in their designs:

- Safeguarding Tajrish Bridge and Quds Square as the gateways to the Alborz Mountains
- Preserving and maintaining the eco-system
- Emphasising social values
- Maintaining current functional characteristics
- Integrating it into the national tourism programme
- Preserving historical places and cultural memories
- Reflecting vernacular architecture and urbanism.
Urban projects like Tajrish acquire national importance, and the concept of Ghadamgah is an attempt to use the ritual symbolism that represents people's beliefs and values to improve and maintain the quality of public spaces. This is seen as the main driver for the project's deliverability. The Ghadamgah Planning Association will facilitate deliverability while preserving its core principles, and consists of representatives from the bazaar, the holy shrine, mosques, residents and neighbourhoods, Shemiran Municipality, Tehran City Council and Municipality, designers and other effective stakeholders.

**Urban Design in Reconstruction: Bam**

One of the worst earthquakes in the last decade hit the ancient city of Bam, in Kerman Province, Iran, on 26th December 2003, resulting in 30,000 people dying with 26,000 injured and over 60,000 made homeless. The catastrophe destroyed more than eighty per cent of the city. The unique character of Bam was as an historic garden city on the old Silk Road, home of the huge ancient citadel Arg-e-Bam (a World Heritage Site), and with an economy based on date palm trees.

Some 32,119 houses were built within the urban housing reconstruction programme, led by the Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation (IRHF), which managed the early recovery phases. Owner-driven and in-situ reconstruction projects were the two main approaches used. In line with current disaster recovery strategy, the goal for Bam was set as sustainable housing reconstruction through community mobilisation and participation. Working to an action plan and within funding and administrative policies, architectural practices were commissioned to assist local residents in the reconstruction of their own homes. The architectural design factors included cultural needs, climatic issues, physical details and regional identity.

While the urban housing reconstruction was linked to urban development studies, the overall policy was to focus on concurrent and parallel initiatives, working towards a long-term town planning strategy, as well as housing reconstruction. Regular coordination between these groups of activities was carried on under the supervision of the High Council of Bam’s Architecture.

**Exploring New Territory**

In 2005, sometime after the start of the housing reconstruction programme there were necessary amendments to the existing detailed master plan. Concerns and questions were raised by practitioners and researchers, and opportunities were highlighted to address the shortcomings of the existing planning system. The main points were that:

- Small scale of reconstruction activities can endanger the integrity of the city and neighbourhoods
- The nature of urban spaces created as a result of individual housing reconstruction was variable
- Whether ‘business as usual’ was a good enough aim for the city formation
• Whether to overturn standardised planning approaches, which had damaged so many urban spaces and neighbourhoods even before the earthquake.

To address the two concerns of reconstruction and better design practices, IRHF set out the following approach:
• Urban design guidance was to be a fundamental approach
• Nodal urban design projects were to be urgently commissioned
• Clear documentation and records were to be kept of the results of previous stages of work.

It was also hoped that the nature of the projects and their outcomes would shape the necessary amendments to current urban planning processes and programmes – confirming the need for urban design principles to be used in developing such programmes.

While the urban design guidelines for Bam were seen as fundamental, streetscape projects for seven significant roads or nodes were introduced as urgent actions. Seven urban design firms were commissioned. To integrate the post-disaster reconstruction activities with the urban design projects, each practice was responsible for working within the reconstruction process as well; they were to provide planning, architectural and engineering services for the reconstruction of individual commercial units along the main roads.

Urban design guidelines at Bam were seen as fundamental

OBSERVATIONS
The introduction of urban design projects in Bam was an avant-garde step linking reconstruction activities with an urban design approach through participatory methods. It was achieved through calls for qualitative approaches to city design and the need to improve Iran's planning system.

However, post-disaster reconstruction has always been a complex environment full of uncertainties and sensitivities, and the recovery process entails complex administrative, social and physical dilemmas, which need to be addressed within the overall strategy. The complexity of urban housing reconstruction programmes is typically higher than those for rural housing reconstruction, according to the World Bank.

Detailed master plans were constraints to the preferred multidisciplinary and qualitative approach, and some issues surfaced that could only be resolved at a strategic level after thorough examination of urban plans at a larger scale. One example of this was the conflicting roles of a major road, which made it very hazardous, and not just a matter of streetscape design. Without tackling such problems at the larger scale, projects would have been just cosmetic changes, which did not improve pedestrian safety or enhance social interactions.

Another important issue was that urban design practices also had to work with local people and support them professionally in reconstructing their buildings along the roads until planning permission was granted, while the urban design project for the same road was underway. This methodology increased the complexities of the project, but provided opportunities to discuss qualitative issues with residents and made the urban design projects more like community development programmes.

Given the globally acknowledged complexities of post-disaster reconstruction, trying other approaches and using urban design projects and programmes as urban development tools resulted in valuable lessons being learned. The collective effort in Bam alongside other attempts at re-shaping the existing planning system positively influenced the transitional phase – moving towards spatial planning from the traditional planning system. A movement that is evident in the newly introduced strategic plan of Tehran.

Fatemeh Arefian, urban designer and architect, former head of the urban design department, Asman Naghshineh consultancy, Iran.
Dr Bahman Adibzadeh, architect, Director at Raz Andishan Omran (RAO) consultancy and lecturer at Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran.
Dr Shapour Divsalar, urban designer, Technical and Urban Projects Deputy, Organisation of Tehran Beautification (Sazman Zibasazi)

Proposal for Imam Khomeini Square which has the most urban identity along the road
↑↑ The morphology of various typologies in Bam
Attitudes and approaches to the public realm in the Middle East are changing. For years the design of the pedestrian environment was a by-product of highways engineering, and anything other than commercial on-plot landscape was not regarded as important. Walking has long been seen as second class travel, and combined with hot summers and low fuel prices, the car and its needs were king.

More recently, many of the city authorities have taken a more strategic approach commissioning design guidance to promote walking and cycling in both their own highway renewal programmes and private developments. This acknowledgement of the value of a high quality public realm is cause for optimism, but the pace of change is slow, particularly for public highways. A number of key themes appear to be driving the change in attitudes and priorities. They vary across the region, but include:

- Easing congestion and moving towards integrated multi-modal transport systems
- Economic diversification, the impact of demographics on public realm use, and public spaces as destinations, i.e. in Dubai
- Upgrading infrastructure for major national events i.e. Qatar World Cup 2022
- Creating 21st century public facilities, for pedestrians in Makkah for the Hajj and Umrah.

NEW DEVELOPMENT VERSUS RETROFIT

New city districts in the Middle East are revisiting the traditional tenets of Arabic urban form. By pushing vehicle movement and servicing underground, and adopting an integrated approach to utilities design, streets take advantage of development massing for shade, with orientation channelling the prevailing breeze. High profile examples include Masdar in Abu Dhabi and Msheireb Downtown Doha in Qatar, both taking cues from historic Arabic settlements like the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Shibam in the Yemen.

These districts are unusual and the contrast in quality between streets and spaces delivered by the private sector and the surrounding public highways is usually significant. Much of the urban landscape is dominated by oversized streets determined by the perceived needs of vehicles and utilities providers than pedestrians. The quality of materials and detailing is often questionable, and the use of high kerbs to deter vehicles creates poor accessibility. The situation is changing however, with several initiatives driving change in the quality of the public realm.

Abu Dhabi is addressing these challenges through ongoing improvements to its Urban Street Design Manual (USDM) and the Walking and Cycling Masterplan for Abu Dhabi commissioned from Atkins by the Department of Transport. This strategy – to make a coherent pedestrian and cycle network across the whole Emirate – retrofits new infrastructure into existing streets.

In Qatar, Atkins’ work for the Central Planning Office (CPO) is about adapting the transport network for more multi-modal trips. The successful integration of bus, metro and cycling infrastructure in existing streets will be essential for tourists to the 2022 World Cup, and will leave a legacy for residents beyond the sporting venues.

THE TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

While sustainability and design guidance has been developed, delivery constraints can water down public realm design visions. One example is the Estidama Pearl Rating System in Abu Dhabi, which makes provision for thermal comfort by stipulating a minimum percentage of pedestrian routes that should be shaded to encourage walking. There are several difficulties with achieving this in practice:

- Constraints on the use of water and local reservations about treated sewage effluent for irrigation mean that extensive tree planting is often excluded from street renewal schemes;
- Concerns about dust and sand accumulation creating large cleaning bills for shade canopies mean that they are not seen as a practical solution for mass shading; and
- Very wide utilities corridors often result in large unused areas on footways – people choose to walk alongside buildings to take advantage of the shade, rather than out on the open.
There are areas where the existing guidance could be strengthened: While research shows that the use of high albedo (i.e. low heat absorption) materials can play a major role in achieving thermal comfort, design guidance often does not include it. Black macadam is the worst material for solar absorption – often about 4 °C hotter than concrete – yet it is still the preferred choice for city roads, driving up ambient temperatures.

The configuration of tree planting for efficient irrigation and thermal comfort can help the sustainability of a project. A strong research paper would help to calibrate design solutions, aid species selection, and convince clients of the cost/benefit case for trees.

There are also practical considerations around repair and reinstatement works by local contractors. An equivalent to modular, simple and flexibly laid interlocking setts is needed for easy maintenance and management, unless the highways authorities could control workmanship standards more tightly.

PUBLIC SPACES DELIVERED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR
As in the UK, there is a great contrast between the quality of most public spaces and those delivered by the private sector. In contrast to many public highways in the Middle East, private developers are delivering some of the highest quality landscapes anywhere in world. The level of investment in commercial real estate, in tandem with competition to attract businesses and expats with environments and lifestyles of a global quality, is driving delivery standards higher. Designers have more flexibility due to private procurement and maintenance arrangements. Finer quality hard materials and street furniture can be specified, and the level of detailing can be enhanced with the certainty that it can be delivered and maintained.

Landscape design is also grappling with aesthetics in both public and private schemes – how to respond to the Arabic context amid so much international post-modern architecture? With urban forms and building typologies so far removed from the heritage of the region, Arabic geometries have become the staple of designers, along with creative responses to climatic constraints. Interestingly, this has become a consultancy service in its own right, with specialists advising designers on the creation and application of locally appropriate geometric patterns.

Private sector developers have also realised the potential for spaces to become attractions, capable of boosting visitor numbers and complementing key tourist attractions. The fountains at Dubai Downtown have become a magnet for visitors, bolstering visitor numbers to the adjacent Dubai Mall and rapidly becoming a global icon on a par with the Bellagio in Las Vegas.

PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY
Of course, the Middle East is not just about business and tourism, it is also the centre of one of the largest annual convergences of people in pilgrimage – the Hajj season in Makkah. Up to three million people arrive in the city during a four week period to perform the Hajj, placing unique demands on the city streets. The ritual has an ancient history, with elements dating back to 2000BC. This has led to the development of remarkable pedestrian infrastructure to ensure the efficient and safe movement of the Hajjis, and this trend is continuing to deal with ever larger demand.

The Makkah authorities embarked on an ambitious programme of development and infrastructure building to prepare the city for growing visitor numbers, including the King Abdul Aziz Road – a 3km long ceremonial approach to the Haram to be built in the heart of the existing city. The boulevard and associated development will link to the proposed Haramain high speed rail link (to Jeddah airport) and local metro and bus services.

The public realm design responds to the varying pedestrian numbers predicted along its length, while allowing efficient interchanges with other modes of transport. Atkins has also had to design for seasonality and climate on this project – the ability to demount some elements of street furniture to allow the boulevard to adopt its maximum capacity mode for the short Hajj season. Legibility was also a key concern; Hajjis arrive from every Muslim nation, with varying degrees of mobility and literacy, placing unique demands on public information systems for the organising Ministry. Accessibility has to include seating to allow regular opportunities for rest, while not obstructing the main busy pedestrian routes. For many, the Hajj is a unique event, and the boulevard will become part of their memory of the most significant spiritual journey of their lives. The scale of investment in schemes of this magnitude and profile further underlines the importance that is now being attached to the Middle East’s public streets and spaces.

Paul Fraser, Principal Urban Designer, Atkins Ltd
BACKGROUND

Egypt has almost 85 million inhabitants and a 2 per cent growth rate, with Cairo home to 11 million people, and Alexandria 4.5 million. The rate of urbanisation in Egypt is forecast to be 2 per cent between 2010 to 2015, and 43 per cent of Egyptians live in cities, rather than rural areas. Regarded as a developing country with the largest population in the Middle East as well as the Arab World and North Africa, Egypt plays a key role in the area, politically and economically, due to its location, population mass and human resources.

Under English occupation, Egypt was a kingdom and many Egyptian cities adopted western city design principles, such as the gridiron system and outward-facing buildings. This created a certain image for the cities, with constant reminders of that period evident in seven key urban design characteristics: a dense city form, a quality of the public realm, legibility, diversity, continuity and enclosure, ease of movement, and adaptability.

Since the revolution in 1952, Egypt witnessed its republican era, led for six decades by three presidents with military backgrounds. In the Nasser era, the country adopted Marxist disciplines as well as Arabian Nationalism, making Egyptians highly dependent on the regime. In the Sadat era, the president embraced capitalism with no preparation for his citizens on how to adapt to such a transformation. In the Mubarak era, which lasted for three decades, the regime valued wealth and commerce, and political decisions favoured business and its demands.

ARABIAN SPRING IN EGYPT

From the perspective of Egyptian urban designers, it is evident that people will do what they need to do, and used to do, traditionally in their cities, but perceptions of urban space over the last sixty years have changed as a result of these regimes:

- The high rate of urbanisation in search of better living conditions has helped to ruralise our cities, and changed perceptions of urban spaces.
- The need for income and high rates of unemployment has put pressure on Egyptians to travel to other Arabian countries and the Gulf area in search of work. Egyptians’ lengthy stays in these other countries have affected their traditions and habits, which in turn has affected perceptions and use of urban spaces.
- The pressure from the three consecutive Egyptian rulers meant that Egyptians have lost their sense of intimacy and belonging with their cities and societies.

All of these pressures on Egyptian citizens have made their behaviour in public space seem uncivilised, as in many developing countries, and the new political changes have directly affected social and behavioural dimensions.

In Egypt, people have started to find the power to change their lives for the better. Urban spaces must now therefore meet the expectations of their potential users and offer the right mix of environmental, economic and social conditions. Several situations show how different pedestrian behaviour is now after the revolution of 25 January 2011.

PEDESTRIAN BEHAVIOUR

In many Egyptian cities, pedestrians crossing the road behave differently from those in developed
countries. Pedestrians in Alexandria as in all Egyptians cities, would cross streets from every direction, indicative of their attitudes to rules about public space use.

The Al-Kornish road is one of the main high-speed roads in Alexandria, some 17 kilometres long, and with several types of activities taking place along it, from recreational, residential, entertainment and commercial uses. This promenade has a number of pedestrian tunnels which in most cases see a great deal of use. A year ago, pedestrians protested against the rules of the Al-Kornish road, which was intended to be a recreational avenue along Alexandria’s beaches, but had become unsafe to cross. They were demanding their rights to cross the road safely, rather than risking their lives daily.

**When designs and rules meet their needs, people will follow them regardless of their culture, gender, or socio-economic background**

Now, a new crossing has been installed to re-connect both sides of the road, and during the first days and weeks, the situation was disaster. Neither pedestrians nor drivers were familiar with the new crossing, and it took a while for pedestrians to get used to crossing in that spot. Then they recognised the importance of the crossing for them, and began to obey a rule created to save lives.

In this case the road designers had not taken into consideration that the culture of Alexandrian citizens is strongly related to the lovely beaches. It was not acceptable to construct a high-speed road in the city where pedestrians need to cross to sit by the Water front, watch fishermen in the morning or sip a cup of tea, eating a corncob or a hot sweet potato at night. The Water front provides an escape after work or on the weekends. Yet when designs and rules meet their needs, people will follow them regardless of their culture, gender, or socio-economic background.

**QUEUING**

In most developed countries, a queue is a necessary part of daily life. But in Egypt people are not generally familiar with queues; they do not always follow any lanes or queuing conventions. For example, Egyptians had never taken part in elections before and the first opportunity to choose a parliament and president were open to them. So, when it came to the election process, people behaved differently. Egyptians themselves were surprised with the self-organised queues that formed, despite the huge differences between participants in various social and economic backgrounds. People used the streets and the inner courtyards of the election control centres as new urban spaces, without getting bored even though some queues were long and extended for hundreds of metres. People were keen for the elections to be successful, and so were happy to queue and acted in a civilised manner. As an urban designer, you need to meet other people’s needs because they will never conform to your ideas, if they go against their own needs and wishes.

**CONCLUSION**

After the January 25th 2011 revolution, everything in the field of urban design and its constituents, which relate to Egyptians’ behaviour should be re-thought to meet our new desires for urban spaces and cities. ‘Good’ spatial behaviour is an indicator of successful urban design that meets the people’s needs, while, ‘bad’ spatial behaviour can be an indicator of wasted resources and a cause for occupants’ dissatisfaction.

Egyptian urban designers must look hard at several aspects of urban design. There are many specialists that work and operate within the urban environment who have been attracted to pedestrian flow studies to understand the way that people move in an urban setting. The importance of pedestrian movement and behaviour makes it the main component in the analysis and design of urban spaces, transportation facilities, pedestrian walkways, traffic intersections and markets. These behaviour patterns give real and valuable indicators about nations and cultures in the study of urban design, describing the relationship between people and their surroundings as an interdisciplinary field. In order to understand their behaviour in relation to other elements of urban form – space and the presence of other people – one must start from the small scale.

In addition, understanding the way in which people move through towns leads to better predictions about pedestrian movement, and this enables urban designers to create better urban spaces, where social life can be stimulated or help in identifying the likely impacts of pedestrianising a city street, for example. In the context of urban design, human spatial behaviour becomes a term that describes the relationship between the built environment and its human inhabitants; a new dimension of Egyptian urban design should be formulated to meet our new needs in our urban spaces as well as our cities.

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**Rania Raslan, Ph.D Candidate, and Ali Bakr, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Alexandria University, Egypt**
WALKING IN A HOT CLIMATE
A study undertaken by Arup in 2009 explored the feasibility of a system of city walkways to extend the catchment of the public transport network, including the then recently opened Dubai Metro.

Dubai’s blue skies and warm weather have made it a popular magnet for tourists. But getting around this sprawling city during the hot and humid summers can be a challenge. Air-conditioned cars prevail as the most comfortable option for many in the heat of summer. Pedestrians face a number of difficulties, including the poor continuity of footpaths, dominance of traffic, and the fact that whole communities are divided by 12-lane highways.

THERMAL SHOCK
Dubai’s new metro system has so far exceeded its initial targets for passenger use. However, the local climate means that unless people live within a few paces of a bus or metro stop, they face an uncomfortable walk in the heat. Dubai’s air-conditioned buildings are regularly set at temperatures of around 18°C, which means that people can experience thermal shock when they walk out into temperatures that can exceed 45°C in the summer. Providing protection in the transitional spaces and the main pedestrian routes between the new Dubai metro stations and major local destinations would, therefore, significantly improve the utility of the metro system to its passengers.

Keen to build on the metro’s initial success, Nasser Abu Shehab, Director of Strategic Planning Department at the Dubai RTA, the Dubai Road and Transport Authority (RTA) asked Arup to develop proposals to extend the size of walking catchments, with particular emphasis on low energy options.

The study that Arup undertook, the Dubai Pedways Development Strategy, aimed to make walking a preferred mode of transport in Dubai; extend the catchment of the metro network; and, investigate the potential for elevated and/or below ground pedestrian links across the city (Pedways) in discussion with potential investors and developers.

PEDESTRIAN BENEFITS
Arup’s approach was to provide a balance between the two temperature extremes experienced from air-conditioned buildings to the outside. A range of options was devised to minimise energy demand, whilst maintaining a comfortable pedestrian environment. Thermal modelling was used to analyse transient comfort for each option, considering walking speed, metabolic rate and walking distances along the Pedways. The thermal sensation of walking in the winter sun was used as an acceptable upper limit for comfort. The studies concluded that a combination of shade, air movement and thermal mass significantly improved the thermal sensation within a Pedway to
acceptable levels of comfort, increasing pedestrian safety and mobility without the need for excessive air conditioning.

**DESIGN PRINCIPLES**
The Dubai Pedway concept provides quick and convenient routes while protecting pedestrians both from traffic and the sometimes aggressive heat in Dubai. A number of social, economic and environmental design principles were identified for the Pedway network:

- **Transport and Movement** – to increase access and connectivity to public transport services, and reduce private vehicle use and related congestion and carbon emissions
- **Health and Wellbeing** – to provide opportunities for health benefits for users with walking becoming a preferred mode
- **Economic Activity** – to provide opportunities for revenue generation and local businesses.
- **Community** – to link key destinations and communities, for greater cohesion within neighbourhoods; and, to create a system that is accessible for all following the RTA’s Guidelines for Design of Accessible Transport in the Emirate of Dubai
- **Energy** – to minimise energy requirements by using orientation and passive design through natural day lighting and ventilation
- **Public Realm** – to create comfortable, safe and convenient routes with good levels of natural surveillance and activity.

The overall objective of the Dubai Pedways study was to demonstrate the thermal performance of a range of pedestrian environments in the Dubai climate, and thereby identify appropriate technical and architectural typologies that deliver the optimal solutions. Anecdotally, pedestrian movement seems to be increasing in certain areas of Dubai, particularly the beach resorts and marinas. However, the hot and humid summer temperatures are still cited as a major deterrent. In order to improve external comfort, some low-cost solutions can be implemented:

- Limiting walking distances between cooler spaces, through massing and layout
- Controlling solar gain and the mean radiant temperature of surrounding surfaces, through shading
- Increasing air movement through orientation and mechanical measures.

**TESTING BEST PRACTICE**
As part of the Pedway study, a review of international best practice relevant to the Dubai climate and urban context was undertaken, and included Mumbai, Hong Kong, Toronto, and Chicago. Structures elsewhere included shading with high thermal mass to avoid solar gain, while capitalising on the heat retention of the structure itself to keep cool, with fans to create additional airflow. The review also highlighted the need for supporting policies and programmes.

The suitability of areas for Pedway connections within Dubai was also assessed, and design guidelines for Dubai Pedway Planning were prepared. Three areas in Dubai were considered in the conceptual design – Dubai Trade District, Wafi City/Healthcare City and Deira City Centre.

The study created a flexible framework for Pedway development and implementation that could be developed organically, connecting more and more commercial and leisure buildings to become a vital part of the city’s transport infrastructure. It also explored funding and revenue models that would offset the capital costs, including commercial sponsorship opportunities such as retail kiosks and advertising space. Becci Taylor, Associate, Arup worked closely with Nasser Abu Shehab, Director of Strategic Planning Department at the Dubai RTA on this project.
A NEW FIELD
Architecture has been part of the Iranian educational system for over seventy years. In 1939 architecture was established as a course at the University of Tehran; in 1963 it became part of the courses provided at Shahid Beheshti University, and was then followed by a number of other universities. Education in urbanism however is not that old in Iran; and education in urban design as an independent course is even more recent.

The first department of urban planning was established in 1965 in Iran at the School of Fine Arts, University of Tehran. The scope of urban planning education was to teach the principles and methods of urban planning and design to students, who would then be knowledgeable enough to rationalise, organise and deploy the potential of other related disciplines in the built environment from rural areas, towns and cities, up to regional levels. The department’s research programme included research methods to investigate the country’s needs in relation to the socio-economic and physical development of its cities, also focusing on cultural values.

It was only in 1975 that the University of Shahid Beheshti and Iran University of Science and Technology started to admit students for master’s degrees. After the Islamic Revolution, from 1984 onwards, with the establishment of the Islamic Azad University (a private university) and Tarbiat Modares University, students were accepted for urbanism courses at postgraduate level at these universities too. The syllabus for city planning and design was always within the Master of Architecture curriculum.

FORECAST DEMAND
With nine hundred large and small cities and a high forecast demand for specialists, Iran needed some 18,000 urban professionals in various fields. However, in 1990, the total number of active professionals was only 1,800, just ten per cent of the forecast demand. From 1989, after the Iraq-Iran war (also known as the first Persian Gulf War), there was a drive to launch urban development courses initially in Tehran, and later in other cities by public and private universities. This has led to 146 departments offering architecture and urbanism courses by 2012, of which 119 are related to architecture and 69 are dedicated to urbanism.

Prior to this widespread knowledge about urbanism and due to the lack of urban specialists, it was architects who undertook most of Iran’s urban planning. However, when urban planners eventually got involved, their perceptions of the city were based on quantitative measures, while urban development projects were in need of qualitative approaches to city planning and design. This quantitative approach to urban planning damaged Iranian cities and influenced mainstream ideas.

To tackle the issue, trained professionals were needed to advocate the forgotten qualitative aspects of city planning and design. Based on the suggestion of a group of university professors, two courses for urban design and planning were set up. In 1989 urban planning and urban design were offered as two separate but complementary majors. In the early years, 18-20 students were accepted by each department per year, and only students with a previous degree in architecture were eligible to study urban design. However later students with a previous degree in urban studies were admitted as well. An urban design major usually takes three-and-a-half to four years including the time to undertake the final
dissertation. Contextualising urban design concepts and techniques was high on the agenda for the university professors, who had been educated in the UK and Germany.

Many Iranian cities have historic or old centres containing valuable elements and traditional urban fabric in their urban morphology and architectural styles. To respect, protect and learn from the globally-renowned Islamic urbanism of the country, a syllabus on urban design in the historic urban environment was introduced. The workshops on urban design in historic places were complementary to the syllabus on theoretical principles of urban design, for example. Working on the historic urban fabric in Iran offers a rich environment for learning the principles of Islamic urbanism, exemplified in the country’s older cities. Being the home of masterpieces in Islamic urbanism, for example Isfahan, Kerman and Yazd, the country also enjoys climatic, morphological and geographical diversities which provide opportunities for students to appreciate a variety of contexts and enhance their experience.

The three-and-a-half to four year period of the postgraduate urbanism course was however insufficient to create a resourceful workforce in the field. Due to the tremendous demands of Iranian society for practical experts in urbanism who could work in government, public and private agencies, especially in relation to the fast growing number of Iranian municipalities, a bachelor’s degree course in planning – called urban engineering – was also established in 1999. The establishment of this undergraduate degree programme became the foundation for planning education. It provided better and stronger planning students to then join the master’s degree programmes and, in general, help the technical and scientific progress of municipalities and the whole country.

CHANGES TO COURSES
At present due to new regulations introduced in 2010, the duration of all taught postgraduate courses has been reduced to two years. While two years of master’s studies is common in many other countries, this change has caused concern about the quality of learning and training in this area, and has repeatedly been the subject of complaint by tutors and students alike. Another concern is that recent students from a wide range of backgrounds from physics to religious studies have been accepted onto postgraduate courses in both urban planning and design. This has significantly affected the level of learning, as bringing these students up to speed on basic design concepts in a short period of time is sometimes impossible.

The following courses are among the most important in urban design postgraduate taught programmes:
- Theoretical Principles of Urban Design
- Techniques of Urban Design Workshop
- Progression of Ideas in Urban Planning
- Environmental Psychology
- Infrastructure
- Urban Design Workshop (covering micro-macro scales and simple-complex levels)
- Final dissertation or thesis (for examination)

The critical lack of tutors in the field of urban design also led Shahid Beheshti University to establish the only PhD courses in urban design in the country in 2005, and urban planning in 2009. Other universities still accept PhD students in urban studies.

The Centre of Excellence in Urban Design, CEUD, hosted by Shahid Beheshti University is a young research centre that plays a vital role in highlighting the importance of the qualitative approach to city planning and design, the role of urban designers, and the quality of urban design education in the country. Its aims are that trained professionals who are concerned about the quality of urban life and cities will be the source of their improvement over the long term, reclaiming urban spaces and returning them to pedestrians. •

• Professor Iraj Etessam, founder of the Department of Urban & Regional Planning, University of Tehran.
• Professor Jahanshah Pakzad, Director of the Centre of Excellence in Urban Design, at Shahid Beheshti University.
Allies and Morrison are the masterplanners and architects for District//S – a 42,000 sqm scheme of high quality residential accommodation situated on the edge of Beirut’s historic city centre. Twenty two new buildings provide 109 apartments ranging in size from 150-600 sqm, and a network of pedestrianised public spaces – a piazza, a sunken garden and a series of lanes – creates a vibrant public realm for a cosmopolitan mix of cafes, shops and galleries.

Buildings are clad in stone and incorporate tall, oversized timber shutters – a contemporary response to the traditional Lebanese balconies and shutters which jut from buildings in neighbouring areas. Eight jewel-like penthouses overlook a series of connecting rooftops with pools and terraces, creating a private landscape raised above the city.

**PRINCIPLES & PROCESS**

The site was formerly owned by Solidere, who are responsible for the regeneration of the historic city of Beirut. It was then sold on to Estates Development SAL on the basis that it met the requirements of the city’s masterplan and, in design terms, reaches the very high standard that Solidere has set.

Our starting points were the site and its relationship with the city of Beirut itself. We wanted to avoid a selfish generic design which, like so much current architecture, could be anywhere in the world. We wanted to create a place with generous reference to particulars of its context, which includes both a powerful topography and the infectious optimism and energy of a city we have come to admire.

Our first visit to see the site was also our first visit to Beirut. Such moments can be overwhelming. Those first impressions, which can never be relived, can provoke strong initial responses. And we found that the more we visited the city and the site for District//S, the more we learned – but also the more our first ideas were reinforced. Looking back, it is clear that three initial observations were key to the concept that we developed.

The first thing we noticed was the shape of the site. It seemed like a rectangle that had been broken. The natural break created a space that suggested a new informal square at the heart of the project.
This beneficial fracture would also form a new route that would thread through the site and connect it to the city. And so the new District //S would be sewn into the fabric of old Beirut.

Dividing the site created two distinct places – two courtyards. It seemed right that these spaces should also connect to the network of neighbouring streets. A vision of small lanes, passages and informal spaces formed in our minds: these would be the capillaries to conduct the energy of life and business. It already seemed to us that District//S would be a pleasant place to visit and live in, a place where human interaction took place on a human scale in an unceremonious and relaxed environment.

The second thing we noticed was the elegance of Beirut’s historic buildings. We enjoyed the variety of form and detail. As individual buildings they are appealing, but it is as a group that they define the city. We thought, therefore, that District//S should be not one building, but a collection of harmonious structures. Each building could be different from the next but, together, the whole would be greater than the sum of its parts.

Sketching the possibilities quickly revealed how important the spaces between the buildings would be. Each palazzo would be simple and individual, but the spaces that conducted the cross-breezes would be complex, inviting and intimate. We recalled how a Japanese calligrapher, when placing the bold black brush stroke on the page, thinks also of the beauty of the white space contained within the structure of each letter.

The third thing we noticed was the way in Beirut’s topography produces wonderfully detailed silhouettes. Busy at street level, with every wall punctuated with balconies or loggias in discourse with the outside, Beirut also offers yet another urban layer with its beautiful rooftops. The topography of the city encourages you not just to look up, but also to look down.

So it seemed important that District//S should have three distinct layers: a busy street level with shops, lanes and gardens, a middle layer of well-planned apartments each with balconies and loggias, and a top layer of villas and terraces that would draw inspiration from and add to the rich composition of Beirut’s above-street silhouette.

We knew from the beginning that District//S had all the right ingredients to be a memorable place itself. We were sure it would be an enviable place to live. And we hope those first impressions that generated our ideas will have matured into a design that is much a part of Beirut’s history as it will be of its future.

LESSONS LEARNED
In order to meet the aspirations of the city and the approvals process, we feel that it is as important to understand the physical context of a site as it is the political context. Beirut, as a city, is rightly immensely proud of its history and is confident in its aspirations. And as with every project, everywhere, there is no shortcut to ensuring that the proposed project fits absolutely with both the needs of the city and its ambitions.
BELFAST STREETS AHEAD
Atkins shows how the city is changing

BACKGROUND
Belfast, a city rich in historical and cultural diversity, is undergoing a momentous programme of transformation to compete as a European city of choice. The £28 million investment, the city’s most significant to-date, is being put into creating a more captivating and inviting city centre. The project, Belfast Streets Ahead (BSA), is already delivering real benefits, with new businesses and tenants choosing to invest in the city. Phase 1 of the project, completed in October 2011, has revitalised 14 faded city centre streets, enhancing the retail environment and making the city more accessible.

THE AIM
BSA looks to improve the appearance and quality of Belfast’s city centre to attract investment from outside Northern Ireland, encourage business development, increase tourism and contribute to a reduction in crime, by making the city centre safer and more people-friendly, with well-lit and active streets.

THE DESIGN
Much of the project area falls within Belfast’s designated conservation area. BSA seeks to deliver a responsive and contemporary environment, looking to the future whilst being respectful of the past. It strives to create sustainable spaces, seeking the right balance to deliver a visually appealing and stimulating city, whilst accommodating many associated city management activities along with planned and impromptu events and celebrations. This requires an inherent flexibility in the designs. The spaces themselves – supported by a complex underground duct and IT network and in-ground power supplies – are simple and clutter-free providing ease of movement.

THE MASTERPLAN
Atkins worked alongside AECOM, who were the masterplanners on this project. The masterplan sought to create an improved walking environment, by creating a series of changing experiences through the streets to spaces such as Arthur Square and Castle Place. The spaces provide the natural points of pedestrian orientation and connections to the wider street network. The design of the streets provided a framework around which street activation could be encouraged, and the alignment of furniture and banding, whilst addressing the engineering and technical demands of vehicular segregation and drainage provided a visual marker to subtly influence the location of street activities associated with the businesses. This soft approach maintains the eclectic mix and styles that are typical of Belfast’s streets, thus avoiding the appearance of forced management and sterilisation of character that is so vital to street life. This approach provides flexibility and as such streets have developed differing characters, adding to the diversity of Belfast’s urban mix.

No buildings facing the street were included in the scheme, however there was a need to synchronise design and implementation activities with major developments such as the Victoria Square shopping centre.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN ELEMENTS
The overall composition of the principal paving surfaces were considered to best address the performance requirements and particular site conditions. This minimised onsite construction activities thereby reducing labour requirements and significantly reducing noise and dust pollutants, a primary cause of concern for those affected by the works during construction.

The drainage was integrated seamlessly into the design and considerable time was devoted to assessing existing infrastructure, re-using and modifying drainage where feasible as opposed to wholesale replacement.

Associated street components such as seating, lighting, bollards, bins and cycle racks were reviewed to determine their sustainability regarding the use of recycled materials or their ability to be recycled in later years. The durability, maintenance and management requirements of all specifications were embedded into the design process which has delivered well considered, robust and sustainable improvements that will benefit today’s users and future generations to come.

This proactive approach to sustainability was recognised with the CEEQUAL Whole Project Award, Excellent Award achieving a score of 78.1% for areas 1 & 3. This major achievement was awarded for:

- Reducing energy requirements of the completed scheme by introducing efficient street lighting monitored remotely and able to reduce use during off-peak periods
- Reducing future maintenance requirements and agreeing management and maintenance methodology for all paved areas
- Materials selected for durability with high-quality materials designed to deliver a long design life
- Minimising off-site disposals to landfill
- Increasing the recycling content.

CONSULTATION
To deliver real benefits, the design was developed in an inclusive manner, informed through consultation with...
user and stakeholder groups. BSA placed considerable emphasis on engagement and consultation to harness users’ valued input in informing the design process and outcomes, such as the critical need to ensure the requirements of all users were met by the proposals. This was especially important with regards to those with mobility and visual impairment. Through detailed consultation with these groups the initial idea of promoting ‘shared space’ within Donegall Place was re-considered in light of the real challenges this presents to the visually impaired. For example, guide dogs are trained to cross streets by locating kerbs. Shared space proposals would have removed these key wayfinding elements, creating a significant disadvantage to the visually impaired.

Keeping Belfast moving during construction again was a key requirement. The Contractor, Farrans Construction Ltd devised and implemented a continual consultation process supported by a dedicated information helpline and full time business and trader liaison role. This responsive approach enabled the programming of works to be maintained whilst also maintaining business and trader confidence in the project and its objectives. This approach has been recognised with Farrans winning Considerate Constructor Awards.

Where conflicting views occurred on the design proposals, the team resolved them by managing the process through transparent stakeholder management tracker sheets, where each stakeholder group would be able to see and respond to each concern raised. Through this process an acceptable resolution was reached and subsequent planning approval was granted.

THE CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT
BSA raised some unique challenges including uncoordinated underground services and the presence of a sub ground structural concrete slab which had been structurally compromised through years of utility repairs and diversions. It was thoroughly examined to determine how much could be retained and re-used with the aim of reducing excavation requirements. Atkins designed a bespoke solution to retain as much of the existing slab, reducing cost and delivering sustainability benefits whilst integrating the existing drainage network into the paving layout delivering great benefit without significant cost and disruption.

Great care was taken in the paving detailing, reducing the requirement for onsite cutting to a minimum, reducing noise and disruption. This in-depth appreciation of buildability has ensured delivery on the quality, time and budget targets.

Construction timing sequences and their subsequent impact on retail and movement patterns was vital. Atkins, working with partner Farrans, with their dedicated design and programme co-ordinator managing the works programme, provided a seamless delivery to the client and stakeholders. This collaborative approach to planning, designing and delivering this multidisciplinary project delivered efficient construction phases to agreed dates and programmes which have been instrumental to maintaining businesses and traders confidence and support throughout the works.

These challenges amongst others required the team to develop numerous design amendments, adjustments and innovations to take cognisance of the on-site constraints whilst at the same time delivering the client’s vision to budget.

THE ENRICHMENT OF BELFAST
BSA has vastly enhanced the city centre, including provision of new street furniture, street lighting, signs and landscaping. A new traffic layout in Donegall Place has enabled the pavements to be extended, which along with the upgrading of the surrounding streets has made Belfast city centre more pedestrian friendly, more attractive to shoppers and to all who visit the city, augmenting Belfast as a premier European capital city.

A sense of place has been created through the use of public art, like the 7m high Spirit of Belfast, a £200,000 sculpture made of four curved stainless steel parts.

Sculptor, Dan George described it as a ‘child for the people of Belfast’. The coloured lighting is designed to reflect the texture and lightness of linen, while the metal reflects the strength and beauty of shipbuilding, two important aspects of Belfast’s history.

Eight feature lighting masts were also installed along the east side of Donegall Place, celebrating Northern Ireland’s industrial maritime heritage, each one commemorating one of the great White Star Line ships built in Belfast by Harland and Wolff. Strip lighting will illuminate each mast at night. These additions have given Belfast individuality, providing interest for all who visit the city leaving them with positive memories of Belfast.
Francis Tibbalds Award Shortlisted Projects

LEICESTER SQUARE RE-DESIGN
Burns + Nice describe changes to one of London’s most famous squares

BACKGROUND
Leicester Square, despite being an entertainment and tourist destination, had become disconnected from its surroundings, rundown in appearance and a place where antisocial behaviour had become a major issue. The vision was to re-establish Leicester Square as home of cinema and the entertainment gateway to the West End; to make it a vibrant landmark and principal meeting place where people can sit, relax and enjoy the atmosphere.

Leicester Square and the surrounding streets form one of London’s most intensely used urban spaces with 250,000 visitors each day, over 50 film premieres each year and more than 250 servicing deliveries to businesses and eateries every morning. A design competition was held in June 2007, the submission by Burns + Nice for the square and the surrounding streets was selected by Westminster City Council.

SCHEME DESCRIPTION
The new design used the historic qualities of the area as its inspiration – the late 19th century form of the central gardens surrounded by the wider urban square and connector streets – and translated these into a contemporary vocabulary that integrates the gardens with the surrounding streets. The constraints included the retention of listed structures such as the Shakespeare Fountain, four marble busts and the London Plane trees; in addition the gardens are required to be physically enclosed by the London Squares Preservation Act 1931. These constraints were positively overcome: new railings and gates were introduced framed by the innovative informal seating element – a sinuous white ribbon. The gardens and the wider square take their design reference from the historic fountain at the centre. Everything radiates out from the fountain; the pathways widen towards the gates giving the illusion of greater distance and space; the gardens and ribbon are framed by a carpet of dark granite, the shape of which creates a legible link to the surrounding square.

The form, colour and shape of the ribbon are derived from the sculptural language and material of the fountain; this has also influenced the curvilinear form of the thresholds at the gateways within the wider city block. The ribbon provides informal seating opportunities and a meeting place at any time of the day or night; it activates the edge creating a new spatial event within the adjacent pedestrianised and alfresco dining areas. The organic shape of the mirrored railings behind the ribbon blurs the experience of being inside or outside the enclosed gardens. A new sustainable lighting scheme contributes both to place-making and legibility, as well as enhancing the new modern character of the space.

URBAN DESIGN CONTEXT
Leicester Square is an historic public open space located in the heart of central London; by the mid-19th century the character of the Square and its connector streets began to change as elegant town housing blocks were replaced by commercial and cultural buildings. But the central garden area and the footprint of the surrounding buildings changed very little, particularly as the land use as public gardens has been protected by law since the 1870s.

PRINCIPLES
The wider urban design principles have been to re-establish Leicester Square within its London context by defining the area as a distinct 'city quarter' or city block to greatly enhance its connections to its neighbouring areas Covent Garden, Piccadilly, Chinatown and Trafalgar Square. The city block is subdivided into distinctive urban components: the connector streets, the square and the gardens, and at its core, the listed Shakespeare Fountain.

CONCEPT
The re-design of Leicester Square offered the opportunity to consider the garden, square and connector streets as one entity, and create a coherent design that captures the intrinsic qualities of the London square and its gardens. There was also the
opportunity to express the unique historic qualities of the site that have been eroded through the various changes in its basic design over the last century.

Other overarching aims included creating a sequence of urban events that give legibility and meaning to the area, and using lighting to create positive connections within the city block and surrounding streets. The introduction of a unifying design language for the city block created an integrated scheme. The threshold of the city block is expressed by introducing a paving design which reflects the form of the ribbon. The concept behind the gardens included:

- Extending the experience of a London square through the ribbon and black carpet
- Reinforcing the sense of place, extending and enhancing the uses of the area through a new lighting design
- Creating a sequence of urban events that give legibility and meaning to the area.

**PROCESS**

From 2007 Burns + Nice were involved with in-depth on-going consultations; the process encouraged involvement and information exchange. Consultations with local stakeholder groups, Transport for London, English Heritage, Metropolitan Police and film distributors, as well as council officials were undertaken via questionnaires, exhibitions and regular meetings. This process refined the concept where necessary, although the overall scheme proposal was widely supported. Consultations continued throughout the development of the design and during the construction phase.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

The key to the success of the scheme was the council’s support of the vision from inception to its realisation on site. The strength of the design was its buildability which enabled positive consultations to occur leading to a successful delivery. Establishing a robust and meaningful consultation strategy through meetings, newsletters and informative signage was an important part of the project process. This continued throughout the life of the project including the construction period.

The scheme demonstrates how improvements within the public realm contribute to regeneration by improving the existing economic context, and assisting in creating a confident and stable environment for investment. It has already become a catalyst for incoming investment and new development such as W London, M & M World and a New Premiere Inn. Furthermore a committed client and the establishment of a technically experienced and integrated design team enabled the scheme’s design challenges to be solved innovatively, whilst retaining the integrity of the vision for the re-design of Leicester Square.
STRATFORD CITY / 2012 ATHLETES VILLAGE
Fletcher Priest Architects with multiple other consultants on masterplanning within an evolving context

The original Stratford City masterplan was the largest planning application ever submitted in London and represented the ambition to establish a new metropolitan centre in the city. Made possible by the opportunities arising from construction of the high speed Channel Tunnel Rail Link, it was the product of extensive consultation and created the vision, framework and process for the transformation of a 73 hectare former rail lands site. It was combined with the aspiration for a ripple effect of regeneration across the wider area and down the Lower Lea Valley. The project was conceived and submitted for planning before the London Olympic bid and was intended to grow in phases in response to market demand over 20-30 years.

RESPONDING TO THE OLYMPIC BID
The project was coordinated with the Olympic bid during the determination period for the original masterplan. The two schemes aimed to align but not trip each other up. It was seen as important that the relatively slim chance of success should not impede a regeneration process already underway. Various overlaps were agreed, including use of the town centre streets as arrival routes for visitors, and location of the Athletes Village within residential districts proposed for the north of the site. The bid success accelerated the pace of delivery and extended the scale of transformation, enabling wider connections to be formed and legacy sporting venues to be embedded in a robust urban context. Initially half in and half beyond the Stratford City footprint, following the success of the bid the Village was fully located within the Stratford site.

PRINCIPLES
From the outset, the guiding principle was of long-term city making, creating an armature of pedestrian movement between the existing town centre and onward to the Lea Valley Park. Off this spine, a series of streets and spaces established linkages into the surrounding areas and focal points for urban districts with varying scales, characteristics and uses. The landscape framework was seen as the underlying basis for the project in recognition that specific needs on a project of this scale would emerge over time and should be allowed to evolve. Masterplan 'fixes' were documented with a series of spatial parameters forming the basis for a comprehensive environmental assessment. Beyond any formal planning details, the guiding principle, strongly expressed by clients and local authority, was a 'not Canary Wharf' attitude to the surroundings. The intention has always been that the project will incrementally blur into its context, seeding transformation in the nearby neighbourhoods, encouraging social integration and connectivity with the diverse population of East London and beyond.

PROCESS
In recognition of the vast scale of the project and the anticipated longevity of implementation, several processes were set up at the outline planning stage. These established zones that would be subject to a more detailed scale of masterplanning before individual buildings could be brought forward. To support this, a series of review panels – on design, sustainability and accessibility – were established. They were intended to guide the planning authority and bring
together clients, design teams and public sector stakeholders into a forum that could review and inform the scheme at all stages. These panels have been a key part of the process. In relation to the Village, the need to accommodate 17,000 athletes and officials during the Games required the rapid delivery of more than 2,800 homes – far more than any normal residential project would ever produce at one time. To achieve this, the northern zones of the project were consolidated and designed at the next masterplanning scale in parallel with commissioning at an architectural scale. To help guide the architectural teams, generally designing perimeter urban structures with approximately 300 homes around shared communal courtyards, detailed design guidance was created alongside comprehensive briefing. This had to balance individual diversity, site-wide procurement efficiencies, complex environmental standards, transition from short term intense occupation by athletes and long term space standards of housing with varied tenures and unit sizes. The project is the largest scheme ever built to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and, in terms of the areas delivered to date, is split approximately 50:50 in terms of market and social housing, fully integrated across the site.

LESSONS LEARNED
Many lessons have been learned and a number of these relate to the classic urban design balance between certainty and open-endedness. In many ways, the success of the project can be measured in the degree to which the original ambitions of the masterplan, created in a pre-Olympics context and a different economic setting, have remained robust. The structure of the masterplan has been delivered and has formed the basis for the wider Olympic and post-Olympic project overlaid upon it. Grids established in isolation now extend in every direction, linking sporting venues and longstanding communities in a way that could not have been anticipated a decade ago. The value of processes relating to review and design guidance have proven essential. Scales of land ownership have become important in ways that were not expected. Originally submitted as a single planning application for a single client consortium, the project had to cope with multiple changes of ownership, with Westfield delivering the retail town centre, the ODA (and Lend Lease as their development managers) the Village and Lend Lease/LCR the post-Games predominantly commercial areas.

FUTURE
The success of the project has been the transformation from infrastructure project to long-term vision to construction process at a scale and pace one could never have anticipated. The acceleration has delivered critical mass of population, social and physical infrastructure and substantial public realm ready for a first generation of permanent residents from 2013 onwards. Interestingly, the new owners of ‘East Village’ have chosen to retain and manage the area as a predominantly rental model of housing tenure, a departure from the UK norm. This gives great hope for the future; the pivotal issues are now ones of community-building. The active management of the area as it grows and settles will be central to its long term role as a new London district.
**FILWOOD PARK, SOUTH BRISTOL**

NEW Masterplanning show the benefits of designing with communities at the neighbourhood level

**EXISTING PROBLEMS**

The land at Filwood Park was historically associated with Filwood Farm, but during WWII parts were also used as an airfield and the concrete apron of the vacant ‘hangar site’ is still visible.

Much of the remainder of the site was turned into playing fields and all other buildings were demolished in the 1970s. However, when the Knowle West estate was constructed between 1920 and 1940, along garden city principles, it backed onto the airfield site. The park has therefore always felt isolated from the housing estate and its residents.

This isolation has contributed to serious and persistent anti-social behaviour. The backs of existing properties along Creswicke Road are open to the park and vulnerable to damage and trespass. Home-owners have therefore implemented a range of defensive boundary treatments, creating an oppressive edge to the park. All play facilities have been removed and the park is used predominantly for dog walking.

**BENEFITS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING**

The HCA acquired the 7.4 ha site from Bristol City Council in 2008. The intention was to deliver much-needed family housing and jobs as well as a better green space. Despite strategic regeneration frameworks being agreed, no consensus could be reached with the community who submitted an application for Town & Village Green (TVG) status.

In September 2011, funding became available to HCA to enhance the park subject to planning permission by April. HCA still did not want to proceed without community support and appointed a team to develop a masterplan through Enquiry by Design (EbD).

Workshops with schools highlighted significant concerns. Adults did not appreciate the extent to which children were frightened to use the park, but the message presented by the local youth group was clear and powerful. Children and adults showed us their favourite parks, and we used these to illustrate how Filwood Park could be enhanced.

A 1:500 scale model of the existing park made it easier to engage the community in a design debate. At the end of the EbD a model of the proposed park helped residents understand the scale of green space and how development would improve safety, protect residents’ amenity, and support wider regeneration.

**IMPROVING DESIGN QUALITY**

The design of the new park ensured that the amount of useable space is unchanged but its quality is enhanced. New homes and offices overlook the park and increase natural surveillance. Front doors face the park creating life and activity. Houses address the pedestrian and cycle routes through the site to create safer and welcoming connections, particularly after dark.

The park edge will be defined by a low hedge providing an attractive green character to the shared surface route. A railing can be provided within the hedge to secure the space from motorbikes which have been a major cause of crime and anti-social behaviour.
IMPROVING RESIDENTIAL AMENITY
New housing creates a secure rear boundary for existing residents on Creswicke Road. Instead of the obvious back-to-back arrangement, a series of residential courtyards are provided. Properties will front and overlook the courtyard spaces to ensure a secure area for parking and a safe communal garden space. This arrangement enables the retention of a linear strip of trees along the eastern edge to support and encourage wildlife and maintain an attractive green outlook for residents. Glimpsed views through to the park from Creswicke Road will also be maintained.

IMPROVING INTEGRATION
Family houses with gardens are located along the eastern edge to link with the existing low density garden suburb. Densities of 40-50dph will mark a step change from the 15-20dph which characterises the area, but the transformation is subtle and gradual.

Two storey housing relates to the existing houses along Creswicke Road whilst three storey houses give a stronger presence and sense of enclosure to the park. A combination of bay windows and balconies will provide a varied and interesting edge to the park.

CATALYST FOR REGENERATION
Residents highlighted the need for a positive gateway to help overcome negative external perceptions of Knowle West. A green business park with buildings of 3-4 storeys, street trees and new four storey apartments, provide the opportunity for a landmark feature to announce the entrance to Knowle West and will start to transform Hengrove Way into an address street.

A higher density of population, together with 8,000 sqm of new employment floorspace, will support investment in Filwood Broadway local centre, reinforce the Rapid Transit proposals that connect to the city centre, and help to stimulate demand for further residential and commercial investment.

LESSONS LEARNED
Successful EBDs generally involve lead-in times of at least six months. We learned from Filwood Park that meaningful engagement with residents, and a high quality outcome, could still be achieved even within three months of commissioning. HCA purchased the site more than three years ago, and planning permission was obtained some seven months after appointing the design team. Construction tender packages have already been issued.

The client now recognises that designing with the community at the neighbourhood level can speed up the planning process.

The process also demonstrated to the client that community support and funding support come from designing in detail at the neighbourhood level. As well as securing £1m for an enhanced park, the quality of design attracted European funding for the green business park. The EBD has therefore provided a catalyst for the wider regeneration of Knowle West.

Masterplan prepared at ‘Enquiry by Design’ with sketch showing park and courtyards overlooked by new housing
Engaging the community at the EBD
Aerial plan showing ideas of local youth group
Working model prepared at the EBD
Photomontage of new housing overlooking the enhanced park
DERWENTHORPE PHASE 2, YORK
Richards Partington Architects describe a new residential quarter

PRINCIPLES
Derwenthorpe seeks to create a mixed tenure, exemplar community of energy efficient homes on the periphery of York. The design draws on the rich architectural legacy of Joseph Rowntree’s model village at nearby New Earswick. Steeply pitched roofs, painted brickwork and striking dormer windows are combined to create a distinctive sense of place. All homes are designed to Lifetime Homes standards and Code for Sustainable Homes levels 4 and 5. Extensive public amenity space will be an integral part of the development, and priority will be given to pedestrians.

Phase One of the Derwenthorpe project is currently under construction. Phase Two of the Derwenthorpe project is located at the eastern end of Temple Avenue adjacent to the prototype houses. Phase Two will provide 125 homes of varying size and tenure. House types range from two to four bedrooms and include wheelchair accessible homes. All of the houses are designed to have the same appearance regardless of tenure.

Forty per cent of the homes will be affordable and these are pepper potted across the whole site.

SUSTAINABILITY
The houses have been carefully oriented with larger windows and sunspaces to the south to maximise solar gains. Houses will obtain their heating and hot water from the biomass-fired district heating network. The district heating is provided via a biomass energy centre, which incorporates two community spaces and a large meeting/education room. It has already become the focus of school, neighbourhood and visitor activities.

SITE LAYOUT
The different sized houses are used appropriately to support the urban structure and provide enclosure and continuous frontages to the streets and spaces. Larger houses are used adjacent to the surrounding open spaces and at key points to punctuate the streetscape and terminate forward views. The smaller houses are used to create short terraces with the elevations varied to suit the location of the houses, for instance at gables or corners. The main east-west street has three storey houses on the northern side and smaller houses on the southern side to maximise the sunlight penetration to the pedestrian realm.

Careful consideration has been given to how the development responds to its surroundings. Temple Avenue will have an improved streetscape and tree planting designed to complement Phase Two. Extensive consultations with the parish council and neighbours, through regular working groups have informed the landscape design and the environmental improvements being made in neighbouring streets.

At the centre of the layout is a well-designed public space with a semi-mature tree that adds structure and creates a recognisable destination and focus. The roads approaching this space have been carefully designed to create a high quality public realm following the principle of
pedestrian priority advocated by Manual for Streets. The layout also provides for pedestrian and cycle links northwards and eastwards to adjacent residential areas and open space and north eastwards across the Sustrans pedestrian/cycle route to the central area of Derwenthorpe providing links back to York.

**DESIGN PROCESS**
Consultations were undertaken with Sustrans officers and the Secured by Design advisor. To create active street frontages the parking is a mixture of on-street, on-plot and minimal rear parking courts, which will also be landscaped and include several houses in each.

The detailed layout of the roads and the distribution of parking were agreed through a series of design discussions held directly with the City of York Strategic Planners and the highways department. This was an unusual and extremely fruitful process – the technical officers were able to visualize the urban design because of the large amount of three dimensional material tabled in discussions. This shared vision for the spaces created a high level of confidence between partners, and prompted the highways officers to push for more radical design solutions, including narrowing of carriageways at thresholds to 3.5m, eliminating kerbs and changes of level, and eliminating all unnecessary signage and road markings. Private services (including the community heating) are incorporated in adopted carriageways rather than in service verges.

**LESSONS LEARNED**
An important feature of the development is the quality of the streets and public spaces that have been created through a collaborative relationship with the highways and planning officers. The intention to create a pedestrian and, in particular, a child and play friendly environment, was foremost in the design discussion. This discussion was facilitated by high-quality three-dimensional renderings and models, and would not have been possible with two dimensional plans only. It is notable how the different disciplines worked together. The scheme is now held up as an exemplar by the highways department, in terms of both process and outcome.

[Neighbourhood Square]
[Aerial view of whole development looking west]
[Site plan showing connections to surrounding neighbourhoods]
[Typical Street View]
It is in the tension between visual landscape and multifunctional opportunities that the book is limited. One would have liked the terms of reference to extend beyond aesthetics towards opportunities for meaningful diverse land use: my mind immediately went to photographs of sports pitches overlaid on car parks by Alex Maclean in *Taking Measures Across the American Landscape*.

The book could have extended into wider urban design areas that are both critical and underexploited in the text. The lot is symptomatic of urban sprawl and historic superimposition over other mobility systems in a way that is not fully addressed culturally or economically. There is limited discussion about land value and the economics of the development in the city. These are issues that transcend specific detail and gets to the heart of real estate economics and the relationship to planning.

There is a danger that the book aims to enhance aesthetic appearance adding only marginal functional benefits rather than delivering wholesale change. These are limited ambitions when the promise of the book and the quality of writing could lift it higher. That said, the book is graphically strong and a pleasure to read, containing excellent use of archive photography.

The book is an accessible read, predominantly aimed at an academic audience. There is huge value in books like this. One would just have liked a little more ‘bite’.

• Jonathan Kendall

**ReThinking a Lot: The Design and Culture of Parking**

Eran Ben-Joseph, MIT Press, 2012, £17.95

Many urban design texts attempt to synthesise the layered complexities of the city, bringing together the diverse range of social, cultural and technological forces that operate at multiple scales in varied locations around the globe. Others take a narrow slice, exemplifying the shaping of the contemporary city through the study of a single phenomenon. This book is clearly in the latter category. Ben-Joseph’s focus is tightly upon the parking lot, and his agenda is a reconsideration of this type from its current role as a barren adjunct to development.

The value of a narrow focus is the opportunity it provides for depth and rigour. Ben-Joseph’s passion is clearly communicated and what could have been a dry text has been written with wit and clarity. The book provides an interesting and detailed history of the parking lot as a land use that emerged from necessity and found itself accidentally claiming a role in urban structure. The book explores the lot in technical and historical detail, though with a strong North American focus. This bias is acknowledged, and it would have been interesting for the book to have explored the degree to which car-based urbanism has created the lot as a global type or whether there is something culturally specific in its US manifestations.

The book is limited to flat, single-level lots. There is no attempt to explore alternative models such as basements or multi-level decks. Had it done so it might have lost its focus and veered into the territory of Simon Henley’s 2007 *Architecture of Parking*, briefly cited as a like-minded volume. Such a broadening of scope would, though, have allowed projects such as Herzog de Meuron’s 1111 Lincoln Road car park with multiple cultural uses to have been included.

**The Temporary City**

Peter Bishop and Lesley Williams, Routledge, 2012, £29.99
ISBN 978-415-670553-6

Many are beginning to wonder whether the extended recession is merely part of a recurring economic cycle or instead a readjustment to a different mode altogether. Similarly this book gently poses the question, what if the city could be shaped by forces other than capital – even if only for a while? Or if shaped
by capital at all, by the individual and the re-configured consumption of - ideas, belonging and being there - brought about by the digital revolution?

The Temporary City provides a lively tour around pop up, meanwhile or transient strategies that are being used to create experiences and make places. Drawing on examples from the UK, America and Europe the book compiles sixty-eight case studies. Co-written by Peter Bishop, former director for Design for London and Lesley Williams, a writer and sculptor, it is well-founded in an expansive critical reading of relevant international research.

The opening chapters introduce temporality as a fourth dimension in urban planning, questioning our focus on permanence in place-making. The drivers and conditions for promoting temporary uses are explored such as: uncertainty, loss of faith in the conventional mechanics of growth, trends in marketing, mobile urban lifestyles, social networking, creative milieux, counterculture and activism, and vacancy and shrinking cities. Each of the following chapters takes up a theme and demonstrates this with case studies.

The authors set out the feasibility of using the temporary animation of sites, the value of this to private developers and ways of offering meanwhile leases. They draw together some canny observations from clients and practitioners. Eric Reynolds (founder of Camden Lock Market among other things) comments that communities are often affronted by vacant sites created by ‘overloading a site with hope value’. In his view the barriers are not necessarily financial, legal or to do with planning, but caused by ‘conservatism and not necessarily financial, legal or to do with planning, but caused by ‘conservatism and the capacity to take up ideas’.

At the same time, people’s purpose in going out in towns and cities is being altered by the ease and economy of accessing goods and services online. The pop up phenomenon is creating an experimental arena where participants are both audience and consumer, offering new experiences that ‘blur the boundaries of eating, theatre, music and art’. The authors highlight how ‘people enjoy the immediacy of the temporary’ as this meets a need for ‘both variety, against a backdrop of increasingly bland high streets, and for enjoyment of the moment’.

In the final chapters – the scale of ambition swells to encompass ways of re-imagining the city and refiguring the process of master planning for this to become looser, more flexible, tactical and collaborative. The case study of the London Development Agency’s zoning of a Green Enterprise District around the Royal Docks and east along the River Thames shows how this approach is being put into practice. The authors observe designers talking about ‘getting stuck in’ – not as an alternative to professional rigour, but to interminable studies that can ‘blight an area just as effectively as unfounded development projects’. Anyone wishing to capture some Olympic spirit in their projects would do well to begin with this book.

Urban Maps – Instruments of Narrative and Interpretation in the City


The natural tendency to make sense of a situation through simplification is an innate life navigation tool. But there is a danger that as the physical and social make-up of our urban environments become increasingly complex, we are too removed. This leads to a need for more sophisticated ways to map different networks; exploring our urban conditions and their narratives is necessary and pertinent. It is important that we engage with these realities, regardless of their complexities, rather than just sentimentally lament what we perceive once was.

Film, and other artistic media, including graffiti, can also be highly engaging modes of enquiry that ‘reveal aspects and patterns that are latent and buried deep within the temporal state of cities’. Such investigations demonstrate the value of and ways to engage with less tangible aspects of the world around us, which are key to understanding these complex conditions.

Between a full introduction and shorter conclusion chapters, Urban Maps is divided into: Brand, Image and Identity; Networks; Films; Marks; and, Object, illustrated with a host of black and white images. The introduction is a little uneven, in the academic norm, but the remaining chapters settle down well becoming clear and engaging on aspects that are ubiquitous but often overlooked. The subject matter is relevant for those involved in moulding our living environments and deepens our understanding of the city.

There is a discussion of non-linearity and the temporal, as well as a clear articulation of the erosion of sense of place – the rise of non-place – highlighting the increasingly wider modes of daily existence through their latent narratives. The loss of sense of awe and diminished chance of encounter to enrich through presupposed (but non-existent) familiarity of terrain is what has partly led to increased urban exploration; re-engagement with the built environment.

Brand and identity are seen as an architectural force, as well as an economic issue. With ‘culture travelling faster than it can understand’, ‘brand acquires ownership of the visual, and therefore content of the city’. In combination with the inertia of architecture and the ceding of the city to the urban, this summarises our current situation well.

A consideration of non-place, as rich territory for creative exploitation, links narrative investigation of urban space to a discourse on the production of architecture. This constitutes a new reading of place; a first step to re-modulating how we think about our urban condition. If we are to engage meaningfully and effectively with the modern world, architecture must be acknowledged as ‘not accepting of its diminished role in terms of dialectic with the city’; a retreat from humanist discourse preventing development of more responsive architecture.

This underpins the need to further explore how architecture can re-engage with cities’ inhabitants and users, whereby the
Making Healthy Places, Designing and Building for Health Well-being, and Sustainability

Making Healthy Places opens with the observation that rising obesity in the US could lead to the current generation of Americans being the first to have shorter longevity than their predecessors. Equally CABE’s report Future health: sustainable places for health and wellbeing cited that in the UK obesity and related diseases cost the NHS £4.2 billion a year; both evidence of the value of interdisciplinary collaboration and transforming health has evolved historically from the need to ameliorate the conditions of rapidly industrialising cities. The second part expands on the interrelationship of design, resource availability and health. As well as physical health, food environments and access to healthy food are also explored along with air quality and water supply, mental health social capital and vulnerable populations.

The third section on ‘diagnosing and healing’ sets out proactive design and policy approaches that integrate thinking about health in the built environment. Examples of initiatives are given for smart growth, green certification of development, complete streets and active living by design. The fourth section offers a toolbox for making healthy places. The authors argue that health should be a component of community engagement and constitute a layer of urban planning. One example is how a Health Impact Assessment has helped to raise funds for a green space project, by demonstrating that investing now would save health costs later.

Finally the section on ‘looking outward - looking ahead’ identifies future research topics, and makes the case for increased interdisciplinary collaboration and transformative learning. The penultimate chapter steps outside the US to consider issues in poorer nations, where the risks of extreme temperatures as a result of climate change are magnified. The experience of these countries is instructive as they continue ‘an unfinished struggle against infectious disease and malnutrition’ without the luxury of ignorance about their material economies.

Making Healthy Places concludes that all cities should be seen as part of resource flows, belonging to a wider ecosystem. The transition to a healthy city is, the authors, assert the transition to a resilient and sustainable city; less dependant on cheap liquid fuels and where the most vulnerable are less exposed to climate change impacts such as heat and cold stress, flood risk and food and fuel poverty.

Marc Furnival

Urban Intersections: São Paulo

Katherine Farley and Deborah Berke, Edited by Nina Rappaport, Noah Biklen and Eliza Higgins, W W Norton & Co, £25

If Rio is Brazil’s glamorous city of Copacabana and Carnival, São Paulo is its grittier big brother. Rapid growth fuelled by mass immigration has transformed the city into one of the largest in the world, a vibrant, multi-cultural megapolis of over seventeen million people. In Urban Intersections: São Paulo, we learn that the city is facing huge challenges. Public infrastructure is struggling to cope with the rate of development (67,775 residential units built in 2010 alone) and there is rising inequality, crime and traffic congestion. The number of people living in the organic favelas (shanty towns) has grown from 1 to 20 per cent in twenty years, while the growing middle class live in ‘vertical gated communities of towers’ or periferias (suburbs).

Catering for this burgeoning middle class is the brief for the project outlined in Urban Intersections. Collaborating with property developers Tishman Speyer, Yale School of Architecture students are challenged to design a middle income development of 2,500 units in São Paulo. The Bandeirantes site is an abandoned farm and abattoir in the city’s northern suburbs.

As you might expect from a Yale publication, this is a high quality production, elegantly laid out with crisp graphic design and fascinating photos of São Paulo.

The book starts with a scene setting dialogue between the project leaders Katherine
The poor in emerging countries is a problem to forget that the site is located in a city surrounding neighbourhoods. As it is a while others try to integrate with the city precedents such as Brazilian Modernism and its history is described within the book— and the best-practice examples he tends to cite, generally in the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Germany. It would have been good for the book to have featured a greater proportion of UK projects, as the overriding sense is that this country is poor at delivering such complex projects compared to mainland Europe. The reasons for the difference in this country, specifically the roles of housing developers, the attitudes of the public sector and the economics of UK development, are understood and explained by the author though the book gives limited confidence that this will change any time soon.

The book is self-described as a manual for architects and urban designers and this seems an accurate term. It appears slightly ad hoc, rather than embedded within the argument.

The book demonstrates a strong understanding of planning processes and the forces of urban development. There are very good explanations of the historical dynamics by which land parcels split and fuse over time and the relationship of infrastructure to urban form.

Crucially, the plot-based urbanism that Tarbatt is promoting tends to imply a more active role for the state and its agencies than is normally the case in the UK, and this is acknowledged by the author. He is far from naïve about the differences between the UK and Ireland— which is the intended readership of the book and its history is described within the book— and the best-practice examples he tends to cite, generally in the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Germany. It would have been good for the book to have featured a greater proportion of UK projects, as the overriding sense is that this country is poor at delivering such complex projects compared to mainland Europe. The reasons for the difference in this country, specifically the roles of housing developers, the attitudes of the public sector and the economics of UK development, are understood and explained by the author though the book gives limited confidence that this will change any time soon.

The book is self-described as a manual and this seems an accurate term. It appears to be aimed at practitioners or students on vocational urban design courses. For both groups it includes a very useful chapter with consistent drawing of plot diagrams that encourage systematic comparison.

In its aims, the book manages to be highly ambitious but also quite pragmatic. It is a comprehensive text that is useful on many levels. Our cities would be experimentally richer if those ambitions could be achieved, overcoming the pragmatic economic and cultural obstacles that tend to impede them.
From Slums to Suburbs
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• Sebastian Loew, architect and planner, writer and consultant. Author of Urban Design Practice: An International Review (2012)
• Laurie Mentiplay is an urban planner and designer with Parsons Brinckerhoff, based in Manchester
• Malcolm Moor, architect and independent consultant in urban design; co-editor of Urban Design Futures
• Judith Ryser, researcher, journalist, writer and urban affairs consultant to Fundacion Metropolitana, Madrid
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Neither the Urban Design Group nor the editors are responsible for views expressed or statements made by individuals writing in Urban Design

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PRACTICE INDEX
Directory of practices, corporate organisations and urban design courses subscribing to this index. The following pages provide a service to potential clients when they are looking for specialist urban design advice, and to those considering taking an urban design course.

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Is the proposed High Speed 2 a Good Thing? I am rather sceptical. I am sure that if built, it can become just as established an element of the English landscape as any line built in the 19th Century. But I am doubtful of the need for it, its value for money, and the business case. Business leaders in Birmingham, and the City Council, are bullish about what they reckon will be its economic benefit in new jobs for the city. I thought this argument was undermined, surprisingly, by a paragraph in the 2011 Eastside Masterplan, produced by the City Council and Glenn Howells Architects for the area of the city in which HS2 will terminate. It states ‘HS2 will make it possible to get to the centre of London as quickly as from outlying London suburbs. Commuting to London from the region would become more attractive for many more people’.

That sounds to me like people living in Birmingham and commuting to jobs in London; a draining away of jobs from Birmingham, not an influx. In its support for HS2, the City Council seems to be shooting itself in the foot (an expression I have used in the past with reference to other big planning proposals). A local effect of HS2 which concerns me greatly is the effect which it will have upon Digbeth. Currently, Digbeth is separated from the city centre by the West Coast main line from Euston to New Street Stations. Trains arrive on a blue brick viaduct overlooking Digbeth to their left, and then nose down into a cutting leading to the tunnel into New Street Station. In fact the line is more of a Lynchian edge than a separation, as streets pass through the viaduct and over the cutting; Digbeth and the city centre are well connected. By contrast, the proposed HS2 terminal will sever them apart. It will sit alongside the West Coast main line, on the city centre side. It will be 500m long, and impenetrable, with several existing streets buried underneath it; a huge barrier between Digbeth and the city centre.

This is ironic. When the City Council declared the Eastside regeneration zone in 1999, which at that time included Digbeth, and formed an Eastside team to handle it, the first act which the team undertook was the demolition of the elevated section of the inner ring road around the city centre, the notorious ‘concrete collar’. They correctly perceived that no regeneration would take place while most of Eastside was cut off by this physical and psychological barrier. The demolition took place in the early 2000s, and the viaduct has been replaced by a ground level boulevard. The proposed HS2 station will reproduce this severance – even more extremely than before.

That this new severance should be proposed ten years after the highway severance was removed suggests some short-term memory loss among planners. It also suggests an ability to support contradictory ideas simultaneously. The City Council has included most of Digbeth within the new Enterprise Zone, which is intended to stimulate business growth and create new jobs. As part of this programme, in Digbeth a Local Development Order will be designated, which will make it easier for businesses to change the uses of buildings. If planning controls are bad for business, as the present Government claims, this relaxation will encourage new economic growth in Digbeth. But businesses will not move into Digbeth if it is cut off from the city centre, and workers and customers cannot easily get to it. This is what severance achieves.

Joe Holyoak
Atkins’ interdisciplinary approach allows us to develop multi-layered solutions to complex urban problems that encompass vehicle, pedestrian and spatial issues – on schemes of all scales and sizes. By embedding best practice and exemplar design in all that we do, we have developed a strong track record in facilitating the delivery of some of the most successful and award winning public realm schemes and masterplans.

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