

136 **URBAN
DESIGN**

Autumn 2015
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**DESIGNING
HOUSING**



**URBAN
DESIGN
GROUP**

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

In July the *Guardian* newspaper considered how protected views were shaping cities and whether these constraints were turning them into museums. The article compared protected views which limit the provision of tall buildings, to 1930s green belt policies which prevent outward expansion of the city. Their aim is to protect the view of a specific place or historic building from an identified point. The effect of such a protected view has a knock-on impact on the height, form and appearance of developments in order to maintain the identified focus of the view.

One of the case studies the article used is the *Oxford Views Study*, which has recently been updated. Here, ten protected view cones protect the skyline of the historic city centre. Six of these were

identified in 1962 and a further four in 1986. Within Oxford this approach has created a flat roofscape with buildings rising to the maximum level allowed. As part of a recent project, I visited each of these viewpoints and established that since their designation, the quality of the view has changed significantly. Two of the views have changed with the growth of the city; a further two are currently screened by vegetation; and another viewpoint is located within a gated allotment that has no public access. This brings into question how these viewpoints and the views from them are being managed and whether this is a robust approach to shape a city.

As with Oxford, London is being shaped through the *London View Management Framework* (LVMF), which originated from the *St Paul's Heights* work of W. Godfrey Allen (Surveyor to the Fabric of St Paul's). This was a reaction to the 1930 Building Act, which allowed significantly taller buildings than were previously permitted. The City of London Corporation accepted Allen's

St Paul's Heights proposals and from 1938 they were implemented as a gentleman's agreement between the corporation and developers. Today buildings are being shaped, literally, by the LVMF viewing corridors. This creates 'interestingly' formed buildings and notable islands, or wedges, of tall buildings outside of the corridors. I would question whether this is a suitable basis for shaping the development of a city.

Whilst establishing views that allow people to appreciate the skyline or an historic feature within a city is important, viewpoints must be managed or be allowed to evolve to accommodate future sight lines. Interestingly in 2014 Disneyland was the most tagged location on the photo-sharing website Instagram. This brings into question how much value is placed on the city skyline other than by planners and architects. ●

Katy Neaves

LIFE IS A CREEPING TRAGEDY



Designed to kill – the blind zone on a conventional HGV – however this lorry is fitted with additional mirrors to reduce blind spots.

So said the composer John Tavener in his final interview. But for some of us tragedy does not creep but it leaps. Speaking at the Cycle City Active City conference in Newcastle in the summer, I met Kate Cairns, a woman who six years ago met tragedy when her younger sister was crushed to death under wheels of a 32 tonne tipper while cycling along a street in London. In an instant, Kate's normal life died too, to be replaced by that of campaigner, out to seek justice for her sister and to prevent further lives from being needlessly lost through the negligent design and operation of HGVs.

What has this got to do with urban design? Everything. For over one hundred years, the way we design and manage streets and conduct our lives has become dominated by the demands of the motor vehicle. The designers of cars and lorries have held mastery over those who design towns and cities. The result? More than half of people think that roads are too dangerous for cycling, and most children are held

under effective house arrest by their parents until well into their teens. Globally road deaths are now a massive health problem and yet an accepted part of life.

We need to reject this philosophy. The built environment should be designed around humans; and vehicles should be designed to fit within it; rather than the built environment being changed to fit the vehicles. There is every reason to extend the scope of urban design to including not only the static parts of the built environment, but all the components necessary for successful, safe and happy urban life, including the design of vehicles. Kate Cairns and fellow campaigners have had some success with the introduction this autumn of a ban on lorries in London that lack additional mirrors and side-bars. But these measures are limited and the campaign will go on until streets are truly safe. It is a campaign in which we all could play a part. ●

Robert Huxford

DIARY OF EVENTS

Unless otherwise indicated, all LONDON events are held at The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ at 6.30 pm.

Note that there are many other events run by UDG volunteers throughout the UK. For the latest details and pricing, please check on the UDG website www.udg.org.uk/events/udg

WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER

Housing – an evening exploring the theme of edition of Urban Design 136 – a subject which in this year of mass population movement has great significance.

WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER

Special Event – please check website/Urban Update for details

WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER

2015 – the Year in Review – an evening of festive fun and rapid fire presentations – an opportunity for practices to tell us what they have been doing and what their

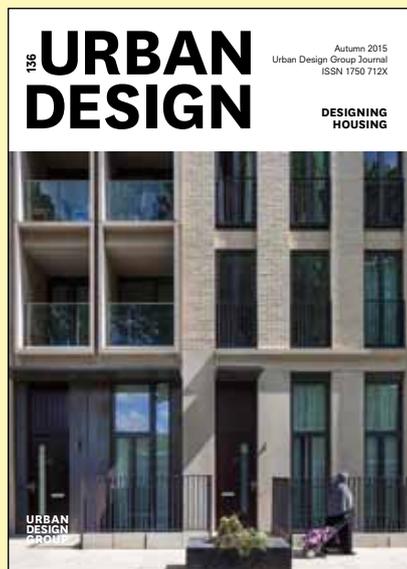
aspirations are for the design of towns and cities.

WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY

Film Night – Rooftop farming in New York, followed by a discussion on Urban Agriculture

WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY

Latin America – an evening exploring the theme of edition 137 of Urban Design



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Portobello Square, London by PRP
Architects. Photograph by Andy Spain.

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Grub Street, Joe Holyoak

Housing in all its forms

With the first of the shortlisted entries for the 2015 National Urban Design Awards featured in this issue, housing is a major focus this quarter. In four of the five shortlisted Practice entries (starting on p38), housing is the predominant design challenge – whether in major estate renewal plans, or reusing marginal coastal areas. The theme continues with a look at Jakarta’s shifting housing trends away from permeability to enclaves, and the social attitudes that this reflects.

Housing is explored in more detail in seven focused articles. These range from house builders’ understanding of urban design, how local authorities are managing housing quality, and comparisons between housing standards in the UK and Europe, to the changing nature of affordable housing, understanding what is meant by ‘work-live developments’, design processes for co-housing, and our assumptions about private open space.

This is no catalogue of plans and elevations, but an exploration of the different ways of designing housing, for different people or different stages of their lives. Housing continues to need urban designers, and the Urban Design Group offers a forum for sharing experience and knowledge.

As the report of the Urban Design Group’s Annual general meeting (p6) shows, while income from other sources may have increased last year, the number of members has stayed broadly the same. In the light of much-needed increases in membership rates, this is to be welcomed, but in the grand scheme of things, the Urban Design

Group and its members have as much work to do as ever. Urban design continues to be seen as an ‘extra’, to which some of the articles allude, and therefore this is a good time to join the UDG and take part in the many events that it hosts, and to convert colleagues. The annual conference in Bristol this year offers a great opportunity to renew networks and make new alliances.

In this issue, we are pleased to publish the winners of the Where do you read Urban Design? photo competition, which has generated much comment on the publicity for the competition itself! The winner, shown on p9 along with two commendable runners-up, is a great reminder of how far and wide the urban design network is. We will run the competition again this coming year, and photographs can be submitted at any time to the editors, with a winner to be announced in October next year.

Lastly, do remember to keep this issue to help with voting on the National Urban Design Awards in early 2016, and whether you are involved in one of the shortlisted projects or not, save the date of Wednesday 9 March 2016 to come to the evening ceremony itself. ●

Louise Thomas

HOW TO JOIN

To join the Urban Design Group, visit www.udg.org.uk and see the benefits of taking out an annual membership.

- Individual (UK and international)** £50
- UK student / concession** £30
- Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design** £80
- Small practice** (<5 professional staff) £250
- Large practice** (>5 professional staff) £450
- Education** £250
- Local Authority** £100
- UK Library** £80
- International Library** £100

Events at the Gallery

The following talks, seminars and debates have been organised by the UDG. Many of these events are recorded by UrbanNous and available to watch again on the UDG website, thanks to the generous support of Fergus Carnegie.



DEALING WITH DENSITY The Gallery, London, 11 May 2015 Speaker: Colin Wilson, Greater London Authority

Paul Reynolds opened the discussion with reflections on how to measure density. He referred to *Why density, debunking the myth of the cubic watermelon* produced by a+t research group. It proposes a catalogue of generic urban forms and analyses their ecological performance. Instead of using ratios of dwelling per hectare or plot ratios, it relates density to floor space, something that was not taken up in either the presentation by Colin Wilson on tall buildings and their role in the density debate, or in the later discussion.

Colin Wilson started and finished his talk with a picture of a street in South Ealing with terrace houses from Metroland development times, with parked cars on either side, leaving just one lane for traffic, albeit without any people on the pavements. This was in stark contrast to the schemes that the GLA welcomes. The examples shown were one in Old Street with two residential skyscrapers, two high density blocks of flats and some lower rise infills; the other, Convoys Wharf on the Thames in Lewisham, with skyscrapers to make up the density of closed medium-rise blocks. The argument

put forward was that although there was no lack of land, high land prices required such densities. Residential 42-storey tower blocks would form the new skyline of London clustered in new towns, such as Vauxhall, Battersea, along the South Bank, as well as in outer London. High density was aimed at accommodating the fast projected population increase within the Greater London area because, according to Wilson, people did not want to live outside London in places like Ebbsfleet. GLA surveys showed that people were content with this new urban fabric, apparently regardless of housing costs. Thus the approval of 280 of 650 planned skyscrapers was appropriate. The reality of active ground floor frontages was challenged in the later questions, but not the aim of reducing dwelling sizes especially in multi-occupation premises. It was hard to reconcile this vision with the aspiration to own a house with a garden in suburbia like South Ealing. ●

Judith Ryser, researcher, journalist, writer and urban affairs consultant to Fundacion Metropoli, Madrid



STREET NORTH WEST: FIRST STREET, MANCHESTER Walking Tour, 15 April 2015

This exclusive event looked behind the scenes at ASK Development's new £500 million scheme in Manchester which is to be a new gateway into the city centre and a high quality business and leisure destination, before it opened to the public. The completion of Number One First Street (180,000 sq ft of Grade A office space) in March 2009 and Vita (luxury student accommodation) in September 2014, began

to establish the area. The next phase of the First Street Masterplan (which opened in late May) includes the first Melia Hotel in the UK, HOME – the new centre for international contemporary art, theatre and film, a 700 space multi-storey car park, and various mixed-use commercial units, to create a vibrant balance between well-established national brands and local independents.

This STREET NW event started with a masterplan introduction and presentation by Jaimie Hollis (Development Manager, ASK Developments) and Neil Pickup (Project Director, ASK Developments) who explained

the aspirations, the journey through concept development and refinement, and the future vision of the masterplan. The presentation set the scene for the walking tour and the group visited each building to understand some of the design decisions and rationale behind their development and construction. The creation of new streets, public spaces and contemporary buildings within the development afforded some views of Manchester never before seen. A further highlight of the evening was the fantastic tour of HOME, the new location for the Cornerhouse and Library Theatre Company, led by Director and Chief Executive Dave Moutrey. A particular favourite of the group was the chance to tread the boards on the stage of the new 450-seat theatre, experiencing the theatre hall from a new perspective.

Overall it was a very successful event where people could have a look behind the scenes at one of Manchester's most exciting new addition. The masterplan has been drawn, the lights are on and the buildings are ready to open their doors; the challenge now is to establish First Street as a vibrant, genuine and contemporary new destination which blends cultural, artistic and business minds alike. Only time will tell, but it is an exciting prospect for the city. ●

Mark Foster and Rebecca Merridew, Convenors of STREET NW at Turley



STREET NORTH WEST: NOMA – HOW TO CREATE A SOCIALY SUSTAINABLE URBAN MASTERPLAN

29 April 2015

That was the question put to STREET NW as we hosted our third event in 2015. The question was posed by David Pringle, Director of NOMA 53rd and his development team, who are responsible for regenerating a 20 acre quarter of Manchester's urban land owned by The Co-operative Group and Hermes Real Estate. Creating a new piece of urban fabric, with a dynamic sense of place and

one which attracts and retains a diverse mix of people, is one of the greatest challenges when delivering a new city neighborhood to plug into the existing urban core.

In order to uncover some of the answers STREET NW collaborated with the NOMA 53 Development Team and project Architect (Jim Webster HAUS Architecture) in hosting a masterplan presentation and creative design workshop. Over 40 people attended, hoping to understand more about the masterplan proposals and to shape those proposals, thus helping to create a socially sustainable place both now and in the future.

Both speakers gave a fascinating insight to the masterplan story and design responses, detailing how the masterplan evolved from vision, to concept to a detailed masterplan. This set the scene for our workshop groups to begin to think about NOMA 53's future.

The workshop was split into three key themes; Work, Live and Play, challenging the groups to determine what key factors would make NOMA 53 a sustainable place to work, live and play in 30 years' time. The brief was to think big, bold and creatively. It was a complex and all-encompassing question to ask but the groups came up with a variety of interesting big ideas and concepts.

The next task is to understand these ideas and concepts. STREET NW will help NOMA 53 to determine which ideas and concepts could future-proof the masterplan, ensuring that it delivers a socially sustainable new urban quarter to Manchester. NOMA 53 hopes to use these ideas to help shape their masterplan review and with any luck we will see some of these ideas put into use. Watch this space! ●

Mark Foster and Rebecca Merridew



GARDEN CITIES

The Gallery, London, 10 June 2015

Speakers: Ben van Bruggen, Robert Cowan, Jim Coleman, Yolanda Barnes, Dominic Papa

Three speakers participated in this second event on Garden Cities, chaired by Ben van Bruggen and with witty interludes on Ebenezer Howard by Robert Cowan. Jim Coleman, head of economics at Buro Happold suggested that the business case for garden cities had to be made, as the economic benefits of creating a new settlement from scratch was not obvious. Many questions had to be answered to make this business case: what is the rationale for the project? Is it needed? What problem is it solving? How

much will it cost and will it benefit the public good or private purses? The UK's housing deficit is not in question but whether garden cities are the way to solve it is not obvious. Furthermore the definition of a garden city is far from universally shared, and proposals may become no more than large housing estates. Coleman ended by praising URBED's winning scheme for the Wolfson prize, because it was not a stand-alone settlement starting from scratch; he suggested that densifying existing cities with good infrastructure was another good option.

The second speaker, Yolanda Barnes, head of research at Savills talked about The importance of Product, Land and Money suggesting that we have been concentrating

too much on the first of these and ignored the latter two. Only by combining all three would we achieve good urbanism. But she started by suggesting that the basis of successful settlements was the street which has been the oldest way of organising urban areas. Her research had shown that sustainable urbanism, fine grain and mixed use, was supported by the public, whilst the out-of-town, car reliant model, was defunct. And yet, 'pavilions in the park' are still being built because of the short-term economic model being pursued and led by the wrong people. What we need is long-term land owners who are developers, managers and stewards.

Dominic Papa, architect from S333 Architecture and Urbanism spoke about the importance of character and differentiation, and showed a number of images of successful developments in various parts of the world. He suggested that diagrammatic representations of potential solutions were often not helpful.

The very well attended room was by now depleted as it was very late, but a good discussion still took place, with one member of the audience contending that Garden Cities were definitely not the solution to today's problems. ●

Sebastian Loew, architect and planner, writer and consultant



CITY AS MASTER DEVELOPER

The Gallery, London, 8 July 2015
Speakers: John Worthington, Peter Bishop, Dick Gleeson, Peter Studdert and Henk Bouwman

This joint Urban Design Group and the Academy of Urbanism event chaired by Steve Bee, attracted a good and vocal audience despite that evening's tube strike. John Worthington introduced the discussion asking 'With the city as master developer, is UK planning fit for purpose?' He revisited the functions of the city: traditionally securing defence, common land and sustenance; in the 19th century, providing infrastructure and services for its people assisted by philanthropy; turning to small scale integration of functions and forms in the 1930s; and,

becoming a key instrument of the welfare state after the Second World War. What is today's legacy in an adversarial state with a very centralised distribution of resources, keen to eliminate welfare dependency? Devolution taking place throughout the UK may alter that status of the city to affirm its dual function as town hall and civil society in charge of wealth creation and equitable redistribution, to become a master developer.

Peter Bishop formerly in charge of Design for London, Dick Gleeson, past city planner of Dublin, Peter Studdert formerly involved in Cambridge's strategic planning, and Henk Bouwman from the Netherlands, all had practical experience with cities as master developers. They emphasised the need to look beyond boundaries and foster wider benefits from development which

cannot progress well without continuously engaging civil society.

The discussion focused on the fitness of local politicians rather than planning or planners, regretting that planning was confined to regulation instead of producing visions. The disengagement of citizens from master development was confined to NIMBYism without making the connection with alternative expectations and different visions from either the politicians or the professionals. Freiburg and other continental examples were evoked as models of engagement between cities and citizens, where cities traditionally had greater powers and autonomy. However planners and urban designers have to work within the existing institutional landscape, and little was said about how they could introduce change within their area of competence. The usual effectiveness objectives were evoked, besides the need for delivery. The power house to be vested in Manchester was attributed to its concrete proposals, as opposed to London's expectation of entitlement. It is hard to imagine that larger entities will be able to deliver solutions closer to the citizens who were not expected to be capable of vision. Considering that planning in local authorities has to be self-financing, it is hard to envisage how the development lobby will share urban change with professional planning ethics, let alone the wishes of civil society. ●

Judith Ryser

Call For Feedback: Handbook For Cycle Friendly Design

Sustrans, Bristol 2014

This *Handbook* provides a concise illustrated compendium of technical guidance on how the built environment generally, and roads specifically, can be made safe, convenient and pleasant for cycle use by people of all ages and abilities. At 36 pages it is packed with easy-to-read drawings and photographs of examples from the UK; it can stand-alone as a tool box of ideas but also links to a library of supporting online resources. It is very visual but contains the essential technical details.

Many of the innovative examples contained within it have involved bold decisions by the local highway authority, who are at the front line of scheme delivery. Future editions will build on this with fresh examples of innovative and experimental schemes implemented in the UK.

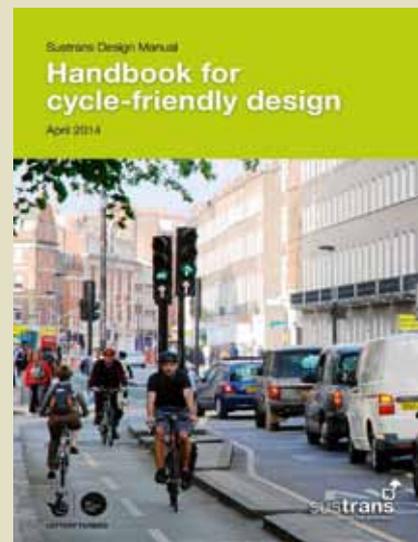
The *Handbook* has been endorsed by several professional bodies and is available free in printed format, as it is intended for

widespread use as a readily available digest of the key elements of design guidance, which can be used on-site by planners, designers and community groups.

It is backed up by 16 much more detailed chapters, available to download from Sustrans' website. The structure of the *Handbook* broadly follows the following sequence:

- a summary of the key principles and processes for a user-focused design
- wider considerations of urban design and other measures to improve the general highway design for cyclists and pedestrians
- on-carriageway provision for cyclists on links and junctions
- cycle provision off the carriageway, whether cycle tracks alongside the road or traffic free routes away from the road, including crossings
- routes in rural areas
- associated design issues including cycle parking, signing, integration with public transport and the design of new developments, and
- the maintenance and management of routes

This is an evolving document and Sustrans welcomes feedback on how it might be improved. It will be reviewed and updated



later in 2015, taking account of comments received and to include more recent innovative infrastructure solutions. The guidance is also underpinned by a programme of accredited technical design training courses for transport professionals run by Sustrans. To request copies or provide feedback, please contact designandconstruction@sustrans.org.uk ●

Tony Russell, NCN Director, Sustrans

Urban Design Group's Annual General Meeting

The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London, 10 June 2015

Katy Neaves continuing in the role of Chair of the UDG, highlighted the following points in the Annual Report to 28 February 2015.

MEMBERSHIP

This year saw the implementation of an increase in membership subscription rates, the first increase in 10 years. It was pleasing to see that this had no effect on membership numbers. December 2015 saw the introduction of an integrated membership and accounts system implemented through considerable voluntary work.

URBAN DESIGN JOURNAL

Urban Design has seen a number of very high quality contributions this year, and welcomed Daniela Lucchese to its Editorial Board. Members are encouraged to contact the editors with topics that they would like to cover in future issues.

URBAN DESIGN DIRECTORY 2015-17

The new *Urban Design Directory* produced by Louise Thomas and Claudia Schenk was launched at the National Urban Design Awards in March 2015 alongside a new interactive website by Ed Povey of BrightPie at www.urbandesigndirectory.com. It has been widely circulated to developers, house builders and local authorities, and continues to attract attention.

NATIONAL URBAN DESIGN AWARDS

Led by Awards Chair Noha Nasser, this year's awards event at the Victory Services Club in March was full to capacity in its new format. Generously sponsored by Routledge, Urban Initiatives Studio (2014 Practice Award Winner), and Bespoke, the Francis Tibbalds Trust gave prizes to:

- Practice Award Winner: URBED
- Public Sector Award Winner: Birmingham
- Municipal Housing Trust, Birmingham City Council
- Developer Award Winner: Barratt Homes Southern Region
- Student Award Winner: Clara Kohler, Cardiff University
- Book Award Winner: Smart Cities: Big Data, Civic Hackers, and the Quest for a New Utopia, Anthony M. Townsend, W. W. Norton & Company

The Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Sir Terry Farrell.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON URBAN DESIGN 2014

Held at Nottingham Trent University, with a comprehensive programme devised by Laura Alvarez and Stefan Kruczkowski, the conference featured technical visits, and 23 speakers in triple parallel sessions. The annual dinner was held at City Hall, with music provided by an Argentinian Tango orchestra, and Ben Hamilton-Baillie gave a recitation of the Argentinian Tango song *El Cordon* – The Kerb, with a translation commissioned specially for the conference. The table design competition was judged by Sir Terry Farrell, and the diners were addressed by Graham Allen, MP for North Nottingham. The UDG is hugely grateful to Laura and Stefan for their efforts and inspiration in creating a remarkable three days.

LONDON EVENTS

The UDG has continued to develop and expand its ambitious programme, which now includes around 20 events per year at Cowcross Street alone. Led by Paul Reynolds the 2014-15 programme included presentations, a film night and walks.

URBANOUS – VIDEO ON DEMAND

Thanks are due to Fergus Carnegie who continues his largely voluntary work making the UDG's monthly events at Cowcross Street available to a global audience through the Urbannous website. This is a great resource and tremendously valuable archive of the huge number of presentations given at the UDG in recent years, and now greatly enhanced by a subject index.

UDG REGIONS

Colin Munsie continued as UDG Vice-Chair for the regions, working to strengthen the Group's links throughout the UK and beyond, with these highlights:

- **East Midlands** – activity has radically increased in the past two years, particularly following this year's conference. We have had strong involvement in consulting regeneration strategies, both within Nottingham city centre and its outskirts, especially the deprived areas south and north of the city. These ventures have involved community engagement and working with local universities over a series of projects, seminars and through expert advisory groups including the smart-phone Placecheck.
- **South (Solent)** – this group has continued its regular meetings in Southampton, co-ordinated by Peter Frankum of Savills, drawing together public and private sector representatives from across the Solent area, including the high profile Solent Design Awards and a training scheme for councillors and allied professions led by Liz Kessler, John Hearn, Richard Eastham and Mark Waller-Gutierrez in Winchester and Eastleigh.

URBAN DESIGN STUDY TOURS

This year's study tours have been to Toulouse and the Bastides of Gascony led by Alan Stones, and Hamburg including Hafens City & IBA led by Sebastian Loew.

POLICY AND CAMPAIGNS

Key UDG members have worked on a series of initiatives including:

- The Farrell Review of Architecture and the Built Environment
- Designing the Underworld – Robert Huxford
- Industrious Cities – Jeremy Hernalesteen
- Urban Form – Roger Evans
- Health and Physical Activity – Barry Sellers, including an event at the Gallery in April 2015.

URBAN DESIGN WEEK

Urban Design Week in 2014 was very low key due to the difficulty of attracting sponsorship.

URBAN UPDATE

The UDG's email newsletter continues to be a valuable resource for urban designers and is received by around 2,000 individuals. In 2015 steps were taken to maintain a weekly service.

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2014-5

	Totals
INCOMING RESOURCES	
Subscriptions	£114,461
Publications and Awards	£6,099
Conference Fees & Sponsorship	£14,246
Donation from Urban Design Services Ltd	£13,963
Activities to Generate Funds	–
Interest Received	£373
Inland Revenue: Gift Aid	£4,216
Miscellaneous Income	£458
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	£153,816
RESOURCES EXPENDED	
Charitable Expenditure	–
Publications & Awards	£24,110
General	£65,538
Conference Expenditure	£16,201
Governance costs (accountancy)	£1,200
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	£107,049
NET (EXPENDITURE)/	
INCOME FOR THE YEAR	£46,767
FUND BALANCES	
BROUGHT FORWARD	£93,967
FUND BALANCES	
CARRIED FORWARD	£140,734
CURRENT ASSETS	£188,004
CURRENT LIABILITIES	£47,271
TOTAL NET ASSETS	£ 140,734



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Toulouse and the Bastides of Gascony

Study Tour, 6–14 June 2015

Twenty-five UDG members and friends set off by Eurostar from St. Pancras station in early June to spend a week getting to know the city of Toulouse and then explore the nearby bastides of Gascony. This was to be a sequel to a UDG tour of bastides in the Dordogne and the Lot thirty years ago.

Toulouse is one of the most vibrant cities in France. In the 13th century the glittering Courts of Toulouse rivalled that of the Kings of France. In the 15th century the city grew rich from the woad-dye trade, and many merchants built elegant town houses in pink brick with stone embellishments, which give the historic town its distinctive character. These merchants were the *capitouls* or oligarchs who made up the independent city council which sat in the Capitole, the seat of government established in the 12th century, which is today disguised behind an impressive 18th century facade. The city also benefitted from the pilgrimage to Compostela by acquiring the magnificent basilica of St Sernin, the largest Romanesque church in France.

Today Toulouse owes its prosperity to the aerospace and high-tech industries, and has expanded considerably beyond its original historic core. Toulouse-Métropole, the association of Greater-Toulouse local authorities, gave us a presentation of their current *grands projets*. These included reshaping of the public realm within the historic centre under the direction of Catalan architect Joan Busquets, the creation of a sub-regional park along the Garonne river designed by landscape architect Henri Bava, the re-planning of the area around the main railway station to form a multi-modal, mixed-use hub, the development of a new aerospace research and education quarter, and the establishment of Oncopole, a

cancer research and treatment campus in the southern suburbs. They are also contemplating adding a third metro line to their existing network and extending the existing tram line.

After this demonstration of big-city ambition, we appreciated the contrast of the small-scale bastides. Bastides are planned towns of the 13th century, most of which never reached any great size. They are the result of an unparalleled wave of town-building in South West France – 315 foundations have been counted. Their purpose was largely economic: an attempt by rival lords to stake out their territory and control its production. Often their foundation was embodied in a contract between the local landowner and the promoter or founder which determined the layout of the town, responsibilities and financial costs and benefits to the parties.

The planned origin of the bastides is evident from their grid layout. Generally a market square is located in the centre, created by the omission of one street block. Often this square is bordered by arcades under the frontage buildings. Frequently there is an impressive-sized church dating from the original foundation of the town, testifying to the scale of ambition of the founders, and located two blocks away from the market square. In some cases, such as Grenade, Cologne, Mauvezin, Barran and Bassoues, the original market halls survive. They have elaborate timber-framed roofs, and were originally intended to incorporate a small upper storey to house the town council.

Some bastides retain remnants of fortifications, though the most impressive fortifications we saw belonged to *castelnaux* or small settlements centred around castles, most of which have not survived. Montesquiou, Tillac, Larressingle and Fourcès were the best and most attractive examples we saw, though Fourcès is classed as an unusual round bastide.

A distinctive feature of bastides is the *cornière* or market square arcade which continues the line of the street which enters the square. The needs of traffic resulted in

most of these enclosed corners to squares being opened up, though we saw a surviving example at Montréal. Elsewhere the characteristic jutting forward of the end of an arcaded building signals the entry to the square. Very often one or more sides of the square have lost their arcades altogether, and, in the worst case, Beaumarchès, a 19th century *Mairie* occupies most of what was the market square.

The bastides we saw in Gascony are low-key, attractive small towns in a pleasant rolling landscape. They are not as impressive as some of the more spectacular examples further north, such as Monpazier, Villefranche de Rouergue or Montauban, but they raise the intriguing question of whether they could be a more suitable model for urban expansion in the South East of England than the garden city.

We concluded our tour with a look at two medium-sized towns, Auch and Agen. Auch is perched on a hill above the River Gers. It has a medieval core and precipitous stairways descending to the river. Its cathedral has unique Renaissance stained glass and choir stalls. Agen's medieval core is harder to find, as it was bisected in the 19th century by Haussmann boulevards. Toulouse suffered the same fate, but its historic centre is more extensive and the damage correspondingly less severe. ●

Alan Stones, architect-planner, urban design consultant and former Head of Design at Essex County Council

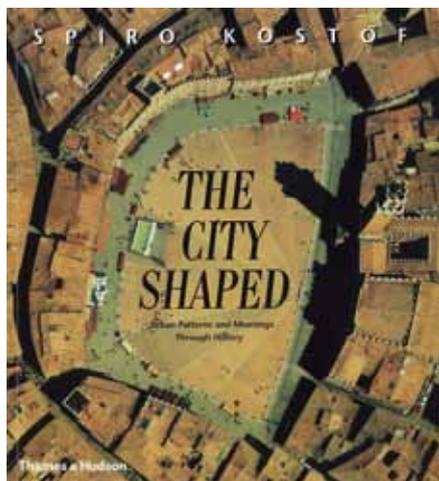
- 1 Arcaded square, Valence sur Baise
- 2 Fourcès, a round bastide
- 3 Toulouse, the ville rose



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The Urban Design Library #15

The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History, Spiro Kostof, (Thames & Hudson 1991)

Until Spiro Kostof came along, architectural history had been a stodgy, chronological ode to architects and their grand plans for cities. Enter stage left Spiro Kostof, a man of the people with a very different approach.

Spiro Kostof was a unique and dedicated historian. He single-handedly changed the approach to architectural history. He was dedicated to revealing the true history of each nuance in the character of cities. In *The City Shaped* he skilfully lays bare our tendencies to draw assumptions from superficial analysis, and provides us instead with a rich encyclopaedia of how places were really made.

Kostof was born in Istanbul and moved to the USA to study at Yale in the 1950s. He had started out studying drama before being attracted to architectural history. Those that studied under him at Berkeley, where he spent most of his career as a professor, recount his engaging and lively manner in delivering lectures – an energy which translates into his writing.

The social movements of the 1960s had a profound impact on him. He argued that design and architecture could not be divorced from their social and cultural context, and in doing so he laid much of the ground work for the contextualism movement. He wrote prolifically and even authored and presented a television series: *America by Design*.

The City Shaped, together with *The City Assembled* its companion text, is an epic study of how the world's cities have been made. It is comprehensive in its coverage, but written in such an engaging and often playful manner that it draws you in, so you feel part of the archaeological investigation. Shortly after drafting *The City Shaped*, and part way through compiling *The City*

Assembled, Kostof was diagnosed with cancer. He dedicated the final months of his life to completing the study, and both volumes were published shortly after his death. It is a real life's work.

Kostof has a fantastic way with words. He covers enormous ground, taking in a plethora of examples. He never dwells on an example for more words than are needed, with many simply afforded a single incisive sentence. *The City Shaped* is not a guide, more a thorough review of the history, purpose and drivers of the design features that we as urban designers employ every day. And for that reason it is a sobering, but simultaneously motivating read.

The illustrations throughout the book are an important part of its magic. Each turn of the page reveals another great plan – the original city plan for Philadelphia, a wood-engraving of the 'Haussmannisation' of Paris, or the cadastral plan of Florence from 1427. But the stars of the show are the drawings of Richard Tobias which permeate through every section, illustrating the nuances of Kostof's arguments. These simple greyscale drawings are highly effective and the common hand draws the book together.

The book is divided into five sections. The first section titled Organic Patterns charts the ways in which cities have come about and grown. He mocks the notion that cities are either planned or organic, illustrating the reality that the two co-exist in most global cities and that the starting point behind many planned urban forms was entirely organic and vice-versa: 'The informal is not by accident or completely random in the same way that the formal is not strict to rules or not responsive to context'. Tobias's drawings artfully illustrate Kostof's point – showing how a supposedly random tangle of streets in an Islamic City can grow out of a highly ordered Roman grid. The city of Herat in Afghanistan is used as an example to show the inherent co-existence of planned and organic – where a near perfect square sets off a supergrid structure within which a 'lively jumble of street elements prevail'. He sees every design feature and approach as part of the process, and is emphatic that we should not consider any past intervention as wrong, just as a product of the process and crucially the social and cultural context within which it came about. He reserves his criticism for the contemporary planners, urban designers and architects who base their designs on false assumptions drawn from superficial historical analysis.

The second section focuses exclusively on the grid. It is a rightly weighty section for a feature we employ on a daily basis. Kostof's historical review emphasises how the grid has been used across very different cultures and for very different reasons. Examples such as a rubbing of the city plan for the Chinese city of Suzhou in 1229 illustrate how a grid can be supple and used to create real beauty on the ground. As Kostof concludes 'the virtue of the grid is precisely

in being a conceptual formal order, non-hierarchical, neutral, until it is infused with specific content...the grid is what you make it'.

Kostof devotes the third section to *The City as Diagram*. He gives significant air time to Garden City theory here, and is less critical of Ebenezer Howard than of many the other city planners he includes as examples. Overall he concludes that 'all ideal city forms are a little dehumanizing... the city in diagram, in the end, is the story of dreamers who want the complexity and richness of the urban structure without the problems, tensions and volatility'.

The penultimate chapter considers The Grand Manner. Kostof majors on capital cities, and Washington unsurprisingly. Some fantastic images and plans illustrate the scale of ambition, both delivered and left on the drawing board.

Kostof's final section focuses on the urban skyline. It is here that he argues for a much stronger voice for communities in the aesthetic vision of their cities. For Kostof, the elements which puncture the skyline should reflect a city's governance – its political and social priorities – as has been true throughout history. I wonder what he would make of London's skyline today...

One of Kostof's recurring and strong messages throughout *The City Shaped* is that we must guard against concluding too quickly on context. Under pressure to find the urban design solution, we can jump to conclusions and grab hold of an idea without truly understanding from what it became. Kostof calls us to enter into the spirit of our city, to understand its historical essence and its continuing life. For anyone struggling with motivation in the day job, *The City Shaped* is a great reminder of why we got into design in the first place. ●

Jane Manning, Associate, Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners

READ ON

The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form Through History, Spiro Kostof (Thames & Hudson, 1992)

Spiro Kostof's last series of lectures at the University of Berkeley: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/kostof.html>

Photograph Competition: Where do you read Urban Design?

WINNER



'Catching up on the magazine between snorkelling and sailing...'

Juris Greste in the Whitsunday Islands, North Queensland, Australia, August 2015



Prompted by this picture (above) taken in Jalisco, Mexico earlier this year, we invited readers to show us where they read Urban Design magazine, and we are delighted to reveal the winning entry and two excellent runners-up. Winning a year's free membership of the Urban Design Group, and of course with it the magazine, is Juris Greste.

The two runners-up, who will be invited to review a book for the journal are Lucy Natarajan in sitting on the steps of the Teatro Greco in Taormina, Sicily, July 2015:

'It was re-built in the days of prosperity under the Roman Empire, and has been converted now for rock and classical music concerts. In the background behind the ruins of the theatre you can see the beautiful town of Taormina nestled in the coastal ridge, which has inspired writers and artists for centuries including JW Goethe and Guy de Maupassant, while my friend who took the photograph is climbing to the top of the theatre in the searing summer sun!'

And Valentina Giordano...



'I'm sitting on the steps of the Teatro Greco, the ancient theatre founded by the Greeks in the middle of the 3rd century BC. ...'

Lucy Natarajan in Taormina, Sicily, July 2015

'Standing in front of the truly amazing UK Pavilion.'

Valentina Giordano at the EXPO Milan 2015



Is Social Behaviour Reflected in Residential Masterplanning?

Cindy Carmelia examines Jakarta's changing housing forms



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'There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the challenges facing our cities or to the housing crisis, but the two issues needs to be considered together...'

Sir Richard Rogers, *Evening Standard*, 18 February 2013

In the past, housing was used as shelter from weather and wild animals, but over time the definition of a house has changed from a functional matter to a measure of social status. There is no doubt that housing is one of the basic necessities in human life. Housing development typically covers more than 60 per cent of land in many cities, and therefore its design has an impact on the identity of the city itself. Stakeholders such as developers and town planners have tried to improve the design of housing to suit the needs of its citizens or customers.

A good city is the result of good site planning from each individual land parcel upwards. Quoting Kevin Lynch's statement 'Site planning is the art of arranging the external environment to support human behavior', human behaviour and the environment clearly influence each another as part of the city's creation. Since housing is an essential part of human lives, the way that housing development is designed will influence city development. Residential areas are the easiest way to uncover the local culture of a city. Local trends and design are often a translation of the needs, behaviour and pride of inhabitants. The question discussed here is: can social behaviour change the way that residential masterplans are designed? Or is there any relationship between the design of housing and social behaviour in big cities?

BIG CITY, BIG CHANGES

Big cities in Japan, China, Indonesia and India have always been known for their large populations. Indonesia for example, is an archipelago country with a massive population of over 237 million people. Development and particularly housing development in its large cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung and Medan has been booming for the past few years.

In 2014 Indonesia's capital city Jakarta had over 10 million inhabitants (not including Greater Jakarta-Sumber), and was ranked as the second most populated city in the world; Jakarta is therefore complex and fast paced in its urban development.

Historically, land in inner Jakarta was plentiful and housing development was mainly low rise and low density, such as bungalows

and terraced houses. Jakarta, with its rapid population growth at 3.8 per cent per year, sees demand for more housing; land has become scarce, and therefore new housing development has been pushed further out to Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek area). The city can learn a lot about the evolution of residential urban development by looking at inner Jakarta's housing in comparison to the Greater Jakarta area's new residential masterplans.

EVOLVING HOUSING MASTERPLANS

In the 1980s when land was still plentiful, housing estates tended to have permeable streets connected to arterial roads. These estates had larger backyards, more open spaces and neighbours were more than welcome to visit each other's houses, and allowed their kids to play outside their homes. There was more socialising and the housing estates were very much non-gated communities. Not everything was planned from the start but these communities flourished and developed over time. The prototype is generally low-rise, low-density, in sizes varying from low to high income class standards. In premium estates, there are security gates at the housing development's entrance, to filter visitors and the public. The security gates serve a functional role, rather than being an aspirational statement about the estate. There are also 'eyes on the street' to increase security inside the housing estate itself.

Since 2000, social behaviour has changed from an open society towards a more individualistic culture. This is not entirely due to economic reasons, but to technology and social media, which reduces social engagement between people, especially between neighbours in the same housing estate. Fewer children are allowed to play outside their homes and more security gates and fences have been installed. Communities have evolved into 'planned communities' where 'eyes on the street' have been replaced by CCTV. New residential masterplans have changed from non-gated communities with permeable streets, into gated communities with cul-de-sacs and walled off boundaries.

Apart from external environmental and social behaviour factors, the key stakeholders such as developers and town planners have also contributed to the evolution of these housing developments. Sinarto Dharmawan, Chief Operating Officer of developer Intiland Grande has described the main reason for choosing to create a gated community as the building of a secure environment. He has also emphasised that today's customers prefer to have their property secured and

- 1 An older landed housing estate entrance with more security
- 2 A lavish entrance to a newer housing estate
- 3 Graha Natura – the entrance and security arrangements
- 4 Masterplan of the Graha Natura development



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well demarcated, to separate their house from public intrusion. This is a result of crime rates that have spiked from the late 1990s onwards; people have become more suspicious of one another and this is reflected in social life and translated into residential environments.

Moreover, in the 1980s, a secured walled-off boundary was less preferable: most of housing estates of the time had a 'blurred' boundary with their neighbouring estate. Many people enjoyed the permeable roads and often saw it as an advantage allowing them to pass through easily – usually as the fastest way to get home. In the 2000s, a secured walled-off neighbourhood is seen as highly preferable and people who own properties from the 1980s have now adopted a new system called a 'portal' gate. The portal gate is a hard fence or gate created for extra security to restrict people from accessing the residential roads too readily. The open permeable roads have become the private property of each specific housing estate. This will eventually inconvenience the visitor and inhabitants, as their way-finding includes detours around the areas.

Social evolution has definitely brought a new flavour to urban life. Living within boundaries has become part of urban lifestyles and connectivity has diminished. The street pattern of the new residential estates has become more uniform with a large grid-like pattern, whereas in the 1980s housing areas, there was a mixture of organic and grid patterns. Today's housing estates have less open space compared to the old housing estates, as social activity outside homes has become less desirable.

Yet the housing market now includes more variety of housing types; from low rise, low density housing to apartments. The masterplans of mixed-use development has also become a design trend in the market.

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE JAKARTA'S CITY DEVELOPMENT

As the design of low density housing estates that dominated 1980s development in Jakarta is no longer regarded as the best model, the trend for gated communities is now the preferred option when people choose their homes. For urban design, this has defined a lifestyle of exclusivity: people have less interaction with their neighbours and with the high value of land, open spaces within the housing estate have become small or sometimes, non-existent. Housing masterplans often have a universal streetscape and pattern, making the identity of the place only a part of developer's marketing strategy,



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rather than a natural process of building identity. Our social culture of kinship has slowly diminished as reflected in the way that the residential estate is being designed.

In the end, whether it is a gated or non-gated community, the idea of socialising between neighbours is something that is positive and needs to be preserved. Social space as well as open space in a residential neighbourhood should be lively and well designed to encourage residents to use it. Attempts to promote this will help to engage society to seek more interaction with others. Developers and urban designers therefore need to raise the bar in designing new master planning concepts. As social behaviour and residential development work together as part of the urban development process, Jakarta still has plenty of room to expand its city design. ●

Cindy Carmelia, Principal, Studio Rancang Ruang, Jakarta, Indonesia



Designing Housing

Quality, quantity and diversity

As many of the contributors to this issue say, providing enough homes for the population, here in the UK and abroad, continues to be one of the main planning and development challenges of the 21st century. In 2007 the then Labour government set a target for 240,000 homes to be built per year here in the UK by 2016 to meet housing demand. For many years after World War Two, more than 300,000 new homes were built per year, and yet recently the annual rate has been closer to 141,000 homes – around half of that target.

In looking at the topic of designing housing, the articles that follow are set within the context of post-recession UK housing provision and not in pursuit of greater housing numbers, but quality; and intentionally do not look into London's high density housing debate, as reported earlier (p3). Just as the recession changed developers' focus from urban renaissance-led high density apartment developments in every town and city, to more family housing in less central locations, so too has it effected the need to add value through design quality, in order to compete in a slower market.

The UDG research project on housebuilders' understanding of urban design (p 14) shows that while there is no simple calculation to value good urban design, it does help developments to sell faster and for a higher value. This realisation has brought about a greater willingness amongst developers to rethink standardisation and minima in housing design, in order to compete on quality instead. We know however that in many areas of Britain that 'adding value' is a luxury that not all can afford: 'value' can mean either better quality, or simply getting more room for your money...

As urban designers we see different forms of housing as generating a presence of people in an area and adding richness, and recognise the variety of people, activities and spaces that it can bring. Similarly the concept of live-work has grown considerably with access to high speed internet services in the remotest locations, and yet how much of this fine-grained mixed use do we understand – is it as mixed and vibrant as we envisage, and how can we make it more vital, viable and diversified?

Just as the Government has published new but optional minimum housing standards, it is useful to compare these with how other countries set their housing standards, and whether we are significantly under-providing our housing. This goes hand-in-hand with our perceptions of private garden space and whether having a garden is a universal aspiration and for what kind of activities. Rethinking what we need (and want) at different stages of life is part of designing cities, towns, suburbs and villages, which urban design can do more to support.

Given that by 2025 forecasts suggest that more than half of those under 40 will be living in properties owned by private landlords, and more young people under 30 are now living at home than ever before, finding new ways of releasing and redesigning existing homes and residential areas is a key urban design role. Co-housing seems to offer a win-win solution to many of life's complications, and yet why is it still such a small proportion of new housing provision? More financially secure baby-boomers could lead the way in creating examples to learn from, acting as clients, co-designers and occupiers. The conventional deliverability models for house building were said to be 'broken' in the weeks and months after the credit-crunch, and

so perhaps it will take some time before alternative funding and development approaches become more conventional.

In this issue, we therefore explore approaches to housing which are standardised, non-standard but becoming established, or alternative in their processes and outcomes. The emphasis is not on cataloguing case studies and housing layouts, as there are many exemplars already published, but on looking across the range of providers and the resultant complexity – and inherent richness – that urban designing housing now involves.

First is an overview of the latest UDG funded research project seeking to understand the value of urban design to house builders, undertaken by Richard Hayward, Ivor Samuels and myself. This aimed to identify the nature of the gap between national house builders and urban design, and found that urban design itself was almost the weakest point of connection, by being both universally important and yet unmeasurable. In a similar context, Amy Burbidge describes how four North Northamptonshire councils established processes to control development quality and considers how that is working. Paul Sallin reflects on how local authorities can work with developers to achieve better housing quality. Malcolm Morgan compares existing and new housing standards in the UK, Europe and beyond with interesting results; while Tim Pharoah explores private open space, and whether our assumptions about how much, where and for what purpose it is provided, should be updated to reflect contemporary lifestyles.

Having studied the evolution of a co-housing scheme in London over several years, Melissa Fernandez Arrigoitia and Kathleen Scanlon look at the ways in which this alternative approach works here and in Europe. Stephen Hill reports on an action research project which is seeking input to support greater learning about co-housing older people. Jonathan Tarbatt examines live-work developments and finds 'work-live' to be a more apt if sophisticated objective. Finally Andy von Bradsky reviews the challenges of affordable housing provision – its delivery, funding, and variety of typologies – and returns to the new housing standards which urban designers will need to embrace.

In many ways the future of housing design seems to be complicated with detailed issues that will matter more and more. But this should regenerate the richness once found in towns, cities, suburbs and villages alike, and will allow the ubiquitous semi-detached house to be more appreciated, or reinvented to reflect society's changing needs. ●

Louise Thomas

Leeds, the LILAC
co-housing community
and its pond



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Urban Designing Housing

Ivor Samuels, Louise Thomas and Richard Hayward recently completed their UDG research project: *Understanding the Value of Urban Design to House Builders*; Richard Hayward reports for the team on the findings of this project

There has long been a rich and varied popular and professional mythology relating to volume house builders maintained in the media, often with obsessions, amongst others, about land-banks, the desecration of the countryside, and ‘Noddy houses’ generating excessive profits. The professions related to design, development and construction, maintain their own rather more extensive range of often blanket criticisms, including a lack of appreciation and use of good modern architecture and advanced construction, and yes, not much understanding of urban design, whatever that is.

‘What is urban design?’ could be regarded as a worrying question of definition and communication, as highlighted by this study. But before we discuss the questions and challenges arising from this modest piece of work, we should consider how this small research team presented the proposal to UDG and carried out the enquiry with a small sample of house builders.

TALKING TO HOUSE BUILDERS

Key to our approach was to try to hear from house builders themselves about the way that they manage the production of housing. Essentially, we used a series of loosely structured interviews with key staff in each of six companies. These interviews were loose because we wanted to learn about their ways of working, and their view about the context in which they work. They were structured as we wanted to ensure that we had a core spine of answers and opinions to use comparatively, as appropriate.

Our discussion prompts began with the processes employed within the company, to identify the ways that they considered, directed and managed design within their organisational context, but also to identify the pattern and *loci* of design interventions and key decision-making.

The structured interview pro-forma was organized around four broad open-ended areas of inquiry, and all answers were treated as anonymous from the outset:

- The way you do things (from conception to completion);
- The way you use others to help you;

1 Birmingham, Park Central, a development by Crest Nicholson in partnership with Optima Housing Association and Birmingham City Council of apartments and houses, including some rehabilitated units, surrounding an eight acre park.

- Specifically urban design; and
- Inspirations and achievements.

The essentials we were looking for could be characterised as Kipling’s six good men(sic) and true: What? Why? How? Who? When? Where?

The entire pro-forma can be found in the appendices of the report on the UDG website. Whilst the discussions generally set out with more of a focus on process than product, we hope that the key outcomes will help us to understand each other better across the range of identified dualities or divides –the public/private; design/construction; developer/controller; and practitioner/academic.

URBAN DESIGN IN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Thus, based on discussions with developers, we believe that we have a broad overview of the key ways in which house builders manage product quality:

- how urban design principles and approaches explicitly or implicitly influence thinking and decision-making;
- where that knowledge is held in the organisation (corporate direction, individual passions or external advisers);
- what factors the design teams who prepare proposals for planning approval and construction, regard as key influences
- positive and negative – on their ability to achieve appropriate results, on budget and on time;



2 High Wycombe, Cometa by Aston Homes, an apartment block in an otherwise nondescript suburban street.

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- how design quality is assessed by the developer, by the local authority or not at all; and
- how and where new urban design knowledge and skills should be introduced.

DIFFERENT VIEWS

The study process involved returning individual accounts of interviews to the six main respondents for factual checks. From a review of the views gathered, we then drew up a list of points of significant agreement or disagreement, but also included some where respondents' views were 'scattered', and some that were extreme outliers in terms of practice or opinion.

This list was tabulated under four broad headings:

1. Planning and Highways;
2. Communities, Design and Briefing;
3. Industry Standards and Supporting the Industry;
4. Customer Feedback and The Value of Urban Design.

Within these headings there were 50 key statements. This tabulation was used as the basis of a Delphi exercise to test the views of our core sample anonymously against a similar sample of (again anonymous) house builders, who agreed to respond at least by indicating: 'agree strongly/agree/not sure/disagree/strongly disagree' for all statements or sub-statements, but also with an opportunity to add further opinions.

Delphi exercises are useful primarily where a critical review of anonymous responses from one expert group is presented to another (also anonymous) expert group, which should elicit frank peer-group feedback. Whilst house builders enjoy a wide-ranging social and professional exchange network and can usually detect the authors of anonymously stated views, the Delphi tabulation of multiple-authored propositions reduced the opportunity for much second-guessing that could skew responses.

In this process, eight new respondents gave their views, and we also encouraged the original six respondents to confirm (or otherwise) their original views through the Delphi exercise.

KEY FINDINGS

We believe that the detail arising from both the primary sample responses and the Delphi exercise warrant detailed reading. There are significant areas of agreement, particularly the problems arising from a range of issues related to planning and highways, but very divided views on the nature and use of design codes. Opinions are divided on the value of *Building for Life* and *BfL12*, with a feeling by our research team that despite these differences there is an appetite for a new industry standard. Early community consultation seems to be now regarded as vital by



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3 Developers asked about inspirational schemes from the past cited the Garden Cities and Garden Suburbs of the early 20th century. A close in Hampstead Garden Suburb makes reference to the non adopted spaces of many contemporary schemes.

some house builders, where once it was avoided by most.

This small pilot study led us to conclude that there are indeed issues to consider through targeted research related to the shape of the UK house building sector compared to other European practices, in terms of design, space standards and overall building performance. This research would also need to adopt an approach of tracking the key organisational frameworks for the production of housing elsewhere. A surprising number of major UK house builders agreed that government needs to provide more assistance to keep small house builders as a healthy part of the sector; this obviously raises issues regarding the domination by the large players of the land market here compared with much of the rest of Europe.

We were surprised by the apparent relatively narrow focus on supporting urban design guidance and frames of reference. It was clear from most respondents that customer feedback on urban design quality was difficult in terms of definition and therefore negligible, and thus whilst they mostly regarded urban design as important, they could not, on



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the whole, correlate this importance to any added value. This brings us back to ‘whatever is urban design’.

The ways in which large developers manage product and urban design varies tremendously. Many of the largest have a central design or urban design capacity that informs – often via the company intranet – regional teams. Some have a specific urban design capacity in-house, within each region or even sub-regional offices. Some use regional offices with relative autonomy over decision-making from start to finish, although most schemes in larger developers are signed off by regional directors in association with company HQ. Two quite different large developers maintain a close central role in terms of all decisions regarding the location, management and quality realisation of their product. Most employ some in-house staff with design and urban design expertise, but may bring in private consultants for special or difficult sites. One large developer will generally use a centrally based specialist urban design team in the latter situations, although their contribution is costed as a consultancy input. However, another large company uses consultants for all architecture and urban design, and aims to develop longer-term contractual relationships with the best.

FUTURE UDG ACTIONS?

This leads us to believe that UDG has an opportunity to establish how its members can generate an approach to urban design priorities specifically for volume house building. However, from the house builder views and the state of local planning authorities in England and Wales, it is clear that the UDG will need to encourage wider membership from public sector planning bodies, especially development control, but also highways.

There is no doubt that in the world we now work in, there is more pressure than ever to control processes and products as efficiently as possible. Whilst national volume house builders have often adopted special approaches to prime or difficult locations, it is clear that most of those who took part in this study still use standard types and elevational treatments in many locations. These standard types are however definitely not used in London and other property hot-spots.

Urban designers have been groomed and urged over decades to fill the gaps between planning and architecture – and even between the wider groups of experts, professionals, politicians and the communities who crave better places. One thing that this study inescapably established is that the elements and vital interactions of urban design are not given or defined adequately in the everyday production of volume house building, to the extent that a discussion of the quality of such environments and ways in which to do things better, may, in many cases prove very difficult indeed. Like so many problematic issues, improvement will involve even more working across disciplines and sectors, and their policy and front-line representatives.

We certainly need to identify the qualities that make good places to live in the 21st century, accommodating the range of

The ways in which large developers manage product and urban design varies tremendously



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4 Oxford, The Waterways, a development by Berkeley Homes on a former brownfield site one mile from the centre of Oxford. The public spaces are maintained by a management company.
5 Faringdon, Folly Park View, a development of apartments and houses by Bloor Homes, on the edge of this small market town of around 7,000 inhabitants.

contemporary lifestyles. This is essential but it is a tall order, and one which we seem to be moving further away. Whilst the ambition to achieve Code Level 6 was controversial and tough for even the best house builders, it marked a significant aspiration to create progressive developments for a future of increasing global change and challenges.

Housing has always been perhaps the most important thematic element in urban, suburban and rural settlements. It seems unlikely that the brief pre-eminence of office or retail forms over the last six or seven decades will be so enduring an influence on the places of human exchange. Our study respondents were asked to identify exemplar forms from the past, resulting in almost universal reference to garden cities and garden suburbs. They also identified a range of valued contemporary housing examples which are illustrated here with photographs by Ivor Samuels.

The full report is available to read at www.udg.org.uk/content/house-builders-and-urban-design. ●

Richard Hayward, Emeritus Professor of Architecture and Urban Design, University of Greenwich.

Ivor Samuels, architect, town planner and currently Honorary Senior Research Fellow in the Urban Morphology Research Group, Birmingham University.

Louise Thomas, urban designer and co-convenor of the 2012 UDG conference on ‘The Value of Urban Design’.



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In Pursuit of Quality

Paul Sallin provides a local authority perspective on housing

Working within a local authority is immensely rewarding. The reward is perhaps not financial, but comes from the exciting opportunity of influencing an area where you can see the fruits of your labour. It is what I hoped when leaving private practice, where I had become accustomed to producing frameworks for public sector clients that were never implemented, or at least not the visionary aspects of them. The lack of design continuity appeared to be part of the problem, with the public sector not understanding urban design enough to promote its principles. Being in-house allows you to offer that design continuity.

THE CHALLENGES

The challenges to good urban design are various. There has never been a statutory requirement for councils to put resources into day-to-day urban design, and not surprisingly it is typically under-resourced or not at all, except in bigger cities. It is very rare to have more than one officer and therefore urban design lacks the collective power to influence key strategic decisions. Design panel reviews can help but many authorities appear to be put off by the administration and costs. The UK's undervaluing of design contrasts with the situation in Australia where even planning committees include designers. At least appropriately trained designers are employed by developers... sometimes. More often than not, small schemes are designed by surveyors, with mass house builders commonly using standard house types laid out by technicians.

Urban design also has a branding problem. Firstly the term 'urban' raises fear in rural and suburban areas. Then, there is the idea that design is just about what it looks like. Lastly, there is the assumption that 'planners do that', which is correct in most places, as invariably evidenced by mixed design quality.

The financial crisis has made the situation worse. The public sector is now preoccupied with delivery and maximising capital receipt from asset disposals, in which design quality can sometimes be seen as a disposable luxury. For example, new permitted development rights for office-to-residential conversions have inadvertently retained (in perpetuity) some of the ugliest buildings in the country. Funding has also been cut. CABE once acted as national design champion and its much diminished role is now symbolic.

1 North Colchester,
Rosewood
development

Neighbourhood planning and garden cities offer the prospect of devolution, strategic planning for new settlements, land value capture and community-led development. However, local authorities are still largely controlled from above, many highways authorities are still a car-focused law unto themselves, greenfield allocations are still private interest-led, greenfield compulsory purchase order (CPO) powers have not been strengthened, and residential development is still monopolised by a small group of commercially-driven mass house builders. There has also been a backlash against urban renaissance inspired maximum parking standards, with the pendulum swinging towards increased ratios (one space per bedroom in some authorities) and parking bay sizes (2.9 x 5.5m in Essex). This might sound inconsequential to the lay person, but as urban designers we know that this results in unreasonably parking-dominated developments and creates a vicious circle of dispersed settlements less able to support more sustainable forms of mobility.

The National Planning Policy Framework and in particular the section on Requiring Good Design might have given a policy hook for design quality, but effectively contradicts itself by only suggesting that 'poor design should be refused'. This places uncertainty in the planning system and leads to planners frequently asking the leading question 'But is it bad enough to refuse?', while mindful of potentially expensive and time-consuming appeals. A lone council can never solve all of the above



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challenges, although hopefully the following ideas provide some useful insights and tips, or at least can act as a prompt for debate.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

How many urban designers should a local authority employ? From my experience and informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities, there should be about one dedicated urban designer for every 500 forecast new properties a year, which for smaller authorities might equate to a part-time/ consultancy / shared resource. This would cover the review of all major and other design-sensitive schemes, whilst allowing vital time for the production or overseeing of priority policies and guidance documents.

A single urban design officer would normally need prior team experience in both development management and policy guidance, given the multi-faceted nature of the role and the need to learn from others, for example to sufficiently cover different design strands and master the essential software tools for the job. Regular contact with other urban design officers in the area can help to counteract the problem of professional isolation. Alternatively, communal teams (such as within a county council) can service various local authorities, although the positives of being an urban design team can often be outweighed by not being sufficiently imbedded in the serviced local authority team, or unfamiliarity with the local area, especially if there are changes in personnel. (This is first-hand experience having previously worked for Essex County Council which served a number of district councils.)

The structure of a local authority team can be tailored to support good urban design. In Colchester, development management, planning policy, asset management, transportation, housing and regeneration are in the same integrated service area. This breeds understanding, collaborative working and helps to overcome many conflicting agendas. At the immediate team level, the close support of fellow colleagues in planning, conservation, and landscape design is invaluable. In this respect, it is a sign of strength to know your limitations, be honest, listen, debate, digest different perspectives, bounce ideas with a view to ultimately formulate enhanced views. The role would also benefit from specialist expertise in architecture, highway engineering and property markets. It is best not to forget to have a good direct working relationship with senior management and with councillors, as they will be making crucial decisions and will need to balance competing objectives within the organisation. Member and officer design training can be useful for discussing key issues and creating an army of design champions. This also

2 Colchester, Lakelands Masterplan by Terence O'Rourke for O&H Property
3 Working with developers to ensure office to residential conversions contribute regeneration value, Telephone House, Colchester Town Centre by SB2 Property

The structure of a local authority team can be tailored to support good urban design



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provides an opportunity to highlight the value of design and the role of the urban designer for increased economic growth, quality of life and sustainability.

PRE-APPLICATION PROPOSALS AND PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Good design processes will inevitably lead to good proposals and vice versa. Urban design training generally instils good working methods within the profession, but this is not always second nature to developers. I would therefore recommend design policy guidance and advice to inform better procedures. This should cover the following points in a loosely recommended sequential order:

1. Design Team Selection

This is perhaps the key part of the process as the developer's choice will determine how long you will both need to spend to achieve an acceptable scheme. Although we cannot make recommendations, we can highlight the importance of design, the need for design specialisms as part of an integrated team, examples of good schemes (referencing designers in the process) and sadly, when a change in designer would help.

2. Site and Context Analysis

We might take it for granted but design teams often need to be prompted to genuinely analyse issues and opportunities relating to heritage, land use, townscape, landscape, movement, local vernacular etc.

3. Concept Options

This promotes an open and transparent approach, in which we can collectively



ensure that you understand where they are coming from, and later to highlight how suggested improvements will benefit them with regard to added value, satisfying decision-makers etc. Defending your views through a considered rationale is central, and occasionally more robustly when developers forget that planning is a form of market intervention and that it might add costs. All things considered, hold out for good design. Negotiation is not personal – developers cannot become friends or foes, although there can be mutual respect and clarity within the system, and all can go on to work better together in the future. I aim to undertake a *Building for Life* assessment for all schemes of 10+ dwellings, although I have rebelled against the advocated traffic-light system in favour of scoring. Scoring gives the assessment greater depth, more teeth and allows us to monitor performance trends.

5. Design Panel Review

Design panel review gives independent advice, is supported in the NPPF, and as such carries weight at appeal. It should be seen as complementary to urban design officer review, offering further perspectives and collective value, whereas similar findings by a sole urban designer might be more easily dismissed. Undertaking panel reviews cannot be enforced in planning policy. However, guidance can suggest which schemes should be reviewed and when avoidance is seen unfavourably. Panellists should ideally be paid (by the developer), although a voluntary system can also be successful, as demonstrated by the South Cambridgeshire Design Panel. Considering typical time and cost constraints, a local design panel should review developments of approximately 75-500 dwellings, with schemes of 500+ dwellings submitted to CABE's national review panel. We are exploring our options in Colchester following the demise, due to funding cuts, of both the Essex and Shape East panels.

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explore the pros and cons of different options without the developer committing to detail. Clear briefing should guard against developers' tendency for 'spot-the-difference' schemes.

4. Development Management Design Advice

Through our automated case management system I am consulted on all schemes of 10+ dwellings, plus those in retail centres and conservation areas. This service agreement works well and avoids the risk of being excluded by individual planning case officers. I also receive any other scheme where the case officer wants my support. Design management should be undertaken in partnership with case officers who will be mindful of wider planning matters.

Receiving the right information is essential and it is therefore helpful to clarify what is required in policy. For example unconvincing elevations can sometimes come to life with the aid of computer graphics (CGIs), as well as street scenes, to understand the group composition of house types.

Dialogue with developers is encouraged at the pre-application stage and normally continues through the planning application phase. It covers reviews and recommendations, typically involving meetings and written comments which make reference to enforceable policy and occasionally include illustrated design briefing. Pre-application fees (perhaps as part of wider planning performance agreement) can cover urban design resource costs. Negotiation skills are as important as design knowledge when dealing with experienced developers. It is essential to firstly

4 Colchester, Lakelands Masterplan by Terence O'Rourke for O&H Property



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proposals through development briefs, competitive procurement to incentivise design quality through scoring, and dialogue with bidders during procurement.

LOCAL PLAN AND DESIGN GUIDANCE

Urban designers should be actively involved in the production of a range of key local plan documents, including core strategy, allocations and development management policies. In particular, they can provide (or help to oversee) outline design visions for proposed new settlements and urban extensions, to inform site allocations. This can include testing sustainable development assumptions with regard to location and density, whilst helping to ensure appropriate planning gain and land is factored in for the delivery of strategic open space, transport infrastructure, schools etc. Experience in development management also enables the urban designer to learn lessons from the coal-face, to tailor policies better. The visioning nature of urban design also

5 Local asset regeneration concept by Place Services at Essex County Council

lends itself to seek out new and emerging ideas, which should be followed through by exploring how this might translate to enforceable policy hooks.

Urban designers will also produce, oversee or partner supplementary design documents. Place-specific priorities might include: design frameworks for strategic centres, regeneration areas and growth zones; masterplans and design codes for strategic development areas (typically undertaken by developers at outline planning stage); and site-based development briefs. At the authority-wide level it is useful to adopt a design guide as a bible for prospective house builders, and in Colchester we refer to the famous *Essex Design Guide*. I would also closely scrutinise documents being produced by local highway authorities, such as street guidance and parking standards, ideally with the support of an enlightened engineer to ensure *Manual for Streets* compliance.

The battle for design quality is arguably felt strongest within a local authority where an officer struggles for resources relative to the development industry, becomes attached to the area, sees various and often more powerful competing agendas, and ultimately guides projects through to the end. ●

Paul Sallin, Urban Designer at Colchester Borough Council and formerly at Essex County Council

Influencing Housing Design Quality

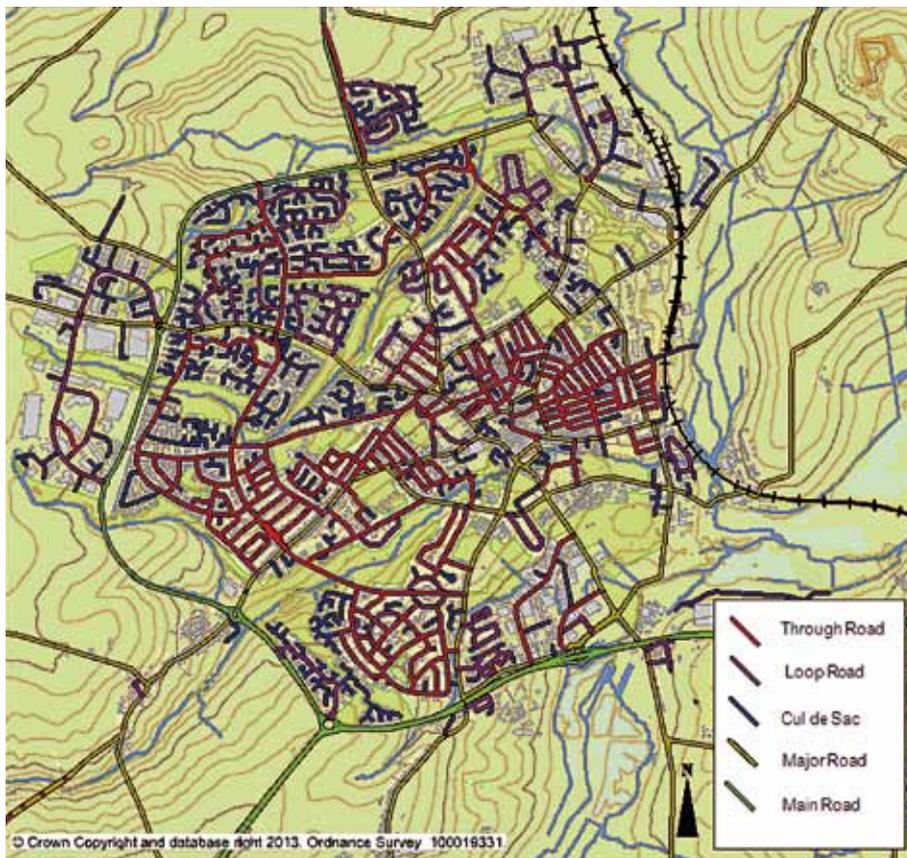
Amy Burbidge explains how four collaborating authorities shape proposed developments



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A COLLABORATIVE PLAN

North Northamptonshire adopted the first joint Core Strategy in 2008, representing four boroughs (Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough) working collaboratively for strategic planning purposes. The Strategy set ambitious targets both for the scale of growth, being within what was then the Milton Keynes South Midlands growth area, and for the quality of that growth. This envisaged 52,000 homes and 44,000 jobs in the 20 years to 2021. Set against that plan was the reality of previous development in the East Midlands. CABE's Housing Quality Audit of 2006 considered that over half



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of the developments were poor, no schemes were rated as good, and only one was seen as very good. Of the four councils, only two had in-house urban design staff. To try and meet the raised expectation of quality, the North Northamptonshire Design Action programme was created, originally part-funded by CABI and Arts Council England, alongside funding from the four local authorities. This involved my recruitment, and a small amount of capital funding, which was for a shared design facility across all four councils. The Design Action Programme has been running since 2008, and it is useful to go back and see what has been done and what has worked or not, and to review how working in this way has coped with the changing planning climate.

DESIGN SURGERIES

The huge scale of growth in Northamptonshire, and the role of the joint planning unit (JPU) working across four councils resulted in the use of Design Surgeries – an idea borrowed from Urban Design London. These occur once per month per authority and are run by in-house structured development teams. They bring together urban design, county highways, police crime prevention, landscape, local authority planning and other specialists to talk about pre-application schemes. Surgeries are a fast-paced way to look at a lot of schemes, and the case officers can hear all of the specialists together, and the negotiation between them. Over the last six months, we have been able to secure extra government funding from CLG’s Site Delivery Fund, to support this joint working approach, and to bring in extra design capacity on landscape, using members of the regional Architecture Centre’s Design Review Panel. From these Design Surgeries, we published a *Lessons Learnt* document, setting out the common issues at surgeries, and how applicants could avoid common pitfalls.

JOINT WORKING, NETWORKS AND TRAINING

The joint working approach of the JPU has allowed us to share services, and pool resources. Alongside urban design, we now have a shared conservation surgery where two of the councils who have no in-house heritage staff can access a heritage specialist on a monthly basis for advice, mentoring and formal

1 Kingswood Square, Corby, successful case study: estate redevelopment and creation of a new public space
 2 Wellingborough route structure analysis using Karl Kropf’s coloured street system

comments. This shared approach has been supported by the councils, who have continued to fund the design service even after external funding from CABI/Arts Council ceased. It has also meant we have been able to secure additional government funding, most recently from the Site Delivery Fund.

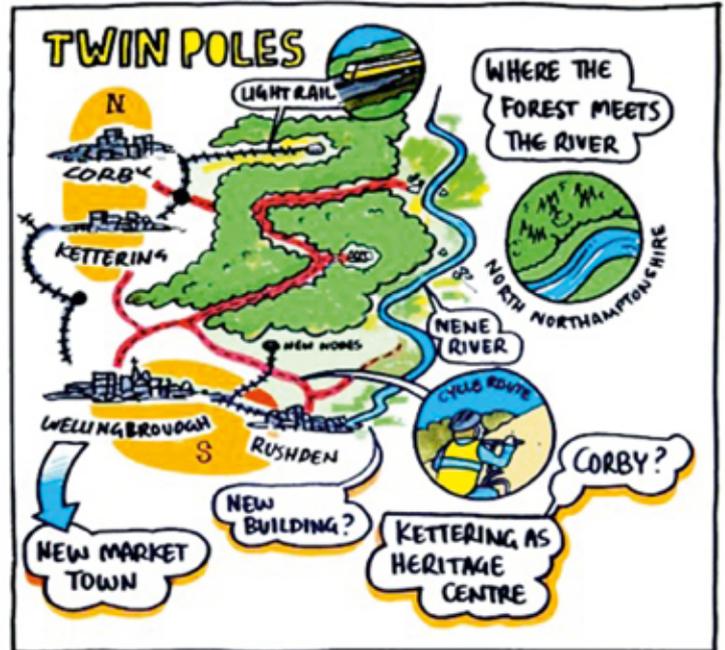
Every eight weeks, we meet up as a Design Officers Group, where officers from the local authorities, the police, and county council can catch up on shared issues. We also often have specific presentations from other interested parties, like the fire service or public health services. Initially, we ran many training events, but these have rather waned in austere times. We also held a popular Site Visit Club which was a budget tour of sites within the JPU area or nearby, to learn lessons and find out the story behind schemes. Club members would arrange their own transport to keep costs low, and we only ensured that they had background papers and someone with good local knowledge to show people round. Site visits varied from looking at sustainable building practices at a logistics warehouse to touring major growth areas at Peterborough. Site Visit Club was popular with councillors, officers and developers, and was open to all.

BUILDING FOR LIFE12

We have been consistently using *Building for Life* (BfL) and embedded it early in policy in a *Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document*. We have also continued to monitor housing design quality in our Annual Monitoring Reports, even after we were no longer required to do so. We undertake a BfL assessment of every completed housing scheme of more than 10 units. These include site visits, photos, and assessments of where people are actually parking and where the bins are. This year and last, we published these photos and edited highlights in a pamphlet, showing good and not so good practice.

DESIGN CODES

We now have seven urban extensions with full or developing design codes, probably the largest number of consented urban extensions in one area in the country, and so have rapidly growing experience of both drafting and implementing the codes. The design codes have been very useful in moving forward with highway policy, and have been more responsive to change than local plan policy can usually be. Different approaches have been taken, with Priors Hall in Corby – our most advanced scheme – having a different relationship with the lead masterplanner, Will Cousins of David Lock Associates, being retained by the land owner in a role as town architect. The town architect role is useful as it acts as a first sift of schemes



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to check general compliance with the design code, and to act as a point of liaison between the landowner, local authority and individual house builders.

PLACE-SHAPING APPROACH

Our draft Core Strategy has been developed with a focus on strategic urban design and place-making. We held two place-making workshops with CABE facilitators to help draw out ideas, and recorded the ideas in cartoon form by artist Joel Cooper.

The workshops identified that the connectivity of the settlements was key to their success, and that relationship between the collection of small towns and their countryside was key to the area's special character. They also identified a number of growth options and their key characteristics. This led to undertaking a detailed study of the urban structure of all 11 towns in North Northants, assessing their street patterns, connectivity, morphology, green infrastructure and character. All the towns were subject to a route structure analysis using Karl Kropf's coloured street system, which essentially looks at whether streets connect to somewhere else, are longer strategic routes, loops, or cul-de-sacs. The plans are easily drawn and understood, and show huge swathes of the towns where movement is overly complicated. Our councillors have engaged with this Urban Structure Study, and particularly the route structure analysis plans, which

3 Two of the growth options, cartoon by Joel Cooper
4 Gold Street, Wellingborough: a successful study

spell out the problems that they see on the ground.

We also looked at the scope of the towns to accommodate further growth, and assessed the towns' edges to consider how connected new areas might be, with a particular emphasis on sustainable modes of movement. The themes from the Urban Structure Study have now been distilled into a set of place-shaping principles, contained within our draft replacement Core Strategy which envisages development up to 2031. The Plan has yet to go through examination, but hopefully this significant piece of the evidence base shows that the design policies are targeted to the issues in North Northamptonshire, ensuring that future development meets the aspirations of the plan.

IS IT WORKING?

Arguing for high quality design in the face of major issues with development viability is a challenge. We are making an impact and I am cautiously hopeful that with the new policies in our plan, and the strong evidence base behind them, we will make a greater impact on improving the quality. Ultimately, much still depends on the negotiation on each scheme, and caring as much about the details of the paving on one house plot, as about the green infrastructure strategy across a whole town, which is why the job is so demanding and interesting. ●

Amy Burbidge, Design Action Manager, North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit



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Comparing Housing Space Standards

Malcolm Morgan explores the different measures in the UK and abroad

A lack of internal space in homes has been identified as a problem in the UK: previous research has shown that the UK has the smallest houses in Europe. In 2015 the government’s department for Communities and Local Government introduced a new space standard for housing *Technical housing standards* – nationally described space standard, which was a slightly modified version of the one included in the *London Housing Design Guide* (GLA 2010). By way of comparison, the majority of existing dwellings would not meet this standard (as shown in Morgan & Cruickshank 2014). This article provides a brief review of space standards in a selection of different countries and regions, and compares them to the new UK standard.

THE NEW UK SPACE STANDARD

The ‘nationally described space standard’ was published in March 2015 but had been part of the Housing Standards Review and its associated consultations since 2013. The standard is expected to come into force in autumn 2015; it is provided as a table for the minimum Gross Internal Area and is determined by three factors:

- the number of bedrooms
- the number of bed spaces
- the number of storeys.

1 List of countries and regions with space standards

In addition to the table, minimum standards are specified for:

- the area of bedrooms – 7.5 m2 for single bedrooms, and 11.5 m2 for double bedrooms; and
- the widths of bedrooms – 2.15 m for single bedrooms, and 2.75 m for double bedrooms.

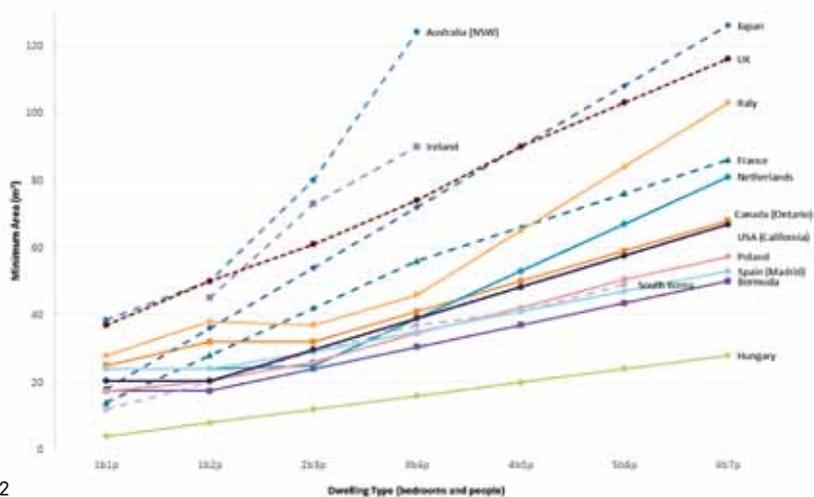
The use of a national standard is intended to simplify the current situation where many local authorities have developed their own systems. However, each local authority still has to choose to adopt the new standard in their local plan after performing an impact assessment. Thus the application of the standard will not be uniform across the country. The new standard is also tenure independent, and as such removes the previous standards that applied nationally to social housing. International approaches to space standards

In our research, we have reviewed selected countries’ space standards. Particular emphasis was put on EU countries, economically developed countries, and countries with high population densities, as these were more likely to be relevant to the UK context.

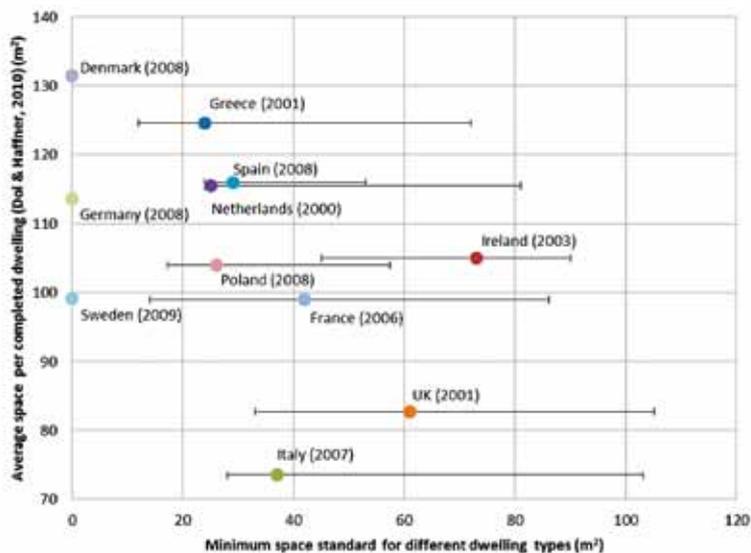
A range of sources were used to identify space standards, including direct translation of the relevant building codes or planning regulations. Of particular use were a series of reports produced by PRC *Bouwcentrum International for the European Commission* outlining the system of building regulation in each of the countries in the European Union, and a comparison of technical requirements in eight European countries.

Table 1 lists the countries selected for study and a description of their space standards. In countries where building regulation is defined at a regional or local scale, an example region has been selected and is indicated in the table, for example New South Wales (NSW) to represent Australia. When identifying the space standards for each country, the original regulation or building codes were used if possible. In countries where no space standards could be identified, a clear statement that standards did not exist was sought. This was not always possible, due to the practical problems of comparing different systems of regulation in different languages, and so these are

COUNTRY (OR REGION) & POPULATION DENSITY (PERSON/KM2)	REGULATION SCALE	DETERMINING CHARACTERISTICS
Australia (NSW)	9	Regional/Local Minimum dwelling area based on number of bedrooms
Bermuda	1,275	National Rooms
Canada (Ontario)	14	Regional Bedrooms
Cyprus	91	National Room Width
France	116	National Minimum area per person
Germany	520	Regional None Found
Greece		National Minimum bedroom areas
Hungary	107	National Minimum room widths
Ireland	73	National Minimum dwelling area based on number of bedrooms, plus minimum room areas
Italy	202	National/Regional/ Local Bedroom/Living Room
Japan	337	National Minimum area per person
Netherlands	407	National Minimum room areas and widths based on function
Poland	123	National Standards for offices, and related standard on lighting etc.
South Korea	512	National Minimum dwelling area based on number of people
Spain (Madrid)	809	Region/Local Minimum areas of bedrooms and living room
UK	255	National/Local (DCLG, 2015) Minimum dwelling area based on number of bedrooms, people, and storeys, plus minimum room areas
USA (New York)	416	Regional Minimum room areas
USA (California)	246	Regional Minimum room areas



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listed as ‘None Found’ rather than ‘Does not exist.’

TYPES OF SPACE REGULATION

Across the case study countries there was no uniform way of determining space standards. However five common methods were observed for the standards:

- minimum dimensions such as room widths, but no specific limits on total areas of a dwelling;
- minimum areas of certain rooms;
- minimum total areas per person;
- total areas of dwellings based on number of bedrooms; or
- Some combination of the above categories.

In addition most countries also specify accessibility rules, such as minimum door widths and circulation areas usually designed around the needs of wheelchair users.

COMPARING INTERNATIONAL SPACE STANDARDS

Due to the significant variation between different countries’ systems of regulation, it is difficult to make direct comparisons. To provide some comparison of the different systems, a selection of example houses has been used based on the requirements in the new UK standard, so that a best estimate of the minimum space standard for each case can be made. This method is likely to underestimate some standards, especially those based around minimum room widths, rather than room areas. It does not consider rules about lighting and access, which in practice may effectively increase the minimum space standards.

The graph shows that the new UK standard is more generous than those of most other countries except Australia and Ireland. However it should be noted that because many international standards specify minimum areas for living spaces and bedrooms only, while an actually dwelling would usually include

additional areas such as a bathroom or kitchen, the minimum standards may not properly reflect the minimum areas of dwellings as built. Whereas in the other countries (shown with dashed lines), standards are specified for whole dwellings, and so do not suffer this deficiency.

Relatively limited data is available about the floorspace of the housing stock across the countries listed in Table 1; however some national averages do exist. The average area of newly completed dwellings in the EU countries ranged from 180.4 m² in Luxembourg, to 73.5 m² in Italy, compared to 82.7 m² in the UK. The second graph compares the average size of newly completed dwellings with the minimum space standards for eleven European countries, eight with standards and three without. The coloured points represent the minimum standard for a two bedroom three-person dwelling, while the horizontal lines, or error bars, show the range of standards from a one-person to a six-person dwelling, except for Ireland which does not specify a standard for one-person dwellings.

The graph does not show a relationship between higher standards and larger average dwelling stock. This could reflect the fact that the distribution of dwelling sizes is different between countries: a country with high standards may have many dwellings that only just exceed the standard, while another country has a greater variety of dwelling sizes. Italy and the UK have the smallest dwellings and some of the most generous space standards, while Greece and Spain have larger houses and a less generous standard, suggesting that the setting of space standards may be determined by the magnitude of the perceived problem. It is notable that in many European countries the average dwelling is larger than the UK minimum standard for a six-person dwelling.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the new UK space standard is more generous than many other countries’ standards. However, the new standard is not greater than the average size of dwellings constructed in those countries. It is not yet known what the effect on the new UK standards will be, but even if new dwellings are built to the new standards they will be smaller than dwellings in most European countries. ●

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 With thanks to Monique Van Beek, Eleni Soulti and Roberta Mutschler for assistance with translations.
 See: Morgan, M, & Cruickshank, H (2014). Quantifying the extent of space shortages: English dwellings. *Building Research & Information*, 42(6), p710-724.



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Reinterpreting Private Open Space

Tim Pharoah looks at the amount and the forms it could take

'Go outside and play', my mother would say to my brother and me when she needed less bother. We grew up in a house with a rear garden big enough even for quite boisterous games. Interaction with the children next door, however, required an invitation; there was no place for the informal meeting of neighbours, except the narrow pavement outside. After we left home, our parents grew older in a property increasingly ill-matched to their changing needs. Eventually the garden became a burden and saw little activity. The house was in a typical suburb of detached and semi-detached houses, all privately owned, and all with fairly large front and rear gardens.

This personal reflection introduces three themes:

1. Private garden space is valuable for parents and children, offering security from traffic
2. The absence of communal space can limit neighbourly interaction
3. Housing to cater for different and changing requirements.

Getting the right amount and type of open space in housing is important because it is a key determinant not only of local amenity, but also of the efficiency and sustainability of the wider urban area. In much of the UK, there is a legacy of housing with private open space that meets the needs of some people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time. It has also resulted in needlessly low housing densities, which have a negative impact on accessibility and infrastructure costs.

This article questions the suitability of historic and contemporary housing forms in terms of private open space provision.

1 Arabia, Helsinki:
semi-private space with
play area

It looks at the benefits and disbenefits of private open space, and how these depend on the manner and quality of provision, and then considers alternatives to conventional practice.

THE PRIVATE SPACE EQUATION

It is worth considering some of the urban design considerations that influence the manner and extent of private open space provision in housing. First is the issue of who is going to live in a development. How likely are they to need open space, now or in the future? Does it need to be individual space, or can it be shared? Will residents needs and wants change? Will they be able and willing to maintain the space in good order? How will the type of tenure affect the answers to these questions, and could the tenure change over time, as has happened with Right to Buy and buy-to-let properties?

Second, there is pressure for housing to be provided at higher densities. How can the need for density and open space be reconciled?

Third is the knotty issue of parking. Private off-street parking means less open space, or a smaller building footprint. In most of continental Europe, putting



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Open space that is for the exclusive use of individual households is in many cases underused or uncared for, [and] becomes an eyesore for neighbours and has a negative impact on value

combination of the following amenities:

- Room for grass, greenery and cultivation
- Play and leisure space that is secure
- Separating living room windows from the street
- A visual setting for buildings, and
- Storage for cars and bikes.

People with young children will almost always value access to space outside their homes. On the other hand, not everyone wants or needs their own private open space, so uniform provision will lead to inefficient use of space. Elderly or infirm people may need to avoid the burden of maintaining open space; students and bachelors for example may spend so little time at home that it hardly matters; and, many people do not like or have no time for gardening.

People's needs and preferences vary, and they change as they move through the different stages of life. Open space that is for the exclusive use of individual households (the quintessentially English suburban model) is therefore in many cases underused or uncared for, in which case it becomes an eyesore for neighbours and has a negative impact on value.

Private open space (whether communal or individual) must also be seen in terms of the impact on the community, and the wider city. Wasted land, whether by poor design, underuse or misuse, reduces housing densities and compactness, which in turn impacts negatively on accessibility and sustainable transport choices.

THE CASE FOR COMMUNAL SPACE

The relationship between public and private space is crucial. Streets traditionally were, and should again become, places for social interaction and sojourn, what *Manual for Streets* calls the 'place' function. This can be achieved by reducing the dominance of moving and parked vehicles, and by designing the street to be attractive to people on foot. If streets become more social spaces again, this can reduce the need for private open space. Conventionally, private open space has

parking underground is a common solution. Why is this so rare in Britain?

Fourth, there is the issue of cost and price. The less open space provided, the more housing units can be fitted onto a given site, and the lower the unit costs. On the other hand, the more open space that is included, the better the housing quality (... discuss!) and the higher the price that can be realised. Identifying the optimum point where these two variables intersect is a key task for developers. The designer must seek answers to all of these questions in order to come up with housing schemes that are successful for both providers and occupiers.

Perhaps, given the complexity of the design process, it is unsurprising that house builders so often have opted for standard solutions that pay little attention to context. Common deficiencies in the way that open space is provided in Britain's housing stock include:

- A uniformity of provision which does not respond to diverse needs and tastes across a scheme or a neighbourhood
- Poor design
- Inefficient layouts and therefore needlessly low densities
- A rigid distinction between private and public space, resulting in a lack of flexibility in the use of space
- Parking which occupies or degrades garden or other open space
- Flats built with little or no private outdoor space.

THE PROS AND CONS OF PRIVATE OPEN SPACE

Space is needed between buildings to allow for light and air, and to facilitate movement. Theoretically, streets can serve these basic functions, without the need for off-street open space (1:1 plot ratio). But on-plot open space in addition supplies some

- 2 Tooting, London: useless private communal space
- 3 Crown Street, Glasgow
- 4 Französisches Viertel, Tübingen, Germany: generous balconies plus communal space

taken the form of private gardens or (in apartment schemes) private communal space, but especially in recent decades, attractive schemes in continental Europe demonstrate the benefits of more flexible semi-private communal spaces.

The benefit to be derived from communal private open space depends crucially on its design and relationship with the dwellings. Open space that merely serves to separate buildings to minimise overlooking can often have no other useful function, and is merely a maintenance burden. Often the only activity seen in poorly designed communal spaces is lawn mowing!

Well-designed communal space, however, can radically improve the quality of local life, offering an informal opportunity for the different generations of residents to mingle. By reducing the potential for under-used private gardens, communal areas can also achieve higher densities without loss of amenity.

THE DESIGN RESPONSE TO VARYING NEEDS

A single solution cannot satisfy everybody. Crucially, in terms of space efficiency, the same is true of private parking space, which also interacts with private space provision. A variety of provision is therefore needed, and within each neighbourhood. It should not be necessary for households to relocate away from family and friends, or schools or workplaces, in order to find a home with outdoor space that fits their needs.

So for the benefit of individual households and the community more widely, the housing stock should be planned to provide a variety of combinations of housing and open space types, and managed so that people can move easily between these different types as their needs and preferences change.

For infill and brownfield housing (around two thirds of all new housing), the aim should be to identify housing types that are demanded but missing from the locality, and to design new housing that will correct the balance. In large urban extensions or free-standing developments, variety is needed within the scheme.

ALTERNATIVES TO HOUSE AND GARDEN

Open space implies green space. But if we instead think of ‘open area’, this introduces other forms that may suit some residents better. Thus we have seen the rise of the patio, the terrace (putting a flat roof to productive use), and the balcony. These private open areas can satisfy some of the purposes for which gardens are provided. In Britain balconies have tended to be rather mean affairs – too small to make apartment living acceptable for larger households. (Developers make the calculation: can the higher build cost be recouped in a higher selling price?) In the rest of Europe and Scandinavia, however, there are new developments with really useful balconies, and with communal space at ground level, thus combining high density with high amenity. An example is the Französisches Viertel, Tübingen, in southern Germany.

Housing can incorporate both communal and individual private space within the same block, allowing for social interaction between neighbours as well as the option of secure and private activities within the curtilage of the home. Crown Street in Glasgow includes perimeter block housing which encloses both communal private space and individual private gardens. This is achieved by locating parking within the street space outside the block. In the Arabia development, Helsinki, the communal space is semi-private (or semi-public) with a secure play area included.

The role of the street can be reinterpreted from highway to social space, provided that levels of traffic and parking are minimal, and that drivers are treated, and must behave, as guests. This was the principal idea behind the Dutch Woonerf (the HomeZone being our nearest equivalent), a concept now half a century old. Even so, there are precious few good examples, probably because of the unwillingness to tackle the thorny issue of parking. The Vauban scheme in Freiburg is a well-known exception, where the streets become a semi-private realm and are adopted as communal meeting and play space. This is achieved by removing parking from the street and concentrating



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5 Vauban, Freiburg
in Bresgau: street
adopted as play space

it in a remote multi-storey garage. Not only does this clear the streets of cars, it also encourages the use of other modes, since these are more easily accessible to the home.

CONCLUSION

The answers and possibilities raised here are as diverse as the populations, areas and legal and cultural contexts in which housing designers and developers are working.

The individual private garden is a popular feature of British housing, and provides for individual private activities. The ubiquity of the house and garden typology results, however, in a lack of housing choice, inefficient use of space, and needlessly low densities. This has a negative impact on the achievement of compact and sustainable city forms. People’s needs and preferences change as they go through life and each locality ideally should provide a range of types of open space provision. Similarly, the provision of dedicated off-street parking spaces for every dwelling locks in the spaces, regardless of whether the occupier owns a car. For the future, housing design should incorporate more communal provision of both parking and open space, which may be private or public, or semi-private. The removal of parking (to remote sites or underground) also allows much greater flexibility in reconciling high density with high amenity.

For future housing, urban designers should pay attention to the context – socio-economic and demographic characteristics and tenure of the likely occupiers – and aim for diversity in the allocation of space. There is scope too for exciting and innovative approaches, including borrowing from other countries. I for one would welcome a wider choice... my garden is too big! ●

Tim Pharoah, independent transport and planning consultant

Co-designing Senior Co-housing

Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia and Kathleen Scanlon describe the collaborative process behind Featherstone Lodge



co-housing) or cater specifically for older people or particular groups, notably women.

One important part of the co-housing process is that (future) residents participate in the planning and design of their communities, working with architects and each other in a non-hierarchical way. The weeks and months spent discussing and developing ideas may result in strikingly original designs, but also help to introduce groups to the processes of negotiation and compromise that will be required when they live as communities.

Here we describe aspects of the design process of one London co-housing community still under development, and briefly discuss examples from elsewhere in the UK and abroad. Finally, we comment on the lessons that the collaborative process of co-housing design offers for urban design more generally.

THE FEATHERSTONE STORY

Featherstone Lodge, built in 1858 in the inner London suburb of Forest Hill, is one of a scattering of neo-Gothic and neo-Baroque mansions constructed on Sydenham Ridge in the early and mid-19th century. Built as country retreats for wealthy London families, many of these houses later became institutions. Featherstone is distinctive because its large walled garden – more than an acre – remains intact.

The house was used in the 1960s as a nurses' hostel and later as a drug rehabilitation centre. When that closed, at the depth of the financial crisis, the site was offered for sale. A local couple interested in co-housing approached Hanover, a not-for-profit retirement housing provider, who agreed to buy the site and develop one of the UK's first senior co-housing communities, if the couple could recruit a group of residents. Typically co-housing groups come together first, then look for a site; the 'site-first' model followed at Featherstone is relatively rare but has clear advantages, as some established groups have searched for years or even decades for suitable sites.

In 2011 Hanover and the couple hosted a well-attended open-house at the house. With a core group of interested participants in place, the design work began a few months later.

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What is co-housing? To live intentionally as a group. To share resources and meals. To design collaboratively. To create and maintain collective living spaces. These are all core elements of the co-housing concept, developed and made popular since the 1970s in Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and the United States. The model arrived more recently in the UK, where there are currently around 18 communities (and about 50 in formation).

Most co-housers are motivated by a desire to live as a community that actively participates in its own creation and sustainability. Some communities form in a bottom-up way because of shared ecological or social visions (in Sweden, for example, co-housing is viewed as an ideal environment in which to raise children), while others are assembled in a top-down fashion by housing associations or even for-profit developers. Communities may be structured as owner-occupied, mutual home ownership, rental or mixed-tenure. They can be rural or urban. They may accommodate households of all ages (intergenerational

1 Featherstone Lodge
2 The communal garden and trees



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CO-DESIGNING

Pollard Thomas Edwards (PTE) architects were appointed by Hanover to work with the group to design about 30 homes, some in the existing house and some new-build. The site had many advantages: dramatic views, a beautiful garden, an impressive existing house. There were also constraints—the dramatic views went hand-in-hand with a steeply sloping site, challenging for older people with mobility problems; the existing house, locally listed, was indeed striking externally but internally had been altered and reduced to institutional anonymity; while the beautiful garden contained a number of protected trees.

Over the course of several months, the group met many times to talk about the design. They considered the configuration of individual flats, solar aspect, kitchen layout, the provision of washing machines. More importantly, they discussed movement through the site, and it was quickly agreed that everyone should enter the community through the main door of the existing house, and that the social and communal spaces would be a ‘common house’ and the large garden. This common house (also known as a co-house) is one of the anchoring elements of co-housing, typically a space for residents to share a kitchen and dining area. Depending on the group’s budget and interests, the common house can be more than one space and it can incorporate facilities like craft studios, workshops, music rooms, etc.

The Featherstone group discussed where the common house should be located: should there be a stand-alone structure nestled in the garden? This would obstruct the expansive green it currently offered. Should it be one corner of the existing house? This could passively exclude those living at the bottom of the sloping garden. In the end it was decided to place the co-house just to one side of the main entrance, so that residents coming and going might see and interact with each other. This encouraging form of architecture, commonly practiced in co-housing design, strives to blur or at least challenge the traditional boundaries between public and the private home spaces.

There was also debate about what would happen in the common house, and the possibility was left open that it could host not only group-specific events like dinners or films, but also activities open to neighbours and the wider community such as yoga classes or children’s play groups. Various members of the group also expressed interest in using the bottom end of the garden for green activities like allotments, workshops or even raising chickens or pigs.

Besides the physical constraints imposed by the site itself, two other factors conditioned the group’s design possibilities. The first was that the final product had to be affordable. Most of the group members intended to buy their units. Some owned London homes that they could sell, but several were not home-owners and expected to draw on savings or enter into

3 Working closely with the architects
4 Residents’ design aspirations

shared ownership. This affected the size of dwellings, construction materials and methods, and the extent of sustainable technology to be used. Second, the developer, Hanover Housing Association, wanted to ensure that the scheme could be sold as traditional market housing if the cohousing group was to fail. Thus the designs that finally emerged were beautiful and suited to community living but not particularly radical.

OTHER EXPERIENCES OF CO-DESIGN

At LILAC, a recently completed multi-generational cohousing community in Leeds, the collaborative design process produced a somewhat less conventional development. The group was strongly motivated by a concern for sustainability and the 20 dwellings, built with a straw-bale construction technique (residents themselves helped make the bricks), reached the highest energy-efficiency standards. They are clustered tightly around a reed-filled unfenced pond, while a communal play area and allotments take up a large part of the site. The LILAC group developed the site themselves; group members pooled their financial resources and took out a mortgage to fund construction. Without the need to satisfy an external developer they could take more risks with their design.

In Berlin, co-housing (known as *baugruppen*) is now a standard, albeit minor, element of the local housing market, accounting for up to 5 per cent of new dwellings constructed. Households moving into *baugruppen* consciously choose a community-oriented lifestyle, but residents haven’t always been involved in early phases of the project. There is commonly a core group of a few households, usually including an architect who may or may not plan to live in the development. Other households are recruited later, and may not have any input into the design apart from choosing the finishes of their own flats.

LESSONS

What lessons can co-housing teach us about housing design more generally? Our visits to functioning co-housing communities elsewhere in the UK and across Europe suggest that they can be intensely appealing places to live; not for nothing are they often characterised as utopian. In terms of community they are the ultimate antidote to the anonymity of modern urban life. In terms of design, many incorporate cutting-edge sustainable construction techniques such as straw-bale construction and passive house standards, thus acting as test beds for solutions that may become more widespread.

Most importantly, the process of working through the design with a group rather than with an individual client



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places the focus strongly on those elements of the design that foster community and neighbourliness. Recent thinking about the social sustainability of urban spaces posits that spaces that are designed for social interaction work better for residents and other users. The co-housing design process allows designers and end-users to spend time thinking about how best to create such spaces; American architects specialising in co-housing design will typically spend a few weeks working with the group on the design of the co-house alone.

But as that example and our own research in London suggests, collaborative work can be extremely time-consuming. In the case of Featherstone, from the group's first meeting to submission of a planning application, it took nearly two-and-a-half years, and it was more than three years before planning permission was granted. While not all of this time was consumed by the design process, which indeed was completed within six months, it did last longer than on a standard development, and longer than the participants envisioned. Why? The reasons are primarily about the novelty of the process for everyone involved. For both group members and architects it was an unfamiliar process with many non-expert participants. The group's membership kept changing, and even the core members didn't necessarily agree on what they wanted. The importance of the cost and marketability constraints was not understood until late in the process. Finally, although the housing association was working simultaneously with several co-housing groups, it did not systematically collect or disseminate best practice that could have reduced delays.

Was the end result worth it, that is did it differ in important ways from what might have emerged from an architect's studio without input from the group? The design clearly isn't a standard housing association or for-profit development: it has a co-house and there are relatively few parking spaces, all on the margins of the site, leaving the large garden more or less intact as a car-free communal space. But judging from our observation of one design process, the group's input was not decisive—the architects, with a wide knowledge of co-housing in the UK and abroad, would very likely have included these elements in any case. At the same time, Hanover's insistence that the units should be saleable on the general market ruled out unconventional resident-led design solutions (some put forward by members who were themselves architects).

The results of collaborative design may sometimes be more measurable in social than blueprint terms. Whatever the final outcome, the collaborative design process uniquely contributes

5 The LILAC cohousing community in Leeds, and its private gardens

to forming group identity through an initially individual but then collectively articulated vision of what homes and community spaces should be like. This takes time and in London, where land values are very high, once a site is found and purchased, time is money in a very real sense. Designing a bespoke co-housing development from scratch may work better in lower-cost areas, and indeed many of the best UK examples are found in places like Leeds, where land is relatively cheap.

That doesn't mean that co-housing has no place in high-demand cities, but rather that the process may need to be modified there. One way is standardisation and the reduction or removal of the group-participation element. In Berlin, for example, there are more than 300 urban co-housing developments and a cadre of specialist professionals with experience in design and finance. There is also a critical mass of people who are familiar with co-housing and want to live in such communities. Many seem happy to enter these communities when construction is complete, rather than taking part themselves in the design process; this is perhaps a signal that the sector has matured.

In Berlin, there are more than 300 urban co-housing developments, and a cadre of specialist professionals

There are other possibilities as well. Prospective urban co-housers might consider using existing (not necessarily residential) buildings and modifying them internally with the same overarching goals of living as a community, social interaction and sustainability. Several redundant office blocks in the London Borough of Croydon have already been converted to residential use; why not for co-housing? In this sense, working with more constraints might actually be helpful, as it can help focus people's attention on those aspects that they can shape and change rather than leaving everything up for grabs. More generally, if co-housing is to offer a viable alternative in expensive urban areas, we need to recognise and address the problem of land prices and the general suspicion of non-mainstream models. ●

Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia and Kathleen Scanlon, Assistant Professorial Research Fellows, Department of Geography and Environment, London School of Economics

Co-designing with an Ageing Population

Stephen Hill describes new action research on ways for older people to design healthy and happy retirements for themselves

‘We can’t wait, so we’ll just have to do it ourselves!’ For many older people, if new housing and care solutions do not happen soon, they won’t need them anyway, but they are less likely to have lived well at the end of their lives. It doesn’t take many conversations with people of any age about how they or their relatives want to live as they get older, to uncover a pervasive sense of anxiety and impatience about what the housing market and policy are not doing.

There are already seven million households headed by someone aged over 65. Up to 2033, 60 per cent of the growth in household formation will include at least one person over 65. This is not a small or self-contained market. The whole housing market will be affected by our future housing choices: downsizing, staying put, house sharing, adaptations and the need to convert housing capital into care revenue will all impact on the future cost of both public and private housing.

NEW HOUSING AND CARE SOLUTIONS

The Housing Learning and Improvement Network (HLIN) has become the most significant thought-leader in developing awareness of best practice. With 7,500 members, its work is used to inform Health and Wellbeing Boards that bring together both local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

HLIN has examined the potential of mutual housing and care solutions, which are already helping people to live longer, healthier lives in a group setting, so that citizens are recognised as agents of their own wellbeing, rather than passive recipients of standardised services.

CREATING AN ACTION RESEARCH PROGRAMME

The UK Cohousing Network is a natural partner with HLIN in developing new ideas. We are also partners in an ESRC sponsored knowledge-exchange seminar programme on Collaborative housing and community resilience, with the LSE and the Universities of Lancaster, Leeds, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield (www.collaborativehousing.net).

We intend to build on the strengths of our international experience of supporting intentional communities living in cohousing projects to:

- develop an action research programme of live projects
- demonstrate the potential of cohousing for older people
- identify more replicable ways of making cohousing projects happen, and
- contribute to the development of new services for and by older people.

We can identify and connect groups of older people or individuals seeking new and better ways of living, and match them with agencies in a position to offer support.

HOUSING AND CARE: PART OF THE ‘SHARING ECONOMY’

For many older people, the time, costs and risks of promoting new development are too great. We will focus on retrofitting homes and communities to enable people to stay where they are, or congregate where they can benefit from neighbourly support and shared lifestyles. We want to test the potential of new purpose-built developments, and the design of lifetime neighbourhoods, urban and rural situations, ‘hot’ and ‘cold’



1 Leeds: LILAC, recent co-housing project. a balance between privacy, neighbourliness, mutual support and activity

housing markets, multi-generational and age-focussed communities.

GETTING THE PROGRAMME STARTED

We have started to identify project opportunities, and engage with potential partners who can support the practical delivery of new projects, including members of the PlaceShapers Group of housing associations, small specialist developers entering this market, and individual practitioners. But we also want to extend our relationships to:

- Urban designers, surveyors and project managers for a national network of professionals to support people wanting to design their own housing and care solutions;
- Developers and contractors interested in developing products and services; and
- Local authorities and NHS commissioners looking for new approaches to housing and care.

This action research programme will bring together partners around real people and situations to create projects through which we can bring about a step-change in the quality of housing and care for older people, and learn how to be more responsive to their changing expectations.

For more information, contact Jo Gooding, Executive Director, UK Cohousing Network: jo@cohousing.org.uk ●

Stephen Hill, Chair of the UK Cohousing Network

Live-Work: Understanding the Typology

Jonathan Tarbatt explores how this building type evolved into contemporary examples



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Live-work sounds straight-forward, but the term can mean different things to different people. The *Dictionary of Urbanism* defines live-work space as ‘flexible units that accommodate both functions’, but at least in planning terms, there is a big difference between working from home and running a business from home, where both employees and customers may come calling.

WHAT’S DIFFERENT ABOUT LIVE-WORK?

For those with surnames such as Smith, Baker or Fletcher, a clue to the significance of our live-work heritage lies in our shared ancestry. Blacksmiths, for example, once played a vital role in their local communities. They worked from home, essentially, but they also kept a furnace that would have blasted out acrid smoke from dawn to dusk while beating metal into shape on the back of an anvil. Most smiths would have employed their sons or apprentices to help out. Other names, like Draper, Milner and Butcher remind us of another even more relevant form of live-work: living over the shop.

Contrast these kinds of commercial activity with plugging in a laptop in your spare bedroom, and you begin to understand the difference between live-work, in all its potential forms, and its innocuous cousin, home-working. Both of these historic live-work precedents are a form of mixed-use. The former, blacksmithing, is a form of horizontal mixed-use, because the living accommodation, would have been next to the forge, not above it. The latter, living over a shop, is, in contrast, a form of vertical mixed-use. Just as wifi technology has freed some people to work from home, it has also allowed them to work from their local café. Ironically, since most commercial deal-making before

1 Red Square in Hackney an awkwardly shaped backland site, creating a new link between east and west

the invention of the purpose-built office took place in coffee houses, we seem to have come full circle in this respect. But working from home (or from your local Costa) isn’t really the same as live-work, or, as we shall see, ‘work-live’.

What happened to the means of production between the days when every village had a blacksmith and now, is rather long-winded. Suffice to say it ended with most of the Smith, Baker and Fletcher families all working for someone else. Certainly there is not much call for smithies nowadays, and if you try to set up a forge in your three-bedroom semi, you are likely to receive a stern letter from your local council. Living over the shop remains a recognised typology, but it is also far less commonplace than it once was. Now however, it is most unusual for the shopkeeper to either own the shop, or to live above it.

To cater for these scenarios, the counter-term ‘work-live’ is gaining currency in the US, to distinguish between activities which are appropriate to predominantly residential areas (as above) and those which could be accommodated in employment or retail areas, where the emphasis is on the working component rather than on living. These are areas where the activities are considered to be less compatible with residential neighbours, and more likely to involve employees and/or and walk-in customers (see for example, www.live-work.com/plainenglish-ws/types/differences.html).

PLANNING FOR LIVE-WORK

Live-work has a chequered history in planning policy and guidance, culminating in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), which brought the concept to the fore (literally, as it appears in Section 1 under the heading Building a strong, competitive economy): ‘In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should...facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit’. (NPPF, 2012, Para 21, pp. 6-7).

The status of live-work as a land use is relatively unclear because it is a sui generis use under the Town and Country Planning Act, meaning that it falls outside of the recognised use class categories.

But here's the rub. Just as setting up as a blacksmith in your back garden is likely to get you into trouble, having permission to do so, and then not doing it – i.e. merely living with your shiny unused forge – could get you into an equal amount of trouble. The reason is that, while most local councils promote live-working, they guard their employment-generating uses jealously. There have been many instances where purpose-built live-work units were sold to people who only wanted to live in them, raising the question of whether the typology has been deliberately misappropriated by some developers as a means of getting around employment land use classifications to allow residential development by the back door (see, for example 'When's a home not a home? When it's a live/work space', Lucy Barnard, *The Guardian*, 25th August 2007).

Suffice to say that this has also left many local planning authorities extremely suspicious of the typology and of developers' motives. Of all the London boroughs, only Lewisham now seems to be actively supporting it.

Recognising this, the Planning Portal includes a model planning condition to regulate live-work units, to the effect that the business floor space should only be used for business (Class B1 to be precise, such as offices, research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area), and the residential floor space may only be inhabited by an employee of that business, their widow or dependants. So, no blacksmiths, and no shops.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

The main advantages from a land use planning and urban design perspective are similar to those held up in support of mixed uses:

- Efficient use of land and resources;
- Fewer journeys to work;
- More vibrant streets and spaces; and
- 'Eyes on the street'.

One of the main challenges for regular mixed-use developments that is less pressing for live-work, is that it isn't always necessary to provide a separate means of access to each use (e.g. one access for the shop, another for the flat above it).

The main disadvantage, of course, is that one never quite leaves home or work. In addition:

- It can be seen as eroding real employment land; and
- It is more expensive to build (see below).

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The most important consideration is the degree to which the work function will be a good neighbour to residents. A close second is whether the living and working uses are to be accommodated next to each other or above one another, and whether separate access is required for each use.

The nature of the work function, will also bring into play technical considerations such as floor loadings and spans, fire separation, means of escape in case of fire, loading and delivery space, floor to ceiling heights, ventilation and exhaust flues and noise insulation.

SUPPLY: THE DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

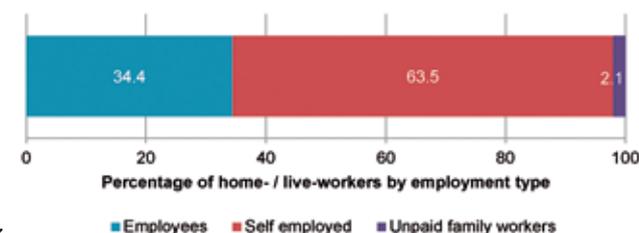
Notwithstanding the abuse of live-work policies by some developers, the broader UK experience is that most regard any form of mixed-use development as a risky product, and live-work even more so, believing it difficult to sell. On the other hand, many house builders recognise the popularity of home-working, and cater for this by including space for a study in their standard house types, coupled with high-speed broadband. These features combined, are sometimes seen as a positive marketing feature in new houses for sale.

As part of the redevelopment of Fairmile Hospital, JTP designed live-work units for Linden Homes. However three of the four live-work units were eventually converted to residential use, due to a lack of demand.



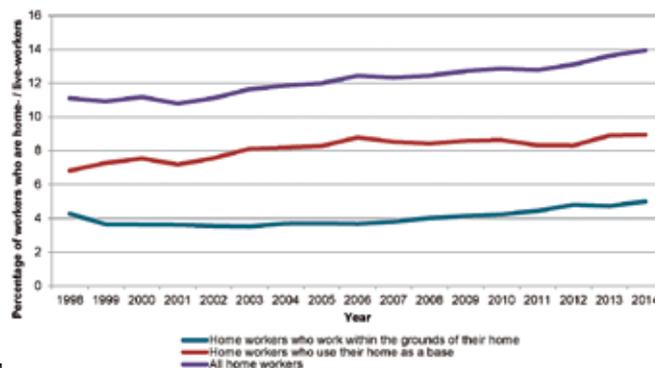
2

Home- / live-working by employment type



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Change over time: Proportion of workers who are home- / live-workers



4

2 The interconnecting spaces at Red Square are overlooked both by the units and the overhead access ways

3 Home- / live-working by employment type, Office for National Statistics, 2014

4 Growth in home- and live-working over time, Office for National Statistics, 2014

In order to reduce the risk of commercial uses being left empty, a common approach to design the local mixed-use centres, which can also be applied to live-work typologies, is to require the ground floors to be flexible, i.e. readily convertible from residential to business uses, as the local economy develops. This approach has been adopted in the design codes for Newhall in Harlow (Studio REAL) and Chilmington Green near Ashford (JTP).



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DEMAND: THE PIONEERING ENTREPRENEUR

At first glance, developer suspicion in regard to demand for live-work units seems well founded. There are also unwelcome financial implications: VAT on construction of the 'work' part may be differentially rated from the 'living' part, and live-workers may also be liable to pay business rates on top of Council Tax (or to pay a combined charge).

But in recent years, there has been a reaction against the so-called rat-race towards global capitalism, which has manifested in a longing for all things home-made, artisanal and the like. Sunday supplements bulge with accounts of such people willing to jump off the corporate treadmill in order to make something themselves – often cheese, chocolate or cup-cakes. The ideal building typology for such start-ups is live-work, or work-live.

The Live-Work Network (liveworknet.com) showcases numerous examples of successful live-work projects. It is instructive that the majority of these appear to have been developed by low-volume developers or housing associations, with some exceptions where local planning policy was influential. There are of course, many more one-off custom built, live-work projects for individuals.

According to the Office for National Statistics' Labour Force Survey, 4.2 million people were home workers in early 2014 (spending at least half their work time using their home), representing almost 1 in 7 of those in work. Almost two-thirds of home workers were self-employed, i.e. running a business from home. Moreover, these figures understate the numbers because they don't track people running limited companies from home, who are classed as employees of their company, rather than as self-employed.

HAVELOCK WALK, LONDON

Havelock Walk is a thriving community of creative types, including artists, printmakers, sculptors, architects and painters. Comprising around 12 units with two new-builds, the evolution



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5 Havelock Walk, Forest Hill, London: living and working
6 Infill live-work unit at Havelock Walk

of the street provides some interesting lessons about what makes live-work schemes like this successful.

It was conceived and instigated by a local sculptor-cum-developer, Jeff Lowe, who saw the opportunity to make the most of what was then relatively cheap space for his own needs. He went on to develop several other properties in the street, and before long it had been designated a Conservation Area by Lewisham Borough Council. Lowe expected a return on his investment, but in contrast to most mainstream developers, he wasn't driven to maximize that return. As such, the street has evolved over time and it includes a mixture of refurbished former industrial buildings and some custom-build infill. The incoming residents also superseded a variety of less neighbourly businesses such as car mechanics. Their own activities are mutually supportive, without generating any problematic impacts either on one another or the surrounding area. Some, including Lowe, have also employed staff on the premises.

According to resident print maker Tessa Holmes, the street has a wonderful sense of community with regular social events. It also opens its doors to visitors on a regular basis, helping to capitalise on the synergy generated by having so many creative professionals concentrated in one place.



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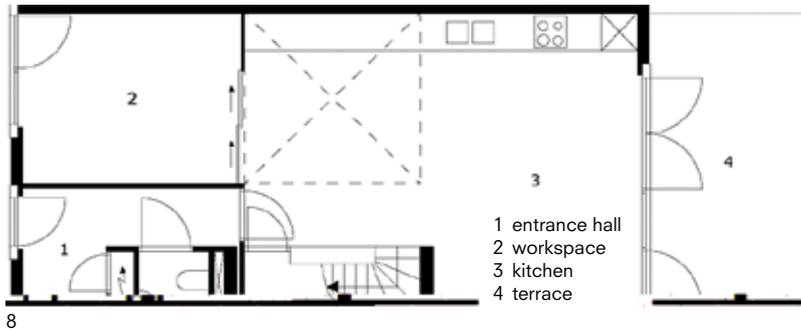
RED SQUARE, LONDON

Red Square is a much larger live-work scheme with 114 units developed by Ballymore. Duplexes are accessed by overhead gantries suspended between the buildings. This cleverly addresses the desire to separate pedestrian movement from heavy goods vehicles, while also helping to avoid the sense of social isolation sometimes associated with living and working at home. According to the architects, CZWG, the number of businesses also provides enough critical mass to support the inter-provision of services within the working community.

Since completion in 2001, at least 20 of the units have obtained permission for a change of use from live-work to residential use. It isn't known how many more may be solely in residential use and subsequently become lawful without needing permission. Hackney Council initially resisted these applications but, following policy changes, began to lose on appeal and so have acquiesced.

CUSTOM BUILD HOUSE, AMSTERDAM

Sitting between these two scales of live-work development – developer led vs. local entrepreneur made good – custom building by individuals or small cooperatives offers a middle way to deliver live-work opportunities. Because these tend to be one-offs however, they tend to remain below the radar. In Tübingen Südstadt, the regeneration of a former army barracks was promoted for custom building on an unprecedented scale. Significantly, the project was backed and coordinated by the city, which required the incorporation of mixed uses in every building. The breakdown between mixed uses and live-work proper isn't known, but anecdotally, it is likely to be significant. Tübingen provided a template for other large-scale custom-build projects elsewhere in Germany (e.g. Vauban), and subsequently the Netherlands (Ijburg and Almere). In Ijburg, for example, the municipality set out small plots (6m wide x 22m deep) and stipulated the maximum building envelope: 13m high with no



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To plan for live-work, however, urban designers may need to develop a greater understanding of what live-work entails, in all its forms

7 Custom-built town house with ground floor work space (ANA Architecten)
8 Ground floor plan (ANA Architecten)

setback from the street. As shown in the illustrated example by ANA Architects, several designers incorporated a work space in the ground floor front room, providing an effective buffer between the street and living rooms. Being initiated by owner-occupiers who genuinely want to combine their business and living accommodation, it is less likely that these sorts of initiatives will revert to purely residential use. Being plot based, they can also be more adaptable to change and consequently generate greater diversity in building form, age and design than larger purpose-built live-work schemes.

CONCLUSION

Live-work has the potential to generate many of the features that urban designers promote: diversity, stronger local economies, mixed uses, lower car usage and more walkable neighbourhoods. To plan for live-work however, urban designers may need to develop a greater understanding of what it entails, in all its forms, and how to foster it in new developments. This is especially true where the clients for large-scale residential-led developments are mainstream developers or volume house builders. In urban areas, where the loss of employment land is a sensitive local issue, live-work proposals have acquired the reputation of a kind of Trojan horse. But while there is no doubt that its integrity has been tarnished by developers and occupiers in the past, this says more about the demand for housing than it does about the value of live-work as a typology, and so could be viewed as a spur to promote the concept even more vigorously, rather than as a justification to dispense with it.

Perhaps it explains why live-work seems to be growing as an activity, but less so as a building typology. It hasn't yet gone mainstream, but in a world where work is increasingly viewed as 'something we do', rather than 'somewhere we go to', this seems set to change, though perhaps in more subtle ways than we imagined. ●

Jonathan Tarbatt, urban designer, architect, town planner, and Associate at JTP.



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New Issues in Affordable Housing Design

Andy von Bradsky looks at the changes reshaping affordable housing provision and design

When I was asked to write this article about affordable housing, I was struck by how much has changed in the last five years. It used to be the case that ‘affordable housing’ meant a form of subsidised housing with a reasonable proportion of public investment as an alternative to open market housing. At the same time, it was more straightforward and predictable for developers to provide it on sites they developed in a financially viable arrangement.

Austerity has changed all that. To make public investment go further, the Government introduced the concept of pegging rents of newly developed subsidised property to the open market, so housing costing 80 per cent of market rent is now deemed affordable. This allows housing associations and other registered providers to raise a higher proportion of investment privately, because they can borrow more against higher rents, thereby reducing government subsidy. In the meantime private rents and property costs have soared and the words ‘affordable’ and ‘housing’ do not sit comfortably together in many areas, particularly for those on low incomes and young people. This is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

Local authorities are responsible for identifying housing needs in their area and setting out how this need will be met through an up-to-date Local Plan. Their Strategic Housing Market Assessment will identify the amount and typology of affordable and specialist housing need in an area. For example,

1 St Bede’s, Bedford, providing innovative affordable housing for the elderly to kick-start town centre renewal. Photograph by Tim Crocker
 2 Stretford Road, Manchester new ‘affordable rent’ housing to generate income. Photograph by PRP Architects
 3 Portobello Square, London tenure blind affordable, shared ownership and high-value market sale family housing. Photograph by Andy Spain

the local demographics will indicate the level of need for housing for young people, families, older people and those with special needs as well as the requirements for different tenures.

The traditional form of affordable housing had a predominance of general needs housing for rent or shared ownership for single people, couples and families, with a proportion of specialist housing, that is for older people and the disabled. The housing typologies have included a high ratio of family housing, houses with gardens or duplexes, and flats, all designed to comply with the Housing and Community Agency (HCA) Housing Quality Indicators to ensure a balance of quality and sustainability.

Housing associations continue to provide a proportion of traditional lower rent social housing at typically 60 per cent of market value, but to do this they need to generate profit from developing more full market value homes to cross-subsidise their social housing programme.

A number of traditional registered social housing providers now offer a wide spectrum of products including shared ownership, shared equity and market sale housing to help fund the social housing element. In taking this approach, housing associations are competing in the open market with traditional house builders.

NEW MODELS

As austerity continues and funding for social housing and affordable rent programmes is constrained, new models of low cost housing are beginning to emerge that may meet 'affordable' criteria and bring new design challenges and opportunities. These include:

- **Market renting** – institutional investment in social and sub-market rental housing is a growing feature of the housing market with investors helping to fund new programmes for flats and family houses. The model is contingent on building at a minimum scale of 100 units and above, of consolidation for efficient cost and management, and a suite of standard designs. A number of councils are opting for this approach to satisfy their housing need and retain land as part of the business model. There is a need for more bespoke accommodation for young people in low-paid work or starting on the career ladder, as an alternative to house sharing in existing property owned by private landlords. There is a growing market for new shared housing models, typically two-bedroom, four-person flats which have bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms either side of shared living/ kitchen.

- **Starter homes** – we expect to hear far more in the months ahead about this much vaunted Government proposal to build 200,000 homes by 2020 based on a discounted low-cost home ownership model. The initiative is aimed at first-time buyers with a defined income that establishes a cost-base for construction. It is assumed it will work on unused brownfield and commercial sites of low value and if the Section 106 obligations for the site are waived. House builders will be encouraged to come forward with products based on quality and good design, providing a first test for the new design advisory function of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). These starter homes are typically smaller houses aimed at low-income families at affordable prices linked to purchasers' income. But there are only a few developers that offer new models on which the starter homes concept can be based.

- **Housing for older people** – the impact of rapidly changing demographics on housing supply has yet to fully make its mark. The traditional subsidised sheltered housing provision of the 1970s and 1980s is replaced with new typologies for all tenures including affordable, shared ownership and market sale. Independent living, extra-care housing and care homes models offer a range of alternatives for people at varying stages of ageing. The scale of provision can be from 80 homes or more, with even greater numbers in retirement villages, which provide a wide range of choices, community provision and integrated healthcare provision. Providing affordable housing for the elderly works well to help kick-start new large-scale development, regeneration and town centre renewal with innovative products that release much needed under-occupied family accommodation in the existing stock.

- **Self-build and custom-build** – the UK has the lowest proportion of self-build housing as a proportion of total output in much of Europe and the aim for politicians during the period of austerity has been to significantly increase the supply of self-build. We have seen some progress in delivering custom-build housing from some niche developers, with products tailored to low incomes. The register of those interested in self-build has greatly increased but as yet councils have not been as pro-active in making land available to satisfy this demand. We expect the Government to be announcing new planning rules covering this shortly.



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4 Shrewsbury Street, Manchester, new extra care housing with community hub. CGI by PRP Architects

CHALLENGES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ideally these new emerging innovative affordable housing models are integrated with market-sale housing within masterplans to provide balanced mixed developments in urban and suburban settings. The urban design challenge for affordable housing is how to successfully integrate them with other tenures in large developments.

Prior to the recession, planning policies emphasised the importance of creating 'sustainable communities' with tenures either separated or integrated on site and designed to be tenure blind – with no visual distinction between tenures. This approach comes under threat in some areas where rising land values and viability challenges are causing the unintended consequence of greater tenure segregation.

In London, tall buildings are proliferating with some 260 new towers in the development pipeline, 80 per cent of which are residential. Integrating tenures in towers is more challenging and inner London sites, for example, have less integration. Ideally the tenures should be integrated into a street scene with multiple tenures organised by core. There have been several high-profile campaigns over the use of 'poor doors' on schemes to separate out entrances between private and affordable housing tenures. However it is often the housing associations themselves which are driving the requirement for segregation of tenures in order to keep their tenants' service charges affordable.

The traditional mechanism for delivering affordable housing has been through grant funding to registered housing providers which either develop themselves or procure through Section 106 agreements. The National Planning Policy Framework requires financial viability to be taken into account and developers are able to negotiate the quantum of affordable housing that is provided on their sites. The use of viability testing has become contentious owing to lack of transparency and the sense that local stakeholders in the planning process,



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particularly the local community, are being disenfranchised as a result of planning decisions to lower the affordable housing level on schemes. Increasingly we are finding the provision reduced through viability testing and commuted sums agreed to provide housing on sites elsewhere. The net effect is a gradual reduction in the supply of affordable housing through Section 106 agreements which is not compensated for by an increase in funded programmes.

On the positive side, a number of local authorities are taking a more pro-active role in the development of sites that they own rather than divesting their land assets to developers, and provide a range of tenures including affordable, shared ownership and social housing provision. Local authorities are also imposing conditions on land for other developers to provide housing types that suit their specific needs rather than a market-led approach for maximum value.

Recent changes to regulations and standards following the Housing Standards Review have created the opportunity for greater flexibility between tenures, with a new Nationally defined Space Standard (NdSS) and national technical standards bedded in Building Regulations for cross-tenure application that supersedes the HCA's Design and Quality Standards and HQIs. The interchangeability of housing stock between tenures will occur throughout its lifetime; for example, a private purchaser may rent their property as a buy-to-let, and there is benefit over the long term for all housing to meet similar standards.

It will be interesting to see how many local authorities opt into the new space standard. The changing demographics also support the need for more space in the home, with inclusive design standards necessary for greater accessibility for the physically impaired. Lifetime neighbourhoods, where there is a mix of household types that offer opportunities for residents to move to more appropriate homes close to friends, neighbours and families, is an aspiration. Some argue that the space standard is a constraint on innovation and flexibility is required in the planning system to introduce new affordable products.

Other challenges for the affordable housing sector will arise as a consequence of the new government policy for Right-to-Buy for housing association tenants and the selling of high-value council homes to pay for the re-provision. It is too early to assess the likely impact of the policy but it may well have a profound impact on the distribution of social housing in urban and suburban areas.

5 Oval Quarter, Lambeth, London, affordable and private sale integrated to deliver regeneration, Photography by PRP Architects

URBAN DESIGN CHALLENGES

From an urban design perspective, the new paradigm for affordable housing offers new challenges and opportunities. The key issues include:

- 1. Tenure mix** – the range of tenure options is increasingly complex, with buy-to-let, build-to-rent, private renting as well as social housing. Tenures should be integrated with no visual distinction between rent and market sale, and be flexible for future changes.
- 2. Flexibility** – use of the Nationally defined Space Standard for new homes will ensure flexibility of tenures over their lifetime. Local authorities should default to the NdSS as a baseline requirement but not rule out innovative products if a case can be made.
- 3. Innovation** – new sub-market private rented accommodation, shared equity and discounted home ownership will emerge as a form of affordable housing to supplement social housing provision. They should be well integrated into local communities and close to transport and facilities.
- 4. Changing demographics** – how to integrate affordable housing for older people at higher densities with general housing in central, town centre and suburban sites combined with health, community and adult services.
- 5. Lifetime neighbourhoods** – a balance of tenures is required to create a mixed neighbourhood with integration of tenures preferred to segregation, and a range of products that enable residents to move to appropriate accommodation close to family and friends.

New affordable housing does not need to replicate the typical social housing model of the past – distinctive and easily recognisable developments for the poor on the edge of or separated from private development. In PRP's Wolfson Garden Cities submission with Shelter, our virtual new town, Stoke Harbour, offered an opportunity to create an ideal scenario. We provided a rich mix of new typologies and products for young renters, shared owners, families, self-builders, active elderly and older infirm in a mix of houses and flats at higher densities than traditional suburban development (see issue UD134 p26-28).

The new paradigm for affordable housing offers a rich and diverse mix of housing for more specific needs that is blended into the townscape. The challenge will be to provide truly affordable housing that is within the reach of those that need it, not housing for the poor clustered in low-value areas in isolated locations. ●

Andy von Bradsy, Chairman, PRP Architects

Recognising Excellence through the National Urban Design Awards

Noha Nasser, the Chair of the UDG's Awards group, introduces this year's first shortlisted entries



the submissions. This stage is often a lively debate of to-ing and fro-ing to decide which entries fulfil the criteria and where there may be the need to request further information or clarifications before agreeing a shortlist. Once the shortlisted entries for the Practice and Public Sector Awards have been chosen by the judging panel they are posted on the UDG's website for UDG members to vote for their winner. This open and democratic voting process is unique to the UDG and something that we are proud of. The Developer and Student Awards are determined by the judging panel.

The Book award, by its nature, is handled differently with leading publishers invited to put forward at least two books each. Eight shortlisted books are read by a group of committed urban design practitioners and academics before reaching a final decision on the winning book.

The Lifetime Achievement award remains top secret until the very last minute when the UDG Trustees select a key person of influence who has made an impact on the industry and a contribution to furthering urban design thinking and practice. This year, the UDG Lifetime Achievement Award rightly went to Sir Terry Farrell.

THE ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

The culmination of all of these deliberations comes on the night of the annual Awards ceremony held in the spring. This year 150 UDG members and guests gathered together in central London to recognise best practice at the forefront of the industry. David Rudlin delivered the keynote speech challenging urban design to break out of its ordinariness and complacency. Short films for each entry were screened amidst live jazz singing and dinner, adding to the atmosphere. Every year we are grateful to sponsors whose contributions make the UDG Awards Ceremony special.

Come along and join us for next year's UDG National Urban Design Awards on 9th March 2016 at the Victory Services Club, London to celebrate the best of the UK's local authorities, consultants, students and developers involved in the design of our towns, cities, streets, spaces and neighbourhoods. The following pages present the first of this year's shortlisted entries – for the Practice Project Award. Please retain this issue of the journal and remember to vote! ●

Since their foundation in 2007 the UDG's National Urban Design Awards have received over 400 submissions for its six Award categories, highlighting some of the outstanding and innovative urban design work being undertaken throughout the UK and beyond, from finished schemes to design guidance and publishing. Initially set up under the guidance of their founder John Billingham, the National Urban Design Awards stand apart in their commitment to urban design in the real world, with all the finalists being chosen by professionals working actively in urban design. The Awards Ceremony in the spring has gone from strength to strength, becoming a major highlight of the urban design calendar.

The Awards are run by a small committee of Convenors who are responsible for setting the criteria and submission guidelines for the six award categories:

- Practice Project award
- Public Sector award
- Student award
- Developer award
- Book award and
- Lifetime Achievement award.

A close partnership has been created from inception with the Francis Tibbalds Trust funding prizes for the £600 Student Award and the £1000 Practice Project Award. The Trust aims to promote excellence and good practice in urban design by awarding prizes, offering sponsorship and other similar activities. Janet Tibbalds, widow of the late

Francis Tibbalds and Chair of the Trust, presents prizes to the winners each year.

THE CRITERIA

To attract high quality submissions, the Awards Committee focuses on developing judging criteria that satisfy two main objectives. The first objective is that submissions have to be of high urban design merit, clearly demonstrating great aspirations and leadership, and following a rigorous process from identifying urban design objectives, undertaking a context-specific site analysis, and the conceptual development of the design through to delivery of the project. The Awards Committee places particular emphasis on the reflective design process with criteria that highlight the contribution to urban design practice and the lessons learned.

The second objective is how successfully communicated the entry is. Shortlisted entries are published in this journal, (see the following pages); therefore the clarity of writing style and the quality of images become important differentiators in the shortlisting process.

THE PROCESS

Once entries are initially submitted, a judging panel comprising one of the two editors of Urban Design's in the chair, an academic, the previous year's Practice award winner, the previous year's Public Sector award winner, a UDG patron, the Awards Committee Chair and Convenors, meet to shortlist

Lowestoft: Brooke Peninsula & Jeld Wen

Assael describe their masterplan for a sustainable urban waterfront



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Supported by a multi-disciplinary professional team, Assael worked closely with landowners and Waveney District Council during the evolution of the Lowestoft Lake Lothing and Outer Harbour Area Action Plan (AAP). Through rigorous survey and analysis, Assael's illustrative masterplan and design coding added detail to this plan and aimed to promote change.

CONTEXT

The Peninsula, a former shipbuilding yard from the early 20th century, is located on the shore of Lake Lothing to the east of Lowestoft town centre in Suffolk. Since trading ceased in 1992, the Peninsula has been poorly maintained, under-utilised and has lost its strong connection with the sea. The 18-hectare site therefore offers an exciting opportunity to revive the Outer Harbour Area and reinstate the historic relationship with water.

CONCEPT

The rigid structure of the shipyard is contrasted against the nature of the County Wildlife Site. Assael's concept embraces and merges these two existing elements and seeks to encourage biodiversity into the old shipping yard through the instigation of a strong framework of parks, gardens and trees while promoting sensitive access to the County Wildlife Site.

The creation of a new waterfront

armature connects the Peninsula to the east to Lowestoft town centre, to the west to Oulton Broad, and to the north via a new bridge link.

Components include a new linear waterfront park, habitat creation in the slipways with associated active frontages including a yacht club, central square and primary school, cafes, shops, work spaces and a wildlife visitor centre.

Sensitive interventions to the County Wildlife Site and existing ecology will 'touch the ground lightly' with raised paths and flood-proof housing for free movement of wildlife and water.

URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

These draw on the findings of a rigorous contextual analysis undertaken as part of the design and consultation process. Ecological surveys mapped the protected species found within just 1km of the site and, in contrast, a large proportion of the site is hardstanding, warehouses, docks with boat moorings and disused infrastructure. Celebrating this contrast in the character of new forms of development and their connectivity and associated public realm were the primary urban design objectives.

CHARACTER, DENSITY & BUILT FORM

Promoting different places to live, from apartments and town houses along the main avenue and gateways to family houses in

connecting streets and areas sensitive to intervention, generated six character areas: Brooke Peninsula, East Quay, West Quay, Central Area, County Wildlife Site and West Side Neighbourhood. By balancing a mix of tenures, a sustainable community of 900 dwellings is encouraged.

Higher densities in the form of landmark apartment buildings are promoted to the northernmost part of the Peninsula with lower densities allocated to the rural edges south of the development, providing an interface between the County Wildlife Site and existing residential areas.

EASE OF MOVEMENT

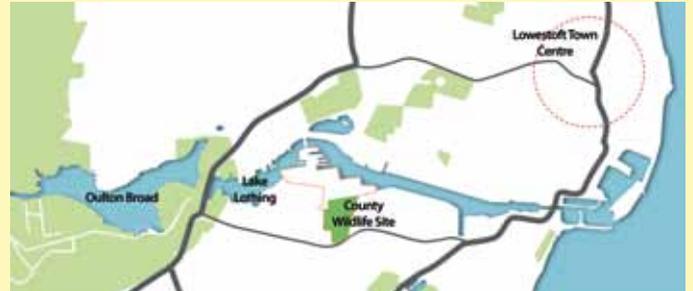
The movement network focuses on providing local facilities, such as shops and play areas, accessible on foot or by public transport, creating a walkable network of streets, footpaths and cycleways.

The introduction of a new entrance and main avenue creates a sense of arrival, culminating in a central square. The site is orientated around this space and serves as a community hub and meeting place with associated school, community centre, cafes, play parks and bus service to spark activity. A number of linkages then connect to other character areas and the whole district is opened to the rest of Lowestoft via a new cycle and pedestrian bridge over Lake Lothing.

- 1 Aerial view of the proposed masterplan for a sustainable urban waterfront
- 2 Existing and proposed figure ground maps
- 3 The proposed urban armature of the masterplan
- 4 Lowestoft context
- 5 Higher density apartment buildings promoted to the most northern part of the Peninsula
- 6 Flood-proof housing and raised paths 'touch the ground lightly' for free movement of wildlife and water into the County Wildlife Site



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PUBLIC REALM

A range of site-wide strategies to complement the six character areas define the public realm of streets, footpaths and open spaces. Hierarchy was key to distinguish the various types of street enabling people to identify with a main avenue, or central square. In contrast, open and more remote spaces incorporate a series of hides for visitors to observe wildlife in their natural environment.

The landscape strategy divides the site into four keys zones, whilst the biodiversity strategy aims to add value to these zones. A sustainable urban drainage strategy celebrates the rain water cycle and the lighting strategy aims to ensure the public realm is safe and welcoming with glare reduction and creative lighting elements. Finally, a landscape strategy promotes structured and unstructured play opportunities for all.

DELIVERY PROCESS

The Area Action Plan set the vision and Assael's masterplan establishes detailed site-wide strategies, the components that underpin it, the built form, land uses and the key development structuring elements, including the main street hierarchy and open space network to illustrate how to achieve this vision. This includes a phased implementation plan of 30-40 dwellings in each phase with associated infrastructure.

This was backed up with a design code that set out the guidance to detailed elements of the design. Some are site-wide and some are specific to areas of the site, such as the four different street types: the Main Avenue, the Residential Street, Home Zone Street and the Park Edge, defined by cross sections and specifications.

The AAP was adopted in 2012 and the masterplan, with its site-wide strategies

and design code, was seen as 'minded to approve' last year with consent due in July 2015.

LESSONS LEARNED

The challenge was how to open up this formerly fragmented, inaccessible location to its environs in a sensitive way that enhances nature and provides a sustainable urban neighbourhood in a flood-prone area.

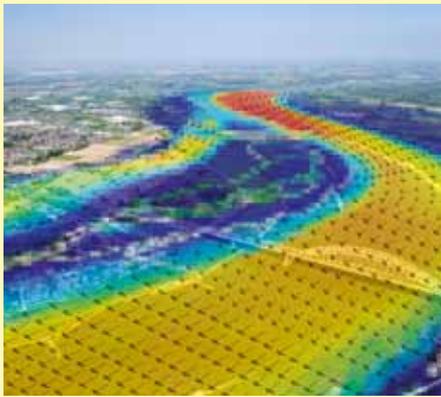
The approach of meticulous survey and analysis of the physical and natural features of the context demonstrates that the very constraints, which at first seemed to blight development, can be used to promote new places to live, work and visit, which reinforce the distinctive character of the place, improve connectivity and enhance our understanding and respect of nature. ●



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Eiland Veur Lent, Nijmegen, Netherlands

Baca Architects rework the Dutch landscape to cope with flooding



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Approximately 60 per cent of the Dutch population lives behind dykes. With the risk of flooding set to increase as a result of climate change, many new and pioneering solutions are being considered and developed to deal with this increasing problem. One such solution for a major new flood relief channel between Nijmegen and Lent in the Netherlands began construction in 2013.

ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

Following the need to evacuate a quarter of a million residents in 1995, the Dutch approach shifted from defensive strategies to acknowledging that space for water was needed. *Room for the River* is a major government design plan that aims to address flood protection and improve environmental conditions in the areas surrounding Holland's rivers.



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Rijkswaterstaat identified that the water discharge (river flow) on the Rhine could increase from 16,000 m³/s to 18,000 m³/s with climate change. This would increase water levels by 0.3 m along significant parts of the river system, enough to potentially overtop the dykes and flood hundreds of thousands of homes.

The holistic project includes a major dyke relocation and new 1km-long flood relief channel, intended to reduce flood-risk and support urban growth in Lent, reducing housing demand in Nijmegen and Arnhem.

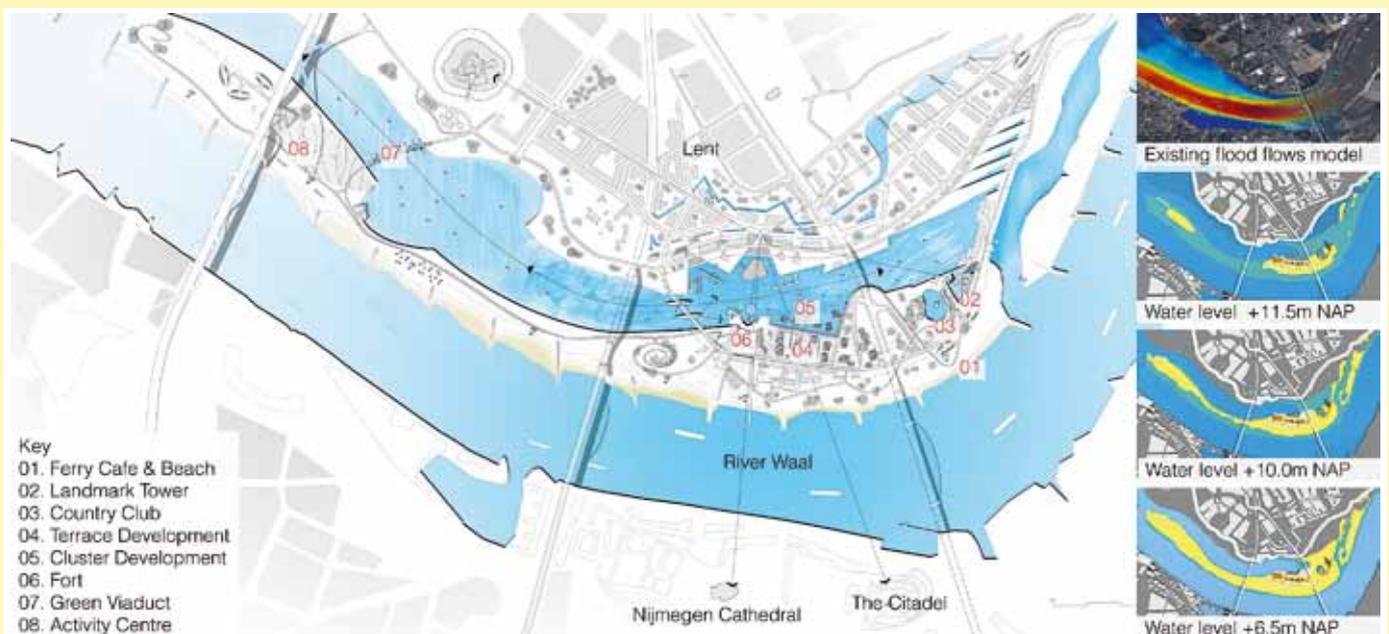
The project is the largest of 40 projects to reduce flood-risk through the Dutch national *Room for the River* programme. It also involves the creation of three new bridges over the three years of construction and redevelopment of the island created by the new water channel.

DELIVERING THE SOLUTION

To cope with the increased water flows the government agreed a €365 million plan to relocate part of the 500-year-old dyke and to create a 3 km flood-relief channel. This enabled the land behind the new dyke to be safely developed.

Major logistic challenges included the relocation of 50 families in the route of the channel, as well as constructing a new bridge into Nijmegen and extending the Waalbrug, clearly not *A Bridge Too Far*. The Dutch authorities established a public private partnership between Nijmegen Municipality and GEM Waalsprong responsible for developing the design and delivering the project, respectively. The work has been tendered in a series of packages, including engineering, bridge design and masterplanning.

Following completion of the flood relief channel a 3-hectare site will be released for development. This is to be led by the private partner to deliver the new housing and landmark building. The local municipality will take forward the surrounding landscape plans. Specialists in waterfront and water architecture, Baca Architects, were invited to draw up plans for the 'island', shown in the illustrations. The idea of the Retreat is to combine water recreation, river ecology, flood-resilient development and sustainable infrastructure to create a self-sufficient eco-leisure destination.



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1-2 Aerial photos before showing the route of the flood relief channel and during construction showing water in the new channel
 3 Masterplan with river rooms, plus topographic mapping showing the change in land profile during low to high water and during flood conditions.

4 Landmark buildings
 5 Landmark tower
 6 Flood-resilient cluster homes
 7 Land and waterscape showing the flood channel during low and high waters



4

EILAND VEUR LENT

The land between the river and the flood-relief channel will change from a peninsula in the summer, when the water level is low, to an island in the winter when the water level rises 5m.

To the north of the main river, low-lying land is to be excavated to make room for seasonal flooding, creating a new protected water arena and series of outdoor 'water rooms'. Landscape characteristics will include river dunes, embankments, dykes, riparian habitat and marginal river stands.

The new development comprises a 70m zero-carbon landmark tower to the east, overlooking the waters, and a series of 100 innovative flood-resilient homes / holiday lets, plus a floating quay. The two towers represent the River Waal and the smaller flood relief channel.

Shallow riverbanks create a more natural relationship with the water and allow specific areas such as the Roman remains,



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wetlands and the historic fort to be revealed during summer months.

The lost Fort Knodsenburg is brought back to life by a public square and activity centre, raised from the historic site, and covered with a living roof and 3000 sqm solar PV canopy.

The new dyke to the north of the relief channel will incorporate a new foot and cycle path along the water's edge and linking districts of the new development in Lent. A wetland area behind the dyke will be created to the east, within which floating homes are planned. The banks of the channel will slope gradually into the water to create an urban beachfront overlooking water sports and activities. The west of the peninsula is reserved as parkland for recreation, nature and seasonal flooding.

INNOVATION

The scheme is designed to respect the heritage of the area, whilst pioneering new methods of flood-mitigation in an environmentally sensitive way.

The development on the island has been planned with self-sufficiency in mind, incorporating solar PVs, heat exchange, rainwater harvesting and reed beds.

The dynamic exchange of land and water is celebrated and enhanced through a landscape that touches and engages with the water's edge and flood resilient buildings that can showcase modern methods to cope with flooding.

5-6

LESSONS LEARNED

This major engineering project has been the catalyst to provide new homes, transport improvements and landscaping, to the benefit of the city, wider region and the local environment. Through considering the potential wider benefits from the outset of the project, the engineering solution has been adapted to provide a more integrated solution, rather than a solely cost-driven solution. This shows that managing increased flood risk can simultaneously help to reduce pressure for development and provide environmental benefits.

This project has the potential to disconnect the houses remaining on the peninsula from their existing community. Instead, through sensitive development and place-making, new and old should complement and enhance this unique riverine location. The existing residents will occupy part of an exclusive island location while the residents to the north of the channel become part of an expanded Lent village with a whole new waterfront.

Once completed, Eiland Veur Lent is designed to be an exemplar, integrated solution and showcase for international architectural and technical innovation. ●

Aylesbury Estate Regeneration

A new masterplan by HTA Design LLP unpicks the modernist estate to promote healthy living

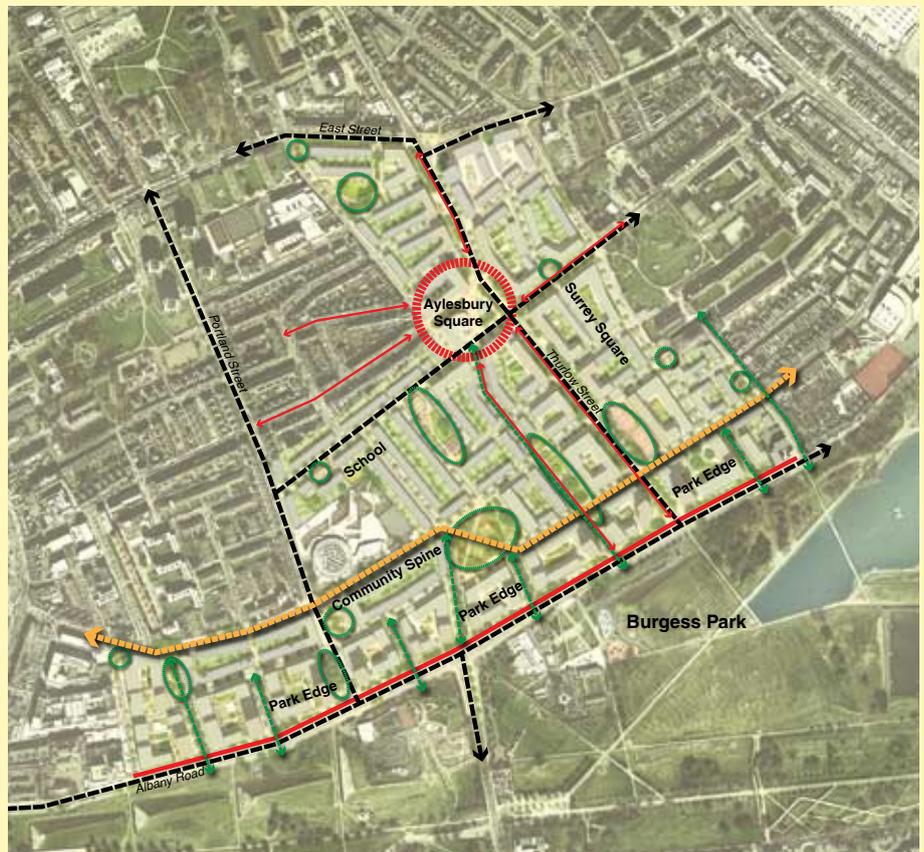
THE RISE AND FALL OF ESTATES

The London Borough of Southwark was until the 1960s based on the ordering principles of the urban street. In the years after the Second World War, the combination of low housing stock, a booming population and intense political pressure led to Local Authorities experimenting with utopian modernist ideals. New system built blocks enabled very rapid construction and allowed housing to be delivered in large volumes. The Aylesbury Estate was one of the most ambitious projects in the country at the time. However, doubts about design and construction began to emerge before the buildings were even complete. This new utopia, with 'streets in the sky' replacing the traditional street, led to social problems through the loss of surveillance, lack of familiarity and reduced encounters with neighbours. Streets provide the opportunity of interaction between neighbours and the rest of the city. By contrast, post-war housing estates like the Aylesbury estate stand out from their surroundings.

By 2010, Southwark had produced an Area Action Plan and in 2012 sought a development partner to help rejuvenate the ailing estate. During the 18 month bidding process, HTA, in architectural collaboration with Hawkins/Brown and Mae, worked with Notting Hill Housing Group, Barratt Homes, Southwark Council and local stakeholder group Creation Trust on a vision to redevelop the Aylesbury Estate. This was a rare opportunity to revitalise a part of London and to knit it seamlessly back into the surrounding city. We envisaged a place in which families would choose to bring up their children: on safe streets and in well maintained parks, close to good schools and excellent job opportunities, right in the heart of London. We plan on delivering this transformation by replacing the 2,750 relatively low-density homes with 3,500 new ones. All social housing will be replaced and the number of houses and homes with front doors at street level will be significantly increased without losing open space.

CREATING GREAT STREETS

Our plan for the Aylesbury removes the physical and psychological barriers that signal the edges of the existing estate through a proposed street network that provides safer, more attractive and convenient access to the new homes. By continuing the subtle deflections and offsets that characterise



- 1
- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| — Major roads | — Park Edge | ○ Open spaces |
| — Pedestrian spine | ○ Aylesbury Square | — Burgess Park green links |
| | — Aylesbury Square links | |



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the surrounding urban grain, the new street pattern will be more appealing to the cyclist and pedestrian. By reversing the ethos of the estate from one of separated modes to a pedestrian/cyclist focus, a healthier lifestyle is encouraged. The streets have been designed to draw Burgess Park into the masterplan, promoting the use of leisure and recreational facilities on the estate's doorstep. Distinctive new squares and pocket parks form the focal

points of the diverse neighbourhoods and each open space has its own identity and purpose. The character of each space is carried through in the approach to landscape, planting, play and the amenity provision as well as the varied character of the buildings that enclose each space. The Community Spine is a strategic East-West link between Walworth Road and Old Kent Road which houses a number of community facilities

- 1 Illustrative masterplan and strategy diagram
- 2 Figure ground maps of the existing estate and proposed masterplan
- 3 Visualisation of Westmoreland Park
- 4 Visualisation of the new residential scaled streets
- 5 Aerial sketch of the Aylesbury masterplan



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linked through open spaces promoting a healthier walking lifestyle. Generous cycle storage, pedestrian only streets and a view of green space from every habitable room contribute to the healthy living concept. By ensuring these spaces form links with each other, a robust green network has been established across the area making it easy to meander and explore the outdoors.

HOMES FOR ALL

To accommodate the shift in density across the site a robust urban design strategy was conceived. Traditional back-to-back terraced housing has been used in the lower density neighbourhoods which are situated adjacent to existing low-rise housing stock, such as the Walworth Conservation Area. A combination of higher density typologies, such as mansion blocks and towers arranged in perimeter block form, have been used along the primary routes of Thurlow Street and Albany Road where the additional height is counterbalanced by the width of the streets. The towers, with one exception at the new neighbourhood square, are contained along the Park Edge adjacent to Burgess Park, thus avoiding overbearing existing properties, maximising views across the park and increasing legibility and orientation across the wider area. The height of the towers increases towards the three main gateways on Albany Road. Heights



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across the mansion blocks are staggered and stepped from four to eight storeys in order to avoid making the blocks' appearance overbearing on the streetscape. Compared to the existing provision the masterplan includes a greater choice of dwellings ranging from one bedroom apartments to five bedroom family homes with gardens and terraces. Maisonettes on the ground floor help to significantly increase the number of front doors and contribute to the liveliness of the streetscape.

LESSONS LEARNED

A number of elements proved crucial to the success of the project. Firstly, being a multi-disciplinary practice enabled the masterplan to be conceived holistically through a collaboration of architects, urban designers, landscape architects and sustainability consultants from the same office, in a collaborative process of continuous review and coordination through iterative design loops. Secondly, as a masterplan of this scale will have a significant impact on residents of the estate, local businesses and a wider community far beyond the confines of the development boundary, an open and thorough process of consultation was vital to both inform the design and underpin support for the redevelopment. A programme of events involving the entire project team, continued a process started with the AAAP, included

workshops, tours, pop up events, exhibitions, and brought valuable insight and feedback which, along with regular presentations to the Southwark planning team and Design Review Panel, helped to shape both the masterplan and first phase. Whilst we experienced strong resident support for the proposals, some groups have become more active in protest against regeneration, even where there is a commitment to replace lost social housing. Following the approval of the masterplan, a group opposed to the demolition of Aylesbury, shifted their attentions from the Council and developer towards HTA and the design team, using social media and physical protests at our office and at an awards ceremony. The stated aim was to discourage architects from engaging in regeneration, but despite aggressive verbal attacks, we continue to believe in the benefit of continuous open and honest local engagement to ensure the delivery of mixed communities with better quality social housing, with the passion developed over 30 years of involvement in community led regeneration. We passionately believe that the Aylesbury masterplan will transform the area by creating overlooked, attractive and safe streets which will connect vibrant places and beautiful buildings, restoring civic pride, encouraging a healthy lifestyle and providing homes that are enduringly popular in a central London location. ●

Barnsley Town Centre

IBI Group reports on what to do when your development partner pulls out of a flagship scheme

This was the dilemma facing Barnsley Council at the end of 2013 when years of planning the redevelopment of the town centre Markets Area came to an abrupt halt.

The council now needed a fundamental rethink but they were determined that something had to happen and quickly if confidence in the town centre was not to evaporate completely.

IBI Group recommended a step-by-step process to regroup and refocus the council's resources and work with local people including retailers and market traders. A *Town Centre Prospectus* was our first step – a new vision as a public statement of the council's intentions. The resulting *Prospectus* is more than a PR document: the *Prospectus* shows how real improvements can be achieved, early wins delivered and potential investors and tenants reengaged.

A FRESH APPROACH

Conventional wisdom would suggest that a partnership with a lead developer was essential to deliver such an ambition but with their fingers freshly burnt, the council were receptive to another way – incremental change facilitated by the public sector.

The council had four key assets:

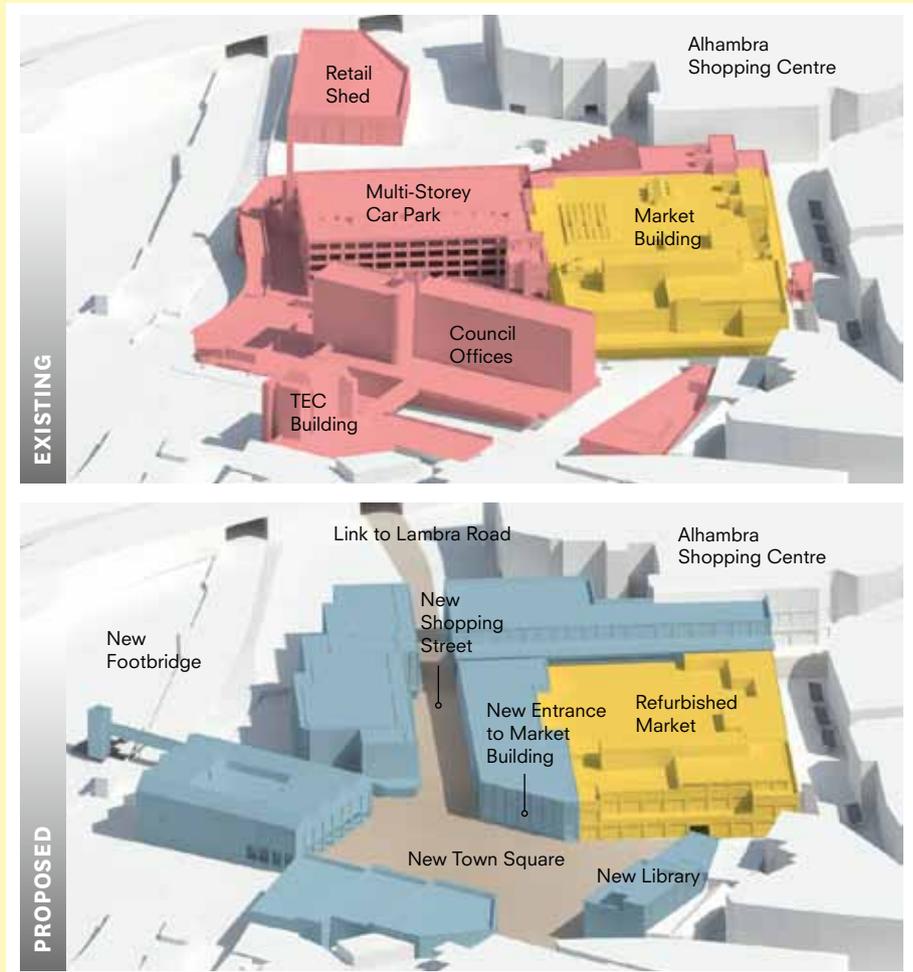
- £41million of capital funds that had been earmarked for the failed development scheme
- Ownership of the land
- The energy and drive of members and officers, headed by the Leader of the council who was prepared to personally champion the new project
- Barnsley's markets differentiate the retail offer and draw shoppers from across the region.

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE

Historical plans show that the original market prospered at the confluence of radial routes from outlying neighbourhoods. Post-war changes brought the Metropolitan Centre – a brute concrete megastructure with its service ramps and multi-storey car park along with an elevated ring road: the town centre was cut off from surrounding communities and the market relegating behind shops.

We undertook technical studies of movement, buildings and infrastructure showing that:

- Footfall and connectivity could be restored by reopening lost routes;
- We could cut and carve the existing



structures through partial demolition and part refurbishment yet still radically reconfigure the urban structure;

- We could clear space for new public realm including a new place to express Barnsley's civic identity; and
- The markets could be made visible again, to animate the town centre with their colour and diversity.

DECONSTRUCTING THE MEGASTRUCTURE

Received wisdom instructs that post-war megastructures with their complex levels and service arrangements cannot change incrementally in the way that traditional streets can. But the challenge at Barnsley was to unpick this complex of market building, shops, council offices and multi-storey car park to allow exactly that sort of incremental change and create open air thoroughfares. The solution was to rediscover a street datum where the Metropolitan Centre

was level with the historic Cheapside. Engineers confirmed that the car park structure could be dismantled to reveal our street level as a platform for new retail and leisure superstructures. As the prevailing land slopes down to the railway line, this deck extends over a substantial service undercroft which can be reused.

The Cheapside deck became our new street level, linking back to Lambra Road and reconnecting with surrounding communities to the south and east that had been cut off from the town centre for decades. New connectivity also includes improved routes from the station, the Victorian arcade and via a new footbridge from car parking relocated alongside the ring road.

These routes converge on the centre-piece of the plan – a new town square on the site of the cleared council offices. For the first time, the town centre will have a place for outdoor events but the square also allows a visible entrance to the indoor market,

- 1 Metropolitan Centre (view from north) showing demolition (pink), refurbished Market Hall (yellow), and potential new buildings (blue)
- 2 Market Area Masterplan: creating individual sites for incremental change
- 3 Proposed Pedestrian Bridge linking directly to new Town Square
- 4 New shopping street restoring link to Lambra Road



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and a permeable interface with outdoor market stalls.

NOW AND LATER

Budgetary constraints meant that our approach had to be based on what we could do today and what could be left for the future. The council's money could pay for demolition, public realm, refurbishing/extending the market building and a new library, leaving a range of other sites to be brought forward by the private sector on a site-by-site basis. The programme for these sites is therefore deliberately open-ended and can include retail, commercial, leisure or residential uses but sufficiently well grouped to allow uses to be clustered: a subsequent proposal for a multiplex cinema and associated cafes/ restaurants has now been accommodated.

In any event, empty sites and blank hoardings are to be avoided so early wins include 'pop-up' and meanwhile uses including 'trees on wheels' plant nursery, decant space for market traders and temporary car parking.

The council are now working with prospective developers and tenants to secure interest in the development plots the plan creates. Meanwhile, engineering studies have been undertaken and demolition contracts tendered. IBI has been commissioned to design the Metropolitan Centre refurbishment, the town square and the new library.

LESSONS LEARNED

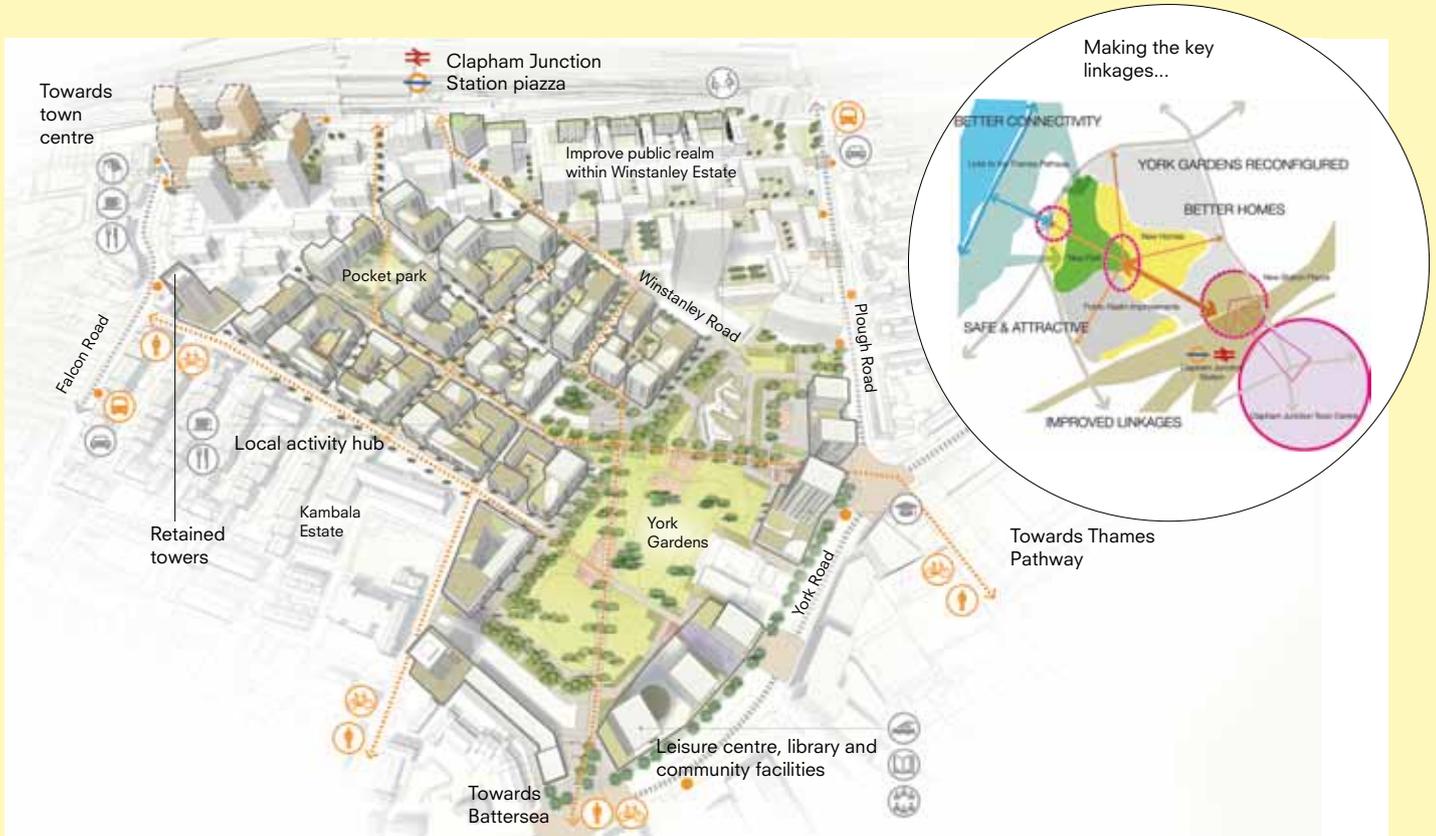
Many town centres face similar challenges and could benefit from Barnsley's approach:

1. An all or nothing approach to redevelopment is vulnerable to changing market pressures. Unlocking the potential for incremental change requires breaking down megastructures to create a finer grain for diversity and change.
2. New development approaches can reflect the changing role of the public sector as facilitator through leadership, policy and targeted investment.
3. A Big Architecture problem with its complex, three-dimensional relationships demands an integrated collaboration across professions.

4. Ugly and unloved buildings may still be worth retaining to maintain trading activity, reuse embodied resources and phase investment.
5. Plans take time to implement and usually end up different to predictions. Allow for the unforeseen and create conditions for continual change. Don't get too fixated on the end-state.
6. Bricks and mortar are only half of the equation. Places need to be considered as both hardware and software with management and social programmes dovetailed into physical regeneration. A guiding theme is making an Intelligent Barnsley: bringing together the physical place and the virtual place, starting with a next-generation library as a digital hub.
7. Big and small steps. Ambitious plans can be complemented by simple gestures: Barnsley council provided shopkeepers with folding chairs for shoppers to sit outside while public realm works replace the street benches. ●

Winstanley & York Road Estates Regeneration

Levitt Bernstein reintroduce perimeter blocks to this London estate



Levitt Bernstein was appointed to develop a long term Spatial Strategy for one of the most challenging estates in west London. The Winstanley and York Road Estates are located in the London Borough of Wandsworth, just north of Clapham Junction Station and the town centre. The estates were the source of the London riots in this part of London in 2011 and the area effectively acts as a barrier between Clapham Junction and the River Thames because of the lack of legible and safe routes.

The plans are intended to transform the neighbourhood into an attractive, green and fully integrated part of Wandsworth. The proposals are based upon a perimeter block strategy, with the new housing recreating traditional London streets, linking into the surrounding context and enhancing permeability.

There is extreme political sensitivity to the issue of gentrification in the area given the history of the riots and therefore the masterplan was developed following extensive consultation with existing residents, many of whom will be rehoused in the new scheme. The consultation process involved showing the residents different levels of development and refurbishment with 70 per

cent support for demolition and rebuilding of the majority of the estate.

The public realm will be transformed with pedestrian and cyclist friendly streets. New links to York Road, Clapham Junction Station, a reconfigured York Gardens and a sequence of open spaces are located within easy access of all residents. Access to the community facilities and green infrastructure are emphasised, as well as promoting walkability, access to public transport and creating cycling links within the area and beyond. Shared surface streets are envisaged as play spaces for children as well as providing a framework for the emerging strategy. A rich range of housing typologies and tenures will ensure a mixed community.

The long term vision includes improvements not just to the physical environment but carefully considers the delivery of commercial and community services, creation of jobs, education and training opportunities for local people.

URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The proposed regeneration period of 10-15 years was developed from the spatial analysis of the two estates and their wider context, together with a holistic view of

strategic planning policy and guidelines.

This summarises the vision for the future of Winstanley and York Road Estates:

- A safe and welcoming neighbourhood that connects with its surroundings, making the most of its direct links to Clapham Junction Station and the Thames.
- A variety of housing and public spaces that are safe and attractive to a mixed community.
- Improved public spaces will enhance the existing environment and create an inviting, safe and healthy place for children and families.
- A new network of safe and attractive routes through the area for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Local residents to be given the opportunity to take charge and manage areas of public space themselves.
- Constant activity and opportunities for social interaction occur on a regular basis through carefully considered design proposals.
- The station area and other local hubs to promote Falcon Road as the primary area for shopping and leisure, creating a mixed use environment with opportunities for local employment.

- 1 Aerial view of the emerging masterplan
- 2 Existing figure-ground
- 3 Proposed figure-ground
- 4 Typical urban block showing range of typologies and tenures around a shared courtyard.

The proposed urban grain varies in response to orientation, scale and massing. The framework creates a friendlier, more intimate scale to streets. Perimeter block typologies ranging from 4-8 storeys help to create a well-defined and enclosed network of streets and spaces. This is a high density neighbourhood, but it isn't high rise.

The framework envisages 1677 homes within the new neighbourhood ranging from densities of around 180-560 u/ha, an overall increase of 195per cent over the existing 858 homes. Much of our early work was based on a study of typologies, using examples from the UK and Europe to illustrate how innovative high density solutions could help to create lively streetscapes.

The Station Precinct and York Road development provide for wide podium footprints to accommodate the non-residential

uses – with taller blocks creating a sense of destination at the station.

DELIVERY PROCESS

New homes will be provided for all affected council tenants and resident owners, together with an increased range of tenures and mix of homes to meet the housing needs of the Borough. Existing community facilities are relocated into more appropriate accommodation, a new leisure centre allowed for, with additional non-residential development that could include retail, catering, hotel use, training use and other employment uses.

Detailed cost proposals have determined the scheme to be financially viable and provide a basis for further detailed discussion between the council, residents, and stakeholders – to enable the comprehensive regeneration of the area to proceed.

It is important to recognise that the strategy needs to be robust, yet flexible enough to take in the constantly changing market, client and political needs. This will then establish an overall spatial strategy that will continue to evolve as individual elements and the development programme are considered further.

CONTRIBUTION TO URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE

The scheme successfully negotiates a comfortable mid-point for an aspiration for a dense quality neighbourhood. It achieves this, not so much through the masterplan, but rather through a carefully negotiated set of parameters and a pragmatic approach to the development process. The aim is to build momentum within the early phases which does not scare the market, but which establishes the location and development values. This places a great deal of pressure on the masterplan as a tool to give the client confidence that quality can be maintained and to set parameters for future development. As such it is an example of how pragmatic modern masterplanning can respond to the current economic climate.

Development is carefully controlled where it needs to be. Within the soft centre of the area, densities are lower as the proportion of family dwellings increases. Frontages to the primary elevation along York Road to the north and the station plaza to the south are given a slightly freer rein in terms of height and mass as development values dictate.

LESSONS LEARNED

Focusing on delivery right from the start of the design development process was crucial. Residents and all stakeholders have been part of the process from very early stages. Thus, the evolving masterplan has developed through joint consensus on key objectives and design principles and is not a finished design set in stone, but a flexible framework, which is open to innovation and change.

The design code accompanying the framework will need a carefully balanced approach, ensuring that the agreed central principles are protected, but allowing enough freedom for future proposals to provide creative ways of delivering the longer term vision for the area. ●



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C Joanna Crotch
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Master of Arts in Urban Design consists of 1 year full time or 2 years part time or individual programme of study. Shorter programmes lead to Post Graduate Diploma/Certificate. Project based course focusing on the creation of sustainable environments through interdisciplinary design.

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W www.ncl.ac.uk/apl/study/postgraduate/taught/urbandesign/index.htm

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W www.ntu.ac.uk/apps/pss/course_finder/108169-1/6/pgcert_planning_urban_design_and_sustainable_development.aspx
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C Giulia Carabelli
E g.carabelli@ucl.ac.uk
The MSc Building and Urban Design in Development programme combines cultural, social, economic, political and spatial analysis in the effort to present a critical response to the growing complexities within the design and production of urban realms.

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C Filipa Wunderlich

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W www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/planning/programmes

The MSc/Dipl Urban Design & City Planning has a unique focus on the interface between urban design & city planning. Students learn to think in critical, creative and analytical ways across the different scales of the city – from strategic to local -and across urban design, planning, real estate and sustainability.

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W www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/planning/programmes/postgraduate/mresinter-disciplinary-urban-design
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Grub Street

I used to teach architecture students with an urban designer called Mike Menzies, who also taught them environmental psychology. One thing I learnt from Mike was about Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. This is often expressed as a pyramid of layers, with physiological needs being at the base, and self-actualisation being at the summit. One of the most basic physiological needs, if not the most basic, is to eat, and I think that is why I get impatient with food critics, who often elevate this fundamental activity into something precious and rarified. ('.....cakey drop scone topped with a sultry duck liver parfait, jammy damsons and tiny, frothy bouquets of elderflower' - the Guardian).

I can't claim that this is totally rational, because if we need to eat then we should eat as well as possible, and certainly our sensory needs (which are located somewhere in that pyramid sandwich) can be satisfied by delightful combinations of taste, colour and texture which we can find in intelligently prepared and cooked food. No, I think my impatience, and my switching off Radio 4 every time Jay Rayner comes on, is at least partly to do with my stubborn prejudice for the ordinary and the artisanal over high art. I liked Frank Gehry in the 1970s when he made buildings out of corrugated steel and chain-link fencing - less so in the 1990s when he could afford to use titanium.

I often use Yotam Ottolenghi's recipes, but also I often expediently miss out items from his long lists of ingredients. His recipes are rooted in the artisanal, but I suspect that Turkish peasants too may not always have ready access to pomegranate molasses and four different kinds of tomato.

So I am very inclined to favour street food, a genre which at its best I take to be characterised by a combination of excellence and lack of pretension. In Digbeth we have had since 2012 the Digbeth Dining Club (DDC), an event which happens every Friday evening starting around 5.30pm. It is in a yard across the street from the Custard Factory, squeezed in between the railway viaduct and the new workspace building, also in blue brick, called Rhubarb. Opening off the yard is a big room in one of the viaduct arches, where there is a licensed bar and rows of trestle tables and benches.

In the yard each Friday there are five or six food stalls, selected in changing combinations from the organisers from a heterogeneous list which includes The Original Patty Man, Canoodle, Manila Munchies, The Hungry Toad, Habaneros, Platinum Pancakes, Fat Duck Spuds, Spectacular Goat, and The Vegan Grindhouse. By 6.00pm it is seriously crowded and noisy in both spaces, a bit too noisy for me when the DJ on the edge of the street starts up as well. The quality of



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food is excellent, and in the past two years DDC has won the *Best Food Event in the UK* award at the British Street Food Awards.

I think that what is satisfying about the DDC is that there is a correspondence between the nature of the event and the nature of the quarter that accommodates it. Both have an authenticity (a dangerous word, I know, because it invites one to suspect one is being sold the opposite), both are rather rough-edged and make a virtue out of unexpected juxtapositions and a degree of opportunism and transience. The day after my last visit I was at Moseley Farmers' Market, buying Warwickshire and Worcestershire potatoes, broad beans, rhubarb and cheese, and there is also a similar fit between event and place there. If you were to try to transfer one event to the other place, it wouldn't entirely work. Mike

also coined the formula $place = space + use$, which I stole a long time ago, and which is blu-tacked to my studio wall. The DDC has turned a left-over space into a place, and it is one of the strange mosaic of places that makes this quarter. ●

Joe Holyoak, architect and urban designer

1-2 The Digbeth Dining Club, Birmingham

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