

DIARY OF EVENTS

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

WEDNESDAY 7TH JULY

ANNUAL URBAN DESIGN GROUP LECTURE

ALL CHANGE PLEASE!

Speaker: Sir Peter Hall, Director, Institute of Community Studies and Professor of Planning at Bartlett School of Planning

Transport interchanges are a key structural element in strategic planning of major metropolitan cities. Sir Peter Hall will discuss how they are handled in best practice around the world.

WEDNESDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER

THE VALUE OF PUBLIC SPACES

Speaker: Julia Thrift, Director of CABA Space

The transformation of our public spaces will require significant investment. Will this be money well spent? What is the evidence for the wide range of benefits that high quality parks and public spaces provide?

WEDNESDAY 13TH OCTOBER

HIGH - WHY?

Speaker: George Ferguson, RIBA President and Managing Director of Acanthus Ferguson Mann, Bristol

THURSDAY 11TH & FRIDAY 12TH NOVEMBER

ANNUAL UDG CONFERENCE IN MANCHESTER

Further details and booking form in October UDQ

WEDNESDAY 17TH NOVEMBER

BARKING REACH – FROM DEGRADATION TO RIVERSIDE CITY

Martin Brady, Team Leader on the Barking Reach Master Plan project, together with a panel from the London Development Agency, English Partnerships, Greater London Authority will lead a discussion on the development of this brownfield site in the Thames Gateway.

WEDNESDAY 8TH DECEMBER

Christmas Party - further details in October UDQ

For further details contact Susie Turnbull,
Email udsl@udg.org.uk or Tel 01235 833797

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POST EGAN'S BLUES



For a number of years the Urban Design Group has been concerned with the lack of appropriate urban design skills, and has lobbied for an improvement in the skills of all those involved in the built environment. Articles in this journal have repeatedly referred to this issue and gradually we have been joined by almost everybody involved, from the top echelons of government to those on the front line of development. A cursory browse through other professional magazines reveals the concern: "Mayor pressed to fund design skills", "Review uncovers dearth of urban design experts"(Planning 16/4/04), "Fine design needs skills, not luck" (Regeneration and Renewal, 16/4/04).

Five years ago Lord Rogers' Task Force warned of the need to improve skills and suggested the creation of Centres of Excellence. The very few that have been created, have remained shadowy organisations and made no impact. CABE has launched a number of initiatives to improve the skills of existing professionals and commissioned research related to the skills deficit, but has not managed to generate real interest in the Centres. Meanwhile, with a lot of publicity and not as much thought, the government launched the Egan inquiry which has finally produced its report. Reactions to it have been almost entirely negative and it is not worth repeating the criticisms here since the most likely future of the report is oblivion. What is depressing about this outcome is the lack of action; it leaves the argument exactly at the same point as it was before Lord Egan started. His proposed National Centre for Sustainable Communities is as likely to emerge as the Regional Centres of Excellence. What we need is action now; it is much better to do something less ambitious than to have another enquiry or to aim at grand schemes that will never come to fruition. If every local authority was given money specifically for the training of urban designers, something may be achieved.

This issue's topic is Town Centre Management and as is mentioned in Alan Reeve's introduction there are similarities between urban designers and town centre managers in that they both function across professions and have skills which are difficult to describe with precision: "TCM is, essentially, defined by the variety of what it does in the wide variety of places in which it does it" could equally be applied to urban designers. The problem of defining skills is directly connected to this.

| **SEBASTIAN LOEW**

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Developers Urged to Become Eco-friendly at Regeneration Forum 4x4 Making Places, Leeds, March 2004

Calls to ban the expression 'Masterplan', community engagement and a plea for developers to be more eco-friendly, were among the issues on the agenda of the *4x4 Making Places 2004*, which put the spotlight on 'Masterplan mania'. Over 4,000 people have attended the forum since Ian Tod of Leeds-based regeneration specialist Allen Tod Architecture launched it in 2001. The series, which features four speakers over a four-week period, comprises players including engineers, architects, planning officers and politicians who are responsible for creating quality cities and towns.

MASTERPLANNING OR NOT?

David West from Alsop Architects kicked off the first week entitled 'Masterplanning what's it all about?' No stranger to controversy, West filled the room with energy and passion for his mission to revitalise Bradford's city centre with a giant lake and by saying: "Let's ban the word masterplan. I'm sure it has been said before and I'm sure it will be said again. Masterplan gives the wrong impression. For 'master' read 'dictator' or 'one hand'. For 'plan' read fixed and finite. The result is prescriptive documents, which have value for a certain period of time and then gather dust. By their very nature, 'plans are only two-dimensional. Let's stop making 'Masterplans' and discover a more flexible and inclusive format for regeneration."

West continued by suggesting the industry replace masterplan with 'framework'. "While it is almost impossible to have a project without a plan we prefer to produce ideas in three dimensions and through a mixed media - computer animation, collage, paintings and film - plus a fourth dimension of socio-economic thinking and community dialogue that underpins everything. Frame allows the practice to explore the bigger picture, to establish the project setting and to continue to develop the art of place making."

Maud Marshall, chief executive of Bradford Centre Regeneration, gave the client's perspective, outlining how ownership of such plans lies with the

client, not the creator. He agreed that masterplan is an inappropriate term. "We should scrap the Stalinist type word and replace it with something more appropriate - Cityplan or City Framework." He also stressed how Bradford's plan, due to be completed in 2019, will require flexibility, while still maintaining its original vision.

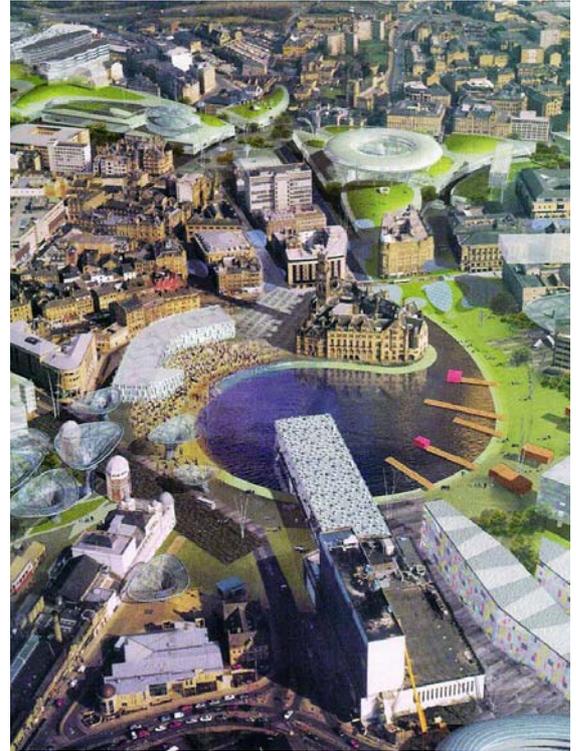
In week three, Roger Zogolovitch of AZ Urban Studio also agreed saying: "Masterplans have to be part of a liquid process, cities are never finished and plans have to be flexible. We find ourselves with a housing shortage, yet there are empty office buildings and the planning authorities take an age to give change of use planning permission."

ECO-FRIENDLY CALL

Planners and developers were urged by eco-friendly champion Bill Dunster from Zed Factory to dramatically reduce carbon emissions. Dunster, whose Surrey-based practice is working with the Bioregional Development Group to design buildings with 'zero fossil fuel emissions', predicted problems 20 to 30 years ahead due to a scarcity of gas and oil. "Unless planners and developers start to think of the consequences of building without full support features such as water and power, the costs of new housing will become prohibitive," he said.

Peter Clegg of Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects LLP argued that by using appropriate vertical dwellings, designed to maximise sunlight and with use of raised terraces and skywalks, densities of 140 units per hectare, which attract people, are available.

Questions from the floor were varied and explored why eco-friendly developments were not being built. Dunster mentioned the need to establish worldwide supply chains for products to create zero energy developments. He also argued that much higher densities should be encouraged around transport nodes and that higher density could offset increased costs from higher energy performance. The panel's view was that development was in the hands of a very small number of financiers who need to understand the economics of eco-design.



Masterplans have to be part of a liquid process, cities are never finished and plans have to be flexible

Supporters of the *4x4 making places 2004* series - which was attended by over 1,300 people - include Yorkshire Forward, Public Arts, The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Yorkshire region, and the Arts Council. Said series founder Ian Tod, "There has been so much masterplanning activity over the past two years exploring and visioning the future of our towns and cities that the topic of Masterplan Mania has come at a good time. The series provides a forum, not to say framework, to provide a better understanding of what's going on, just as the task of delivering the transformations gets underway."

| Ian Tod, Director of Allen Tod Architecture

Home Zones - What Next? The Gallery London 17 March 2004



Graham Smith, one of the authors of *Responsive Environments*, opened with a critique of the years that preceded the idea of Home Zones. He referred critically to Radburn, *Traffic in Towns*, the *Cheshire Design Guide*, Poundbury, the inactive fronts of many buildings and then, in support of what had happened in places such as Birmingham demolishing parts of

the Inner Ring Road. Good international examples today include traffic calming on major routes, pedestrian crossings across main highways, canals previously filled in now being resurrected. His 'woonerf' illustrations showed playing in the public space as the function of the street has been turned upside down and the presence of children moderates behaviour; he compared that with UK Home Zone examples and the minimal changes made to streets. Street trees seem to cause tremendous problems for us but not elsewhere.

Emerging ideas include:

- Take out stopping points and traffic lights - traffic travels at lower speeds.
- Change treatment of the road and use narrower lanes to reduce speed.
- Create wider pavements and add street trees, and possibly make the route less direct.
- Use paving finishes such as cobbles to reduce the visual impact of the street.

- Use a central combined bollard and light to restrict speed.
- Place trees within a parking court.

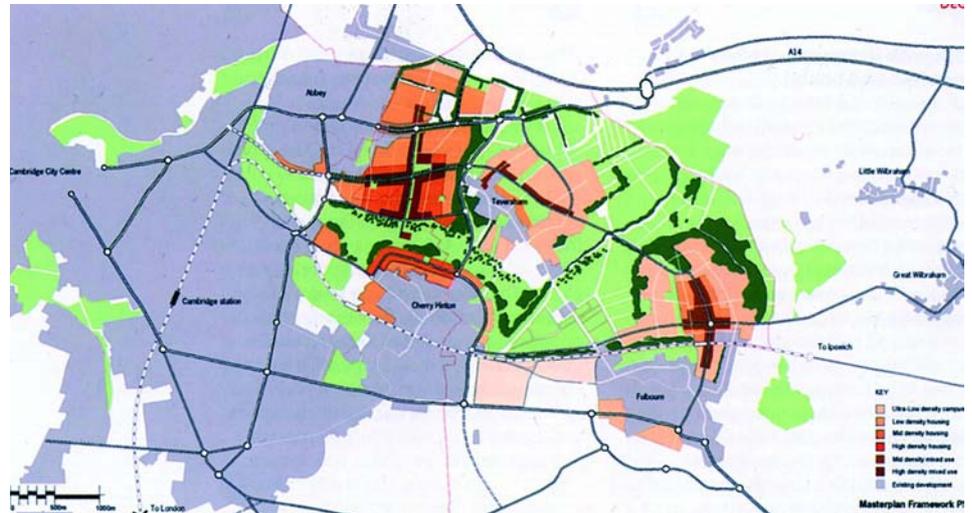
So what next? living with traffic? snuggling up with traffic? Smith felt the future must be environmental traffic management, not traffic calming. The discussion raised the usual point: why is the situation so different in the UK? Is it the cultural difference between countries, the impact of DB 32, professional gaps or the lack of understanding by politicians? The biggest hope must be the UDG's involvement with the IHT and CABE in training for traffic engineers, which provides the necessary interchange of ideas and the opportunity to influence the way they see things.

| John Billingham

Design Codes and Masterplans: Creating Sustainable Communities, 30 April 2004 MIC Conference Centre, London

The main reason a wide mix of professions had gathered at this conference seemed to be to gain an understanding of design codes: how, when, in what form and by whom these codes are to be implemented. George Ferguson, president of the RIBA opened the show, representing a body of professionals which perhaps shows most nervousness towards the issue of design coding. Is coding just one of a long line of trendy buzzwords being bandied about, or a design tool to ease a rather lengthy planning process? Ferguson was cautious but hopeful that the importance of 'positive place creation' won't be pushed to the background by the ODPM in favour of merely greasing the wheels of the planning process.

David Lunts from the ODPM defined coding as "an operating system to deliver high quality, responsive urban environments" but added that it was "more than design guidance" and "more than a masterplan". The pro-code lobby doesn't seem willing to offer firm definitions of what it wants designers to take forward. Offering an extremely positive vision and giving examples of Hulme, Poundbury and Seaside as three success stories, Lunts is obviously fully behind the idea; finishing on a slide of



Borneo Sporenburg we were left with positive feelings towards coding – a feeling not wholly shared by the majority of the speakers.

Joanna Averley, Director of Enabling at CABE, talked through CABE's new publication *Creating Successful Masterplans – a guide for clients* which defines masterplans and the stages involved in their implementation. It says that design codes should be tested at all levels of resolution of region, city, block and building. Quality should be at the

**Locally distinct
context should be
built into codes**

heart of design and coding help to remove characterless development whilst allowing flexibility. The code must be prescriptive enough to deliver key goals, but tuned in to distinctive needs of each unique design situation.

A common theme throughout the day was that locally distinct context should be built into codes and that they should be used on a case-by-case basis, not simply rolled out everywhere. Codes are about place making, not architectural design, but their ability to streamline the planning process is a positive one that should remove the apparent pseudo local democratic process that currently exists. Developments that spend years in planning due to endless reserved matters negotiations can be streamlined by resolving most issues at the start through

a group design process or Enquiry by Design, and not going repeatedly through the planning process – all facilitated by the use of a code.

The topic of the conference could easily have been the overhauling of the planning system itself. Coding could become a frustration which halts innovation in design and maybe we should learn to enjoy the un-coded differences that exist in places such as the modern street. We enjoy streets of different periods and styles and places generated from chance; coding potentially takes away these choices making spaces of order, without involvement of end users and essentially creating unhappy places.

Many questions still remained and the feeling was that many in the

audience had come for clarification about what coding was about. The ODPM possibly prefers clients and designers to discover the whys and wherefores of coding for themselves and generate self-made knowledge on the subject. Clearly design codes are not entirely understood by the majority but general opinion seemed to be that the ODPM is pushing design codes to simplify an otherwise complicated planning system, speeding up development times and reaching housing targets necessary to meet future demand. I remain to be convinced of the benefits of design codes and question if they will deliver the desired objectives.

| Chris Beswick, Urban Designer, Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick

Housing Market Renewal Areas The Gallery 14 April 2004

Martin Crookston, an Economist and Urban Planner and Director of Llewellyn Davies Planning, spoke about urban design aspects of the Housing Market Renewal Areas (HMRA) programme which has been described as the biggest urban regeneration project for a generation. Following studies carried out by CURS at Birmingham University of Liverpool, Manchester/Salford and Newcastle/Gateshead, the government designated nine Pathfinder areas requiring major action. The overall objective of the programme is to turn around housing abandonment by 2010, to restructure the housing markets and to ensure a more sustainable balance in new housing. For example in the North Staffordshire area with a population of 360,000, there are 67,000 dwellings, of which 36,000 need refurbishment, 14,500 are to be cleared and 12,500 new ones built, which indicates the scale of the problem. In Merseyside there is 10 per cent vacancy in the inner core and values range from £10,000 to £35,000. However, the HMRA programme must be seen as a 'housing plus' agenda with social and economic indicators equally important. The stock includes the whole range from terraces, walk-up blocks, high-rise and outer estates. Tenure reflects the low demand in these areas and the council not being tenure of choice compared with the alternatives offered by the private sector, usually at the urban edge. Ethnicity adds another dimension.

Urban design has a definite role to play but Martin argued that an urban design-led plan is not appropriate to



meet the overall needs of the HMRA programme and strategic thinking. The need is to identify the assets, reinforce and use them, and identify the case for change. Strategic action plans are needed, to provide a context for local urban design and Local Development Frameworks. The community needs to be engaged, although some of this may occur after the initial submissions have been made to government: the Barnsley technique represents the big picture and in other cases a longer involvement will occur. Some of the issues include identifying the skills and capacity involved, employing hearts and minds and making sure that good planning processes can produce successful and measured outcomes.

The overall issue is a question of low demand - people choosing not to live in

a particular area. However, the economy is very different in the specific areas such as Manchester, Birmingham, Stoke and North Lancs. People questioned whether the real issues such as the reduction in industrial employment, were being addressed. Why are areas abandoned? Isn't it more about the public realm - the streets and the management of areas and also the destructive behaviour of certain households which cause the problem? Some of these issues could not be examined without analysing in greater detail specific areas where they had greater local significance. The next issue of UDQ will take HMRAs as its topic and will contain material related to specific areas.

| John Billingham

Identify Yourself



Bilbao, Barcelona and Lille, Rotterdam and, closer to home, Manchester, Newcastle Gateshead, Bristol and Liverpool: these cities have many success factors in common, but they all have that slightly magical and illusive quality – identity. They have chosen to use urban design and architecture to highlight, express, explore and reinvent their identities, not just through iconic high status buildings but also by injecting a sense of excellence into the ordinary, making a link between local culture, regeneration and the image of that place.

This is perhaps more difficult to achieve in smaller urban areas or post-industrial sub regions, but certainly not impossible. Abroad, the Ruhr in Germany has created a draw for cultural tourists to Emscher Park and its 100 km long cultural trail; at home Huddersfield has reinvented itself as a ‘media hub’ through the Creative Town initiative and Lewisham, now home to the fantastic new Laban centre, regards itself as ‘Creative Lewisham’. Identity is multi-layered and complex and is rooted in local culture, but it does find its expression in the built form, for better or for worse.

This fact poses a real challenge for the nine Pathfinder Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programmes for areas suffering from a stark image of abandoned terraces, poor economies and social dysfunction. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) is supporting these in a variety of ways. In the East Lancashire Pathfinder (Elevate East Lancashire), we are working in a new and intensive way, placing staff in the area for a minimum of two years and working hard to tackle issues about image, identity and

aspiration through urban design.

The area has suffered housing market collapse and abandonment on a large scale. The economy has experienced a severe downturn. There is real concern over relationships between different ethnic groups, which are fractured and have led to political extremism finding a foothold. Design East Lancashire (DEL) will promote the value of high quality design in the built environment, injecting design excellence into every aspect of the housing regeneration process, helping to transform the image of the area not just for external audiences, but for local people as well.

DEL will co-ordinate a full range of CABE services, demonstrating the difference that a concentrated programme of design-focused activity can make in a specific geographic area. A large resource is being pumped into East Lancashire: Elevate has its first tranche of funding – £68 million up to 2006. In short, this is a very needy area, a challenging but potentially rewarding test ground for a design-led intervention.

It is important to recognise that, rather obviously, design is not a panacea, and that the issues the area faces are as much about economic and social development as that of the built environment. However, there is a fantastic opportunity to change that environment. The DEL programme has four key strands designed to deliver immediate impact but also to ensure that design excellence principles are embedded for the longer term. These are:

- physical demonstration projects – which can function as exemplars for further projects
- skills, education and training – aimed at local authorities in the first instance, but also including training and education programmes for local people
- vision and identity projects – to explore perceptions of the built environment and to raise aspirations about the future of the area
- marketing and advocacy – to ensure effective dissemination of all DEL’s projects but also to have a broader advocacy role in promoting the value of good design.

Early work has already started, supported by General Public Agency, a consultancy that developed the original business plan for DEL. Training with

It is important to recognise that, rather obviously, design is not a panacea

Glasshouse has begun for local authority officers. The feedback was better than positive. Jason Orton’s photographs help create a new perspective on the area, its built heritage and natural beauty.

Professor John Urry, a sociologist based at Lancaster University, has been commissioned to write a short ‘thinkpiece’ about the area, provoking debate and again shifting perspective about what might be possible. Urry points to a potentially different future for the area. Although there is great opportunity for re-use of existing housing stock, clearance in an area facing such a high level of market failure and in some instances collapse, cannot be avoided. Where this happens, it is equally important that design is the tool that is applied to ensure that the spaces and places created as a result work, and that we do not repeat the old patterns of clearance; removing every other terrace and leaving a rubble strewn vista between houses that now face onto the neighbours toilets and rubbish bins.

We have a particular image of East Lancashire. Urban Design can help to radically transform that image, to build aspiration and pride, stimulate inward investment, provide a better quality of life and, ultimately, express a distinct and positive identity for the area through its built environment.

During the coming years CABE will be raising the design stakes as high as possible in East Lancashire. We cannot do this alone and rely on partners in the region to achieve our goals. It represents a new way of working, both for CABE and agencies like Elevate, the local authorities and NWDA, but it will also offer new and creative solutions that will allow us not just to imagine, but to realise a new and vital future.

| **Chris Murray, Director of Learning and Development, CABE**

Walking and Talking

The premise of these walks is simple - to help a group of people interested in urban design and new to London to get to know the city better. Having recently arrived we have begun to familiarise ourselves with our own patches.

So, after many long conversations in zone-one bars and restaurants, we decide to strike out for the inner suburbs that have recently become home for one or other of us... The first date is fixed, Deptford to the Greenwich peninsula route is set upon. Travel plans and arrangements are made.

Those who arrive early are free to ferret about the immediate vicinity of Deptford High Street to see the small scale mixed use interventions ...a church hall and housing development... some remnants of pre-car London with local people queuing up at 'Wellbeloved butcher and grazier'. We set off along the High Street; it is thronged with market stalls and visitors.

Our next point of reference are Deptford Creek and the Laban Centre. The landscaping of the grounds encourages, facilitates an 'inside outing' of the activities housed in the new facility. The lightweight materials and colour of the building accentuates the crisp blue of the sky. The Creek retains traces of the industrial past. The boats docked there speak as much of eccentricity as of industry.

We stop in Greenwich covered market for refreshments before heading off via Cutty Sark and the Thames path. In front

of the Naval College, joggers are dogged and walkers excitable, the sea has come right up to Greenwich. Bemused dogs bark.

Walking around the Trafalgar Tavern the close relationship between new and old housing is striking, until the river splashing between two buildings and across the road distracts us. The contrast in the treatment of the walkway is marked as natural materials give way to brick paviers of various colours and dimensions that in turn give way to a dusting of industrial dust and detritus.

Squeezed between the wall of an old brick factory and edge of the path our industrious benefactors have provided a small space we might call a pocket park in another context. I fail to convince my contemporaries that this is an oasis in high summer - dappled light, rustling leaves, water, seating, a south facing brick wall, it is sheltered and exposed in all the right ways. I wonder who empties the bin.

The sun is slipping down; storm clouds are gathering over Canary Wharf - it's very 'Gotham'. We huddle near the Dome. What can be said that hasn't already been written? Like stubborn teeth in the jaw of Greenwich Peninsula the buildings of River Way bear witness to a time before the Dome. Abstracted from any related urban context they seem vulnerable and iconic at the same time.

At the Millennium Village attention to detail is apparent; the bricks are rich and intricate without becoming twee



and gestural. But the big stuff, the connections, seems to be the weakest link in the chain of plan, design and implementation. There is an environmentally innovative supermarket structure incorporated into the masterplan, but a portacabin provides for the corner shop needs of residents. It feels like a seasonal service, with pricey ice pops on sale for three and a half hours a day between March and September. The supermarket seems some distance off. My hunch is that it is seen as a really short drive, rather than an ingeniously integral part of the scheme.

This walk started in a vibrant High Street filled with activity, passed through an exciting industrial landscape that oozed with past and present opportunities. It ended in a landscape of zoned sterility; a machine of defensiveness in a four-wheeled consumer landscape. We head to the bus, return to the riverfront, ensconce by a fire to drink and talk and wonder where we will go next.

| Louise Duggan, Urban Designer, London Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames

Street Update

STUDENT NETWORK

We are keen to establish student forums within each urban design school to:

- link into the related departments of their university, including architecture, planning and engineering
- feed into the STREET network and keep us in touch with the projects and priorities of the school
- develop the dialogue between the different schools, and help organise the student exhibition – a fantastic opportunity to exhibit your projects, and potentially get a job (link timing with a Marketplace event)!

Interested people should contact Emma Appleton through the UDG. Students of the Joint Centre for Urban Design at Oxford Brookes University have

set up a forum to generate debate about the future of urban design. They have organised a series of afternoon guest lectures, drawing expertise from other departments within the university, and have plans to stage a 'great debate'. (contact Matthew Heal matthewheal@hotmail.com).

MARKETPLACE

By the time this has gone to print, the first Marketplace will have taken place in London, where urban design practices and local authority departments 'exhibit their wares' to students and young built environment professionals. This event, and another to be held before the end of this academic year, are pilots to see if this approach is successful in helping students in their search for work.

DISSERTATION TOPICS

We have asked each university to submit this year's dissertation or design project topics, so that if people have any input, tips about good sources or experience in a particular subject area, they can contact the school. We think it is also interesting to see the focus of the different schools across the UK.

URBAN WALKS

Following the introduction in UDQ90, Louise Duggan has captured the first urban walk. In April, we had a fantastic day organised by Anna Couch exploring Battersea and Clapham. The next walk will be in June – to Hampstead and Hampstead garden suburb, with a picnic on the Heath. Check the UDG website www.udg.org.uk for details.



Phoenix Failing

Alexandra Rook offers a critique of Coventry's Phoenix Initiative

Coventry, used by the Civic Trust to run a series of residential courses, is an ideal location for demonstrating both the attributes that go towards making good places and the problems that arise when these are forgotten. The city still demonstrates the 'concrete collar' of post-war planning philosophy that is rapidly being dismantled elsewhere. So we were eagerly anticipating the series of spaces and places created by the Phoenix initiative to add to our palette of examples that the city has to offer.

Visiting it now that it has been built, has brought into sharp focus the question of the validity of the iconic project as an instrument of urban regeneration. It is good to have a new link between the cathedral precinct and the bus station, and some new city centre housing, but the rest of city – that part not used by tourists but by the citizens of Coventry going about their daily affairs – leaves much to be desired. One suspects that it is easier to make good special places than make the ordinary places of a city better, yet it is raising the quality of the *ordinary places* that we should be concerned with.

The retail market and the nature of its entrances are dire. They involve the shopper traversing the unsightly inside of the block, with all the servicing arrangements and garbage disposal provisions that should take place in the back but not be revealed as part of the public realm. The access to the ice rink itself is another sad story. Customers who leave their cars in the multi-storey car park arrive at the back of the building and are obliged to walk around to the front along a carriageway – the footpath ends after 50 metres.

As to the Phoenix initiative itself, I went with high hopes having followed the development of the project, which looked exciting, on the website. The project was in safe hands; what could go wrong? Unfortunately, there is just too much going on: too many materials, too many poor junction details, and too many art works. This busyness merely serves to emphasise the small scale of the spaces. Small and

intimate spaces need to be detailed simply and beautifully to create a sense of calm, wonder and intimacy.

THE PRIORY GARDEN

The first in the sequence starting from the cathedral, this sunken garden was created from the excavation of the original 13th century cathedral of which a few column bases are preserved in glass display cases. The glass boxes have also become containers for an assorted collection of 'found objects'. These artworks are described on deeply obscure 'interpretative' signs: public art which needs explanation fails signally to engage. On one side of the garden, as Jes Fernie's article in *Building Design* (30.1.4), rightly points out, is 'a truly execrable mosaic which... provides crudely literal associations with the city. This is public art at its worst...'

THE CLOISTER GARDEN

I personally liked the recorded voices emanating from six listening posts in the cloister by artist David Ward, but it is somewhat antithetical to the nature of a cloister. I will like the pleached lime trees as they become green and boxy, but the loose white marble chippings are funereal, scattered everywhere and have no place in a city centre garden. The wall-mounted benches are over sized for the paths and the flat brick cross in the middle, ugly and redundant. The trees, standing in a broad bed of bark mulch, cry out for groundcover planting or, better still, a simple square of grass. The best feature is the boundary wall, beautiful, smooth, substantial and well-laid sandstone blocks.

PRIORY PLACE

A completely new space and the most successful, if winds do not accelerate through the funnel-like entrances, it is framed by some very



- | **Opposite page** The Whittle arch on Millennium Place
- Top left** An example of poor detailing
- Top right** The Cloister Garden, lime trees, marble chippings and beautiful sandstone wall
- Left** Priory Garden artworks, public art at its worst

good new apartment blocks by MJP. The artwork is a wonderfully simple wall of water (or would be if it had been working) and triangular pool over which the bridge link flits. Susanna Heron, a consummate artist, has produced another remarkable piece, modest, wondrously simple with the slightest hint of ancient antecedents. The space cries out for trees to mark the processional route across the site. The water feature marking the spot of the old mill was disappointingly dry as dust.

MILLENNIUM PLACE

Squeezing along the relatively narrow passage drawn by the strange Whittle arch of the next art work one enters the 'grand finale'; grand by Coventry's modest scale of things but lacking real civic grandeur. The floorspace slopes up with the snaking branches of the time zone clock by Francoise Schein (which was not working either) creating something of a trip hazard in what is clearly meant to be a large public gathering space. Is this an instance of art for art's sake?

The transport museum provides a neat backdrop reminiscent of the Piccadilly Gardens pavilion by Tadao Ando. However, the wall of cheap red plastic plaques by Jochen Gertz, the People's Bench, is already beginning to look shabby. The blue bridge by glass artist Alexander Beleschenko may look interesting but is unlikely to be used; it is quicker to walk at grade within a simpler public realm designed for public use. Again one major artwork would have been sufficient.

LADY HERBERT'S GARDEN

What a relief then to enter the Edwardian garden of the old almshouses which is old fashioned but unpretentious and allows a linear route along the boundary of the old city wall which terminates in a sandstone tower. It is very much a quiet oasis, predominantly green, with some horticulture.

GARDEN OF INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP

On the flip side of the line of the city wall is this new 'garden' by artist Kate Whiteford: a box maze set in white chippings (again). One looks down on it from a parallel path to the city wall or by leaning over the curving bounding wall on the other side, which is topped by the text of a poem. The two spaces are connected by a cross route cut by a post-modern wall with large opening that frames Coventry's iconic raised motorway. A mound of grass leaning up against the wall has been stepped and looks a nightmare to maintain. The spaces under the motorway, which it frames, have not been addressed at all.

And that is where it ends – or begins – depending from which end of the processional route one starts. The concept of the linked spaces remains a strong underlying structure and is a credit to the controlling instinct of the master plan but the realisation could have been so much better. Instead of giving expression to and enhancing the structure, the detail has clouded it. The art works have got out of hand to the detriment of the spaces in which they sit. There is just too much going on, it is too busy and there are too many instances of poor detailing.

I am reminded again of the wise words of Peter Shephard: "There is nothing more difficult than to have an understanding of how to produce a simple effect". MJP and the design team understood that at the concept stage, but lost it in implementation. It would be instructive to understand why, to avoid repeating mistakes. The Phoenix initiative will no doubt be much visited and enjoyed; it will certainly add another instructive dimension to our urban design training. The vision, if not the detailed execution, certainly deserved its commendation in the 2004 Civic Trust Awards.

- | Alexandra Rook Principal Consultant, Community Planning & Engagement, The Civic Trust, with thanks to Ivor Samuels and John Hopkins



Architectural Quality: A Vital Necessity

Bernard Roth discusses the importance of understanding architecture

Let us not be shy with regards to architectural quality. It speaks just as much to users as to architectural critics, to organisations as to individuals, to property managers as to architects, to passers-by as to the owner. We are allowed to be both simple and subtle.

Architectural quality survives in time, independent of fashions, styles, periods; it is what has been well conceived, well designed and well built using perennial materials. As André Gide said, "Perfection is what does not need redoing". It does not cheat on us if we know how to look at it, in the same way that furniture or objects do not cheat if we can recognise their purity and their strength beyond decoration, effect or period.

Architectural quality is based on the project, a talented answer carefully implemented (the realisation) to a question that has been carefully elaborated and therefore well asked (the brief). Since time immemorial the architect, the client or his agent, the builder, the mason, the supervisor, have each made a contribution. And each of them has to be talented. Their undoubted complementarity needs to become complicity: there is no good architecture without an architect but also without a client to respond to. They both need each other; they therefore need to understand each other so that their dialogue does not turn into control - financial or cultural - of one partner over the other; instead the two should mutually enrich their vision, their knowledge, the brief turning into a scheme and then into a building. Unfortunately, in the same way as the legal, commercial or scientific education of the clients arrogantly ignores the fine arts and therefore architecture, and is more concerned with the 'how' than the 'why', so the culture promoted in schools of architecture is not geared to management or to concerns with use or user.

Those of us who are not part of the architectural world should resist the constant temptation to reduce our judgements to the superficial and dogmatic postures of 'I like it' or 'I don't like it', limited in addition to the building's façade. Of course, everyone has the right to have a gut reaction to seeing the only visible part of a building; but in order to not miss the point, we must try to understand what architecture is, to train our vision and discover 'the story told by this building'.

THE ANSWER TO A COMMISSION

Architecture as opposed to literature, music or painting does not exist without a commission. The project responds to an order with objectives to be met, a specification called the brief. Since antiquity, commissions were for a refuge, a shelter, a signal. Thus the project responds to practical and economic needs; that is its utilitarian side. In parallel, grand and prestigious projects - funereal, religious and military at first, urban later - were also commissioned; thus architecture, through its expressive force, its symbolism, its search for perfection, gives significance to human existence. Secular and religious rulers have forever commissioned such buildings from architects.

Later came a time when property owners commissioned 'possessions' to be kept, buildings for rent; with the development of the property market complementing the land market, came the period of real estate 'goods', of the State as builder, and of the private developer. Here the actors' goal is to anticipate the demands of the future consumers.

We therefore cannot separate commission from architecture: whether private or public, religious or military, prestigious or ordinary, monumental or discreet, the response to a commission is both functional and significant. In turn, architecture, in translating the commission, offers inspiration to a place and affects patterns of living. A cathedral and a mosque are places of worship and the affirmation of a faith, a castle protects and shows power, a flat is a shelter and a home, an office block a place of work and a firm's emblem. Suffice to say that there are certainly many answers to the same brief, that this can evolve and that in addition to an intellectual understanding (function, use) architecture requires a sensitive perception (forms, volumes, materials, light, sound). Two Parisian schemes, the Centre Georges-Pompidou (Piano and Rogers) and the Louvre Pyramid (IM Pei), loudly decried before they were built, are successful because they respond well to their brief and are signifiers which enhance their environment.

ARCHITECTURE IN A WORLD OF CONSTRAINTS

In music, painting, literature and poetry the artist is free to compose. Architecture needs 'implementation'; it is an art form that operates within constraints. These can be varied and cumulative: geographical,



Opposite page I M Pei's Louvre pyramid, the answer to a brief and a contribution to its location
Left Rogers & Piano Pompidou Centre, a successful response to a brief and a signifier
Right The 19th century Parisian regulations allowed for a variety of architectural expressions.

Architecture is both the best known and the most misunderstood of the arts



geological, hydraulic, legal, administrative, technical, financial. Regulations on their own are enough to limit considerably the margins of manoeuvre; whether creativity has a place is a legitimate question: Is the scheme not likely to become simply a mechanical answer to the brief? Do too many constraints kill creativity? The following two examples prove the opposite.

During the 13th century, some 750 Cistercian abbeys were built throughout Europe. These schemes followed the instructions of Bernard de Clairvaux based in turn on the very stringent Benedictine order which imposed a functional programme and architectural recommendations for every new abbey. Nevertheless, even though most of them respected the rules, they ended up all being different as a result of the skilled use of the site, materials and light. The austerity and purity imposed on Romanesque art was not confused with poverty; on the contrary they led to a wealth of imagination, to demands on the quality of the materials and to a constant search for perfection in the realisation.

The second example concerns more mundane architecture in Paris between 1850 and 1940. Haussmann's regulations of 1859 concerned the building line and the profile of the building. Covenants attached to the sale of land regulated height, materials and elements of decoration of the façades. These general prescriptions aimed at harmonising individual blocks, allowed great diversity: for instance, contrary to a received idea, balconies were not imposed on particular floors. However, during that period all stakeholders shared a view of the city as hierarchic and ordered, and buildings were only differentiated by the details of their façade. Yet during the same period and under similar rules, other architectural expression such as Art Nouveau or revivalist styles flourished. Later on and following modifications in the regulations, other stylistic expressions, including the abstract forms of the modern movement, managed to use the same rules to express their own identity.

GIVING FORMAL EXPRESSION TO SEPARATION?

Architecture is both the best known and the most misunderstood of the arts: we are surrounded by it yet it is generally reduced to styles, as if literature could be reduced to writing. We must train our eyes and learn

to read architecture; the principle of separation may help us set up a framework.

A first line is drawn and space is divided into two: room/hall, visible/hidden, principal/secondary. The contractor erects solids, walls, floors, ceilings. The functional brief organises voids. The relation between the two is both technical and artistic.

A scale is defined: the relation between the scheme and the surrounding buildings may be totally different from the perception of the project itself. The human and the symbolic scale may confront each other.

Proportions are established: relationships between parts, a perennial concern of architecture, act upon our emotions.

External volumes and internal spaces are designed; inside and outside are separated. But the relationships can be reversed: we go into town, we go out into the street; but by entering our home, we exit from the street.

Through composition, thresholds, transitional areas, spatiality is created; voids are organised and emphasise each other.

If necessary, load bearing structures are distinguished from partitions.

In between place and project, a container is defined: its spatial form is both a place, a path and an ownership.

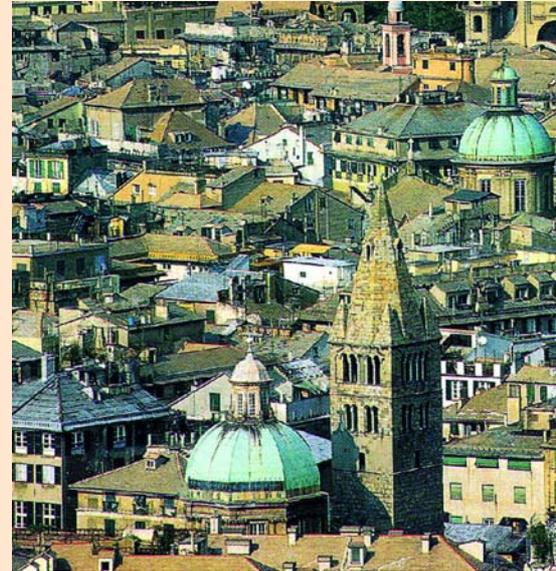
The distinction between ornament and signal, cliché and function, state and nature, sign and symbol, fashion and architecture, universal and eternal, are the starting point of a different way of looking; through it the simplistic dialectic of 'I like it, I don't' can gradually be replaced by emotion, taste, sensitivity towards the architectural world in which we work, dwell and travel on a daily basis without giving it the look it deserves.

Bernard Roth, Chairman of Promaffine and lecturer at the Institut Supérieur de Sciences Politiques in Paris

This is an abridged version of an article first published in June 2003 in *Reflexions Immobilières*, the magazine of the Institut de l'Épargne Immobilière et Foncière in Paris. Translated and abridged by Sebastian Loew.

Pesto Genovese

Alex Cochrane takes us on a lyrical journey through the 2004 European City of Culture



Strong, robust,
eclectic, a muddle of
motley flavours

In my own view, there are three categories of great city. Firstly, there are those that look great: they thrill the senses with their sheer display of illustrious achievement, great buildings and grand spaces that celebrate centuries of tireless creativity and toil by their persevering citizenry: Paris, London, Glasgow. Secondly, there are cities for the senses made up of endless tangles of vibrant streets oozing with energetic and eccentric sounds, and sights and smells: Istanbul, New York, Amsterdam, where the pumping, shouting heart of the city is in your face at every turn. And thirdly, there are those that befuddle the mind with the beauty with which they settle into the landscape: Edinburgh, Stockholm and Dubrovnik. If a city makes one category, it is great. If it makes two, it is something to behold. And into each and every one of these categories I would enthusiastically insert Genoa. Genoa is, to my mind, the most thrilling city in a country positively bursting with thrilling cities. Coming at it from the glossy sophistication of the Riviera, or the grace and pomp of Turin, it appears wonderfully out of place amongst the beatific coastal villages and towns.

A LABYRINTH

Oozing empirical grandeur and rough edged chaos in equal measure, Genoa is a vast labyrinthine jumble of impossible disorder. The grandest piazzas and palazzi jump out at us unexpectedly as we wander the cavernous back streets, the *caruggi*. Perilously tall tenements create cool grottos away from the sun; cobwebs hanging like washing lines between facades 20 feet above our heads. We have soon left Italy far behind: each pinching, meandering turn seems to take us further east; I would not be in the least bit surprised to be met by a silken robed Persian, offering a visit to some near-by bazaar.

Wander on a short while and turn a tight corner; we burst upon the broad unity of Piazza Matteotti. We are deposited with dizzying haste back into a great maritime city-state. The majesty of Palazzo Ducale dazzles white in the sun, topped frivolously with the ubiquitous St George flags fluttering red and white, legacies of the noble Genoese empire. As we stand back to take in the scene, a narrow vista catches the eye: Via San Lorenzo, beckoning us back down into the warren of the old town, sloping ominously towards some hidden quarter. We give into this seduction, past the west face of Cattedrale di San Lorenzo, its richly



Opposite page top New civic works, including Piano's 'Bigo' bring spectacle and drama to the city's ancient harbour.
Opposite page bottom Palazzo Ducale, the seat of the Genoese Doge from 1331 and a symbol of its haughty, imperial past
Left The rooftops of Genoa
Right 'Il Caruggi di Genova'; Genoa's cavernous streets contain the medieval heart of the city.



contrasting black slate and white marble facade swaggering proudly in its dowdy piazza. We descend still further, past the chic and trendy outlets tucked deep inside hulking stone facades; shuffling through the tiny Piazza Banchi, the medieval heart of the city with its stalls stacked high with swarthy second hand books and vividly colourful fruit and vegetables. But the salty air pervades our senses and we break out of the pinching streets, into the sweeping bustle of Genoa's ancient harbour.

THE SEA

Genoa is, of course, a city that in every sense is poised eternally towards the sea. Rising stars during the Crusades, the Genoese mariners were widely purported to be the greatest of the known world by the late middle ages. *Genova La Superba* made the most of its knowledge of eastern navigation to vie with Venice for total seniority on the seas. It was only the city's own cocksure snobbery that eventually led to its decline, when its own son Christopher Columbus, snubbed by indolent banking syndicates, established new trade routes across the Atlantic with the backing of the Spanish crown. The eastern routes so emphatically controlled by Genoa and Venice were no longer where the action lay, and both cities fell away in the face of the youthful upstarts of the Atlantic rim: Spain, Portugal, Holland and Britain. Nevertheless, it is still the sea that flows through every nook of this captivating city. Indeed, just like its age-old rival in the Veneto, the quirk of the place is that the spicy eclecticism to be found in every detail is the most fascinating legacy of Genoa's haughty, imperial past. It is unsurprising that Genoa is the only European city to be mentioned in *The Arabian Nights*.

Standing on the sun bleached stone of Piazza Caricamento, having tumbled out, squinting, from the winding streets, we can almost hear the whispered echo of that ancient bustling harbour. It might just be heard in the galleried arcades that line the eastern edge of the Piazza, once a hive of mariners haunts, chandleries, customs houses and outlets of every nautical kind. Today they still house a pleasing jumble of bars and restaurants, interspersed with the odd fish stall frequented by locals and visitors alike. Whilst the dock line has crept inexorably out to sea over the years, this ancient and ragged edge of town still evokes a unique atmosphere amongst the legion of bobbing white yachts.

A catastrophic insult was made to the city after the war in the form

of a huge elevated bypass that today cuts a swathe between the old town and its harbour. Part of the post war reconstruction of a city blighted by Allied bombs, the bypass continues the great coastal route from the south of France, along the ragged Ligurian coastline and south through Tuscany to Rome. But for all its folly, perhaps it is after all the best way to arrive in this city, in a sweeping arc through the very hub where city meets sea, the very essence of this place.

RENZO PIANO'S CONTRIBUTIONS

In typical fixation with the cult for the spectacular, coupled with an acknowledgement that the harbour deserves more from life than a couple of marinas tucked away behind a bypass, the city fathers have invested much of Renzo Piano's time in enlivening the front with civic works, and, perhaps rightly chosen this as the focus for most of the new projects connected to the city's current position as European City of Culture. Certainly the harbour offers much to the visitor, with some wonderful public spaces and a tremendous aquarium, all carefully planned and designed to reflect upon the role of the sea in the history of this city.

Perhaps I was destined to fall for his place. Where I grew up, hulking steel ships would glide past the end of my playground, ghostlike in the swarthy gloom of an English winter. Playtimes would be peppered with bowsman's whistles and deep, crunching foghorns, the bronze Empress of India keeping solemn guard over the Guildhall Square. Maybe I have found my home; a Portsmouth lost in Italy. But of course as dear as that city is to me, it neither has a fraction of Genoa's atmospheric allure, nor its rough edged zest. It flows through in the city's most celebrated foodstuff, pesto; strong, robust, eclectic, a muddle of motley flavours. It lilts in the rich, jaunty sound of the city's beloved songsmith, Fabrizio de Andre as he sings of the Via del Campo.

And of course, as we take in the sublime sun of the Italian Riviera, the contrast in context alone is enough to fascinate. It is as if the seething chaos of Naples had broken free of its bay and floated away on some great quest to behold the showy refinement of the north, to San Remo or Portofino, only to be shipwrecked in some great tempest and left stranded like flotsam, clinging recklessly to the Ligurian hills.

| Alex Cochrane, urban designer with Roger Evans Associates



São Paulo

Joana Soares Gonçalves considers the future of tall buildings in South America's biggest city

São Paulo, like many other major cities of the developing world, has been undergoing an intensive process of change and intensification which promises to continue for the years to come. In 2003, the city's population surpassed the mark of 10 million spread over 1.5 square kilometres, and the metropolitan region figured 25 million. The biggest city in South America, São Paulo is recognised as the most developed urban area and thriving economy of the continent. Sustaining the national economy, it has been the South American financial and technological centre for over 30 years. One effect of the demographic and economic growth upon the urban tissue in the second half of the 20th century, has been the concentration of tall buildings for residential and commercial uses in many parts of the city.

OFFICE TOWERS

Today, the residential towers are preponderant in the townscape but without any planning regarding the urban morphology. The prominence of office buildings in São Paulo's built environment is also notorious. At the end of the 1990s, six out of ten employees were engaged in the service sector, mostly in tall office towers. The townscape has always been a consequence of the regulation of plot ratio and use of land, resulting in a city of tall square-blocks where the taller buildings mark the major corridors of the commercial and financial districts.

Special areas of the city have been prominent locations for activities of the global economy during the past decade. As a consequence, they have been transformed in places of tall office buildings, similar to what can be observed in the so called 'world cities'. However, in terms of environmental and socio-economic conditions, São Paulo differs significantly from the urban centres of global economy of the developed world such as London or New York. The high rates of atmospheric pollution, social-economic disparities and alarming lack of safety are some of these crucial differences.

For decades, the history of tall buildings in São Paulo, apart from

some few exceptions, has been marked by a disregard to three key urban issues: pedestrians' environment, infrastructure, and townscape. Additionally since the 1930s, the city has been highly dependent on the car, making it a strong agent in the transformations of the urban environment.

FLIGHT FROM DOWNTOWN

In a rather complex and hybrid urban tissue, new corridors of tall buildings have appeared over the past 40 years, announcing emerging commercial districts and leaving the downtown area behind. During the 60s and 70s Avenida Paulista was the new axis, the setting of the most important financial district of the continent. Still in the 1970s, the speculative market created a new corridor of office towers, Avenida Faria Lima, going southwards from downtown. During the 1980s and 1990s, it was the time of Avenida Luiz Carlos Berrini, in the south of the city. Since 1990, with the wider opening of the Brazilian economy to the global market, the opportunity for a new wave of office towers in São Paulo has emerged: a number of recent developments has been defining an international geo-political territory of tall towers, the Avenida Nações Unidas, alongside the Pinheiros river. Some of the tallest buildings in the city are here, ranging from 25 to 37 storeys. The tallest, *Torre Norte* with 37 storeys and 167 meters is also the second tallest office tower in Latin America, behind the 1956 *Edifício Itália* with 168 metres in the downtown area.

Since the 1970s, the construction of new office buildings in other locations than the downtown area has obeyed the spatial, functional, environmental and technological objectives of businesses. Meanwhile the downtown area, with 43 per cent of the city's office space, has become a place of high vacancy rates. As a result, even though the area has the best infrastructure in the city, companies of every size have left it because of difficulties of car access, lack of safety and costs of buildings' retrofit. This phenomenon is not restricted to the central



Opposite page View over the downtown area of São Paulo
Above The most prominent buildings on Avenida Nações Unidas respond to a demand for very high quality space for multinational companies such as Compaq, Bell South and Microsoft.
Right The vertical corridor of Avenida Paulista, built in the 60s and 70s, is still the financial district of the country.
Bottom right Map of São Paulo with the four main locations of tall buildings

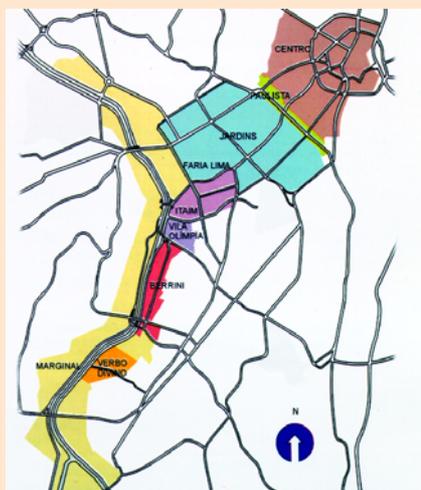


area: Avenida Paulista, which experienced high levels of occupancy in the 1970s and 80s, is experiencing a period of increasing vacancy, for the same reason that the downtown was abandoned before. Even in the latest major vertical corridor, Avenida Nações Unidas, vacancy rates are also increasing. This raises the question of whether the city needs more office towers, or whether there is an opportunity for a broad policy to retrofit existing buildings.

CURRENT STRATEGY

In the São Paulo Strategic Urban Plan of 2003, there are measures to control the vertical growth and keep the current density of the city, except for a few locations classified as ‘special areas for tall buildings’. The justification for this is the city’s insufficient infrastructure. In general terms, few of the tall office buildings that have been built in São Paulo in the past decades incorporate design features for innovative or improved solutions regarding their environmental performance; neither has the impact on the urban context been addressed properly. Therefore, the current approach to tall buildings in São Paulo is not applicable to cities and global environmental needs of present time. However, the current public concerns about the insertion of tall buildings in São Paulo which seems to be driven by the impact of density on the infrastructure, indicates a positive rethinking.

Undoubtedly as the city grows in demographic and economic terms, more tall buildings will have a future in São Paulo. Nevertheless, the need for a visionary attitude towards a more sustainable planning as well as building design is urgently needed. More than ever, the reassurance of the São Paulo’s economic and social vitality relies on the renovation of the tall buildings that have been left behind for decades.



For decades, the history of tall buildings in São Paulo has been marked by a disregard to three key issues: pedestrians’ environment, infrastructure and townscape

| Joana Carla Soares Gonçalves, PhD Professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, University of São Paulo, Brazil and author of the thesis *The Sustainability of the Tall Building*, 2003



URBAN DESIGN AND THE MANAGEMENT OF TOWN CENTRES

Town centre management (TCM) came into being in the UK some 20 years ago now, and has always been concerned with the quality of the built environment all be it as a setting for other things, particularly retail. The history of TCM, in its slow evolution from the largely janitorial – keeping streets clean and tidy – to a concern with the broader dimensions of regeneration and development is a fascinating one. As an activity it shares the benefits of urban design of not being a ‘profession’ – able to be quite catholic and permissive in who it employs and to what ends. It is almost impossible to define TCM in any prescriptive sense: TCM is, essentially, defined by the variety of what it does in the wide variety of places in which it does it. It is about trying to make places work, based on the premise that this is primarily an economic objective.

TCM also raises interesting questions about the boundaries of urban design as a practice whose main aim is to make decent places. In my view, management and design are, in this sense, complementary activities. The built environment does not usually manage itself. On the other hand, one measure of a decent place is that it minimises the burden of management.

The collection of articles presented here, from both academics and practitioners, helps to build the case for designers taking an interest in urban management. They are meant to provide a glimpse into the complexity of this task at the town and city centre level; and to give a sense of the often-contested nature of the values driving its operation and implementation.

TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT AS REGENERATION

Noriko Otsuka and Alan Reeve help define the boundaries

The contribution that town centre management (TCM) makes to the wider regeneration of town centres is a complex matter, and depends to a large degree on the nature of the regeneration problem in particular locations. This article presents a method of categorising town centres based on their regeneration need, allowing some prediction or testing of the appropriateness of TCM strategies to address the needs of specific towns.

The types of urban regeneration carried out within town centres varies largely according to the socio-economic situation of particular places. Based on a study of 12 towns throughout England, the research revealed that each location has a different pattern in delivering regeneration programmes for its town centre and that this is largely determined by three factors:

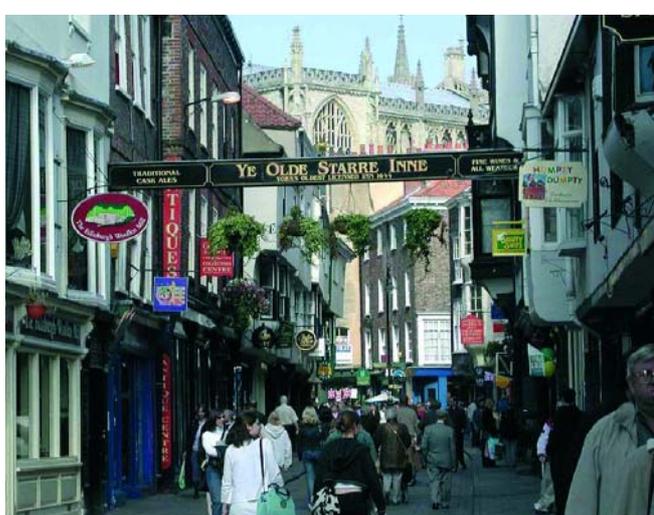
- the place's economic imperative
- development opportunities provided by private investors and
- priorities for the regeneration that are determined by local and central government decisions.

Despite the complexity and diversity in relation to the definition of urban regeneration, the research identified three distinctive types of urban regeneration need, derived from the socio-economic and spatial characteristics of different locations (Types A, B and C). With regard to each type of urban regeneration, TCM has shown dissimilar contributions in terms of locality, types of urban regeneration and roles of TCM as well as those benefiting from the TCM initiative.

TYPE A

These are locations which do not require much urban regeneration since they have few derelict sites and buildings and minor problems of social deprivation. Winchester and York exemplify this type. Their town centres have ample means for self-regeneration and consist of a number of assets, such as a marketable form of heritage or higher quality of life, which attract private investors, residents (for work and living) and visitors. These towns need preservation and conservation in order to sustain their rich environment rather than regeneration.

In this context, TCM appears to be a comprehensive response to sustaining existing resources, namely, a good environment and a healthy economy.



Top Winchester Cathedral
Above York city centre

| | TYPICAL CHARACTERISTIC OF LOCATION | TYPICAL CHARACTERISTIC OF URBAN REGENERATION | ROLE OF TCM | BENEFICIARIES OF TCM |
|--------|---|---|--|--|
| TYPE A | Self-sufficient Need preservation Rich environment Healthy economy | Little need for regeneration | Marketing promotion Tackling competition | Affluent residents Business groups Tourist and visitor |
| TYPE B | Industrial legacy Many regeneration opportunities Segregation between poor and rich much political attention | Flagship projects Market-driven Prestige outcomes Undermine social objectives | Support prestige regeneration projects Promote further investments Create a marketable town centre for affluent groups | Affluent residents Business groups Tourist and visitor |
| TYPE C | Severe industrial decline Limited marketable resources Issues rooted in dependency culture Social deprivation related problems Little political attention | Community-led Physical, economic plus social goals Upgrade socio-economic level of locals | More answerable to physical and economic sides of regeneration Need to address social issues Create a sense of ownerships for locals | Affluent residents Business groups Locals and disadvantaged groups |

Table 1 Summaries of locality, urban regeneration, TCM, and beneficiaries of TCM in each location

TCM is working on promoting further investment opportunities for businesses and challenging competitive pressures from neighbouring towns and cities as well as out of town shopping centres. TCM is concerned with the benefiting, or providing added value to relatively affluent residents or tourists.

TYPE B

These are locations where urban regeneration has focused on improving the economic and physical conditions of centres by implementing large-scale 'flagship' projects on former industrial sites and individual buildings in the town centre. Such places are exemplified by parts of Birmingham such as Brindley Place, and the 'canal district' of Manchester. These locations have sufficient 'natural' resources such as an industrial building legacy and infrastructure that enables them to initiate regeneration projects and to attract consistent capital injection from the private sector as well as to receive political support encouraging the process of regeneration.

In such places, negative images associated with industrial decline in the past have been successfully transformed by regeneration activity. Their recent outcomes are evident from the making of high quality environments, high profile business premises and high status residential developments, arguably aspiring to the standards existing in the locations of Type A. The goals of urban regeneration here are very responsive to business objectives and market trends. This type of urban regeneration represents an ambition to promote a new form of image that will attract further capital investment and potential customers, namely, middle-class and affluent working class shoppers. In spite of the fact that Type B locations usually contain a considerable number of disadvantaged groups who have little access to these exclusive facilities, in a context in which urban regeneration appears to bring many benefits to relatively affluent populations, thus promoting elite retail and other activities in the town centre. In this situation, TCM is contributing significantly toward supporting on-going regeneration projects and enhancing the quality of currently regenerated premises, as well as promoting future development opportunities which are concentrated on the physical and economic sides of regeneration. There is no doubt that the targets of TCM and urban regeneration are often complementary here. TCM certainly answers the aspirations of particular types of town centre users who have already largely benefited from these exclusive regeneration projects.



TYPE C

Then there are locations where town centre regeneration includes not only physical and economic improvements, but also some degree of social regeneration. These are exemplified in the research by Gravesend and Corby. Unlike Types A and B, these locations have limited marketable opportunities and large disadvantaged communities, often with deep-rooted, social problems such as poverty, unemployment, crime and disorder. These towns and cities have been struggling to reverse a negative image that has its origin in the closure of traditional industries and subsequent urban decline. These are ordinary towns which have received little attention from the private sector in sponsoring any form of urban regeneration. The ultimate rationale of urban regeneration under these circumstances is to improve the economic activity level of local people since the town centre economy largely relies on the spending of local communities who are generally not affluent. Although physical

| **Top** Ladywood, a run down estate in Birmingham
Above Footpath from Ladywood to exclusive residential developments of Brindley Place
Opposite page Type C example: Corby (top) and Gravesend (bottom)



It would seem almost impossible for TCM to provide solutions to the problems caused by this type of urban regeneration

and economic regeneration have taken priority within such town centres, regeneration projects have also had social objectives. In the cases studied, the improvement of the town centre environment has played an important role in creating a sense of community ownership for disadvantaged groups.

In this context, the contribution of TCM needs to be clearly measured with respect to the three strands of urban regeneration: physical, economic and social. TCM can be seen as successful as measured against the first two themes in Type A and B locations. The challenge is where the dominant problem is a social one, linked to economic deprivation. The research suggests that as a mechanism for social regeneration TCM has limited capacity since its resources are essentially those associated with places outside the C type of town. It may have a role in such places, but social benefits can only be a secondary, or indirect output of its activities.

THE CURRENT LIMITS OF TCM

There are several problems highlighted by any analysis of urban regeneration operating in Type B locations where priority is given to commercial and business ends over social and community needs. A case can be made that consumption-led and market-driven urban regeneration has, indeed, undermined social improvements of local and disadvantaged groups and so far resulted in creating a new form of social exclusion within particular town centres. In a sense, this can be regarded as a form of state sponsored gentrification.

Looking at the history and nature of TCM, which is itself often market-oriented, in parallel with Type B urban regeneration, it would seem almost impossible for TCM to provide solutions to the problems caused by this type of urban regeneration. Although a key philosophy of the New Labour government is to deliver 'sustainable communities' and it is engaged in tackling social exclusion, Raco (2003) has highlighted the lack of government initiatives to deal with the social effects of market-driven regeneration. The problems of social exclusion emerging in Type B contexts are indeed beyond the capabilities of TCM.

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This article is based on research carried out by Noriko Otsuka towards a PhD at the JCUD, Oxford Brookes University into the relationship between town centre management and urban regeneration.

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BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

Jacque Reilly describes BIDs funding

THE CONTEXT

Over the past decade town centre management (TCM) has been recognised as a driving force for regeneration and improved competitive advantage in our town and city centres. The need for this model of public/private partnership arose from the increase in out-of-town shopping and the overprovision of retail space caused by the boom and bust cycles of the early 1980s. Town centres were losing shoppers and gaining vacant properties. And while owners of out of town centres were able to take a long-term view of performance to dictate retail mix, high streets had no obvious vehicle for developing and coordinating strategies for long-term sustainability. In the early 90s there were fewer than ten TCM initiatives in the UK, today there are over 350. This remarkable increase in a relatively short period acknowledges the success of TCM.

From the outset there were fundamental issues with the way TCM was funded. With local authorities and donations from a limited number of retailers providing for most of the budget, partnerships were vulnerable to political whim and economic conditions. And with only a few core

funders the system was unsustainable and open to freeloading. Currently, only a small minority pay for projects that benefit everyone, a situation that is becoming increasingly untenable for long-term funders. But that is all about to change. After a decade of research and lobbying by the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) and other interested organisations, the government has put forward legislation for business improvement districts (BIDs) and with it the possibility of sustainable funding. The framing legislation formed part of the Local Government Act, which received royal assent in June 2003.

HOW BIDS WILL WORK

The BIDs model was pioneered in Canada in the early 70s to fund improvements to the retail environment in downtown Toronto. The idea quickly spread to the USA. It is believed that there are now over a thousand BIDs in North America, primarily funded through a levy on the property owner. In England and Wales under the legislation a BID partnership will deliver added value services within a geographically defined area. These services are to be funded through a supplementary levy on the

business rate, collected on behalf of the partnership by the local authority. There is no restriction on who can propose a BID but it will be the ratepayers in the defined area who will vote on the proposal. The legislation also provides the option of tailoring a BID to a particular sector and in that situation only ratepayers in that sector would vote on the proposal and subsequently pay the levy. In order to secure a yes vote a 'dual key' majority must be achieved which means a vote must realise a simple majority both in number of votes cast and in the rateable value of votes cast in order to be successful. BIDs will operate on a sunset clause of up to five years with a reaffirmation of support through the BID voting system required before a BID can continue.

TESTING THE MODEL

The government's commitment to introducing BIDs was given in April 2001 during a speech by the Prime Minister in which he stressed his determination to improve the 'liveability' of Britain's cities, towns and villages. Certainly BIDs will dovetail with the government's urban renaissance and liveability agendas but for

businesses it is the control they exercise over this tool for bettering their trading environment, that will make BIDs a worthwhile investment. However BIDs are viewed, their potential for improving the public realm cannot be disputed. In order to evaluate their development in these early stages, to determine best practice in terms of implementation, and to feed into the government process, the BIDS Pilot Project team works with stakeholder organisations at national level as well as supporting 22 pilot BIDs in locations across England and Wales. This work gives us a variety of contexts in which to examine the development of BIDs as well as significant capacity to work with government, businesses and TCM partnerships as they consider the potential of BIDs.

Their flexibility makes BIDs suitable for adoption over a range of different sized locations with different priorities. And the variety of strands being pursued by our pilots is evidence of this. Examples include issues around the night-time economy being examined by Blackpool and Birmingham Broad Street, gaining and maintaining competitive advantage in the face of new development elsewhere in the town centre which is a key focus for Bristol and Liverpool, and tackling anti-social behaviour and the perception of crime in Bromley. The benefit of BIDs is that they provide local solutions for local problems. The business community in each pilot is dictating the focus of the BID.

The project's approach requires that each pilot BID be headed by a team of three that includes a public sector representative (which amongst the pilots ranges from councillors to regeneration officers), a private sector representative (ranging from independent retailers to property owners and agents) and a coordinator, usually the town centre manager. In addition, they receive support from the central project team. The project has set out six milestones for the pilots to work towards: communicating the BIDs pilot project, defining the study area, identifying champions and establishing an organisational structure, agreeing added value initiatives, finalising a business plan, and campaigning for the vote.

The project has been running since July 2002 and the pilots were selected January 2003. As the project examines the work of the pilots against these milestones some common stands are emerging. A year into the process the majority of pilots are well advanced in the consultation stage and most are in the process of finalising their BID area. The BIDs range from being strongly business led to more public sector driven, but all have secured champions from within

Opposite page Vibrant Street Scene, New Street Birmingham
Below Drab Street Scene, Peterborough



the business community. This engagement with the business community has reinforced the importance of demonstrating added value and independence from the local authority. Most are forming or have already formed independent limited companies for their BID operations. And while they all had initial ideas about what sorts of programmes they would run, the consultation process has shown real diversity in the sorts of projects businesses have identified as important to them. The detailed business plans on which the ratepayers will vote, will have to result from extensive consultation in order to guarantee business community ownership of the ideas contained within it.

The project team works closely with the government and the project Steering Group to gain an understanding of the issues and to influence legislation to ensure BIDs can make a valuable contribution to the business environment.

KEY BUILDING BLOCKS

BIDs are a tool, not an objective. The approach should not be to begin with selling the idea of a BID but instead looking at what is currently provided, what is needed in addition to this and how it could be funded.

There will already need to be in place a breadth of engagement with the business community. If a number of businesses are already benefiting from working in partnership they are more likely to embrace the BIDs concept and its benefits.

There will need to be clear recognition from the local authority and more broadly from county and regional government of the benefits of working in partnership. If a number of businesses are already benefiting from working in partnership they are more likely to actively support and contribute to the development of a BID.

The structure of the BID partnership in most cases should be a limited liability not for profit company. This provides independence and clarity of ownership. However, it must be clear how the local authority is represented within the company's structure and how it will relate to the relevant communities eg small retail, large retail,



| Birmingham, Chamberlain Square

A BID can provide the opportunity to coordinate a number of initiatives in the area, thus maximising their potential

leisure, property, commercial etc.

The business plan must clearly set out what the BID partnership intends to deliver and how it will be measured. It must be demonstrable that this is an investment that will drive footfall, reduce the cost of operating and change the strength of the trading environment.

A BID can provide the opportunity to coordinate a number of initiatives in the area thus maximising their potential. Many businesses recognise the benefit of contributing to activities at a local level eg Christmas lights, radio link, in blooms, marketing campaigns etc. A BID can bring these together.

Funding sources must be clear and equitable. The business plan needs to indicate the level of contributions which the levy will lever in through property owners, grants, local government etc.

IMPLEMENTING BIDS

At a national level we are working with partner organisations on a number of issues around the implementation of BIDs. These include the exclusion of property owners from compulsory contribution and engagement of stakeholders in managed complexes already paying service charges.

The exclusion of compulsory contributions from property owners was a concern from the moment the primary legislation was introduced. During the fierce debate inside and outside of parliament the argument was made that property owners receive the long-term benefits of BIDs and should therefore pay as they do in the USA. The problem for the government was developing a system that was fair and equitable but also easy to

administer. It was this second test that the inclusion of property owners failed. Without introducing a property tax and the accompanying property owners role, on which to hang the levy, it didn't seem possible to develop a system that would be at all easy to administer. The government however, has acknowledged this concern and agreed to evaluate the role of property owners in the early BIDs through the national pilot.

In fact, property owners have already shown a great deal of interest in BIDs and were amongst those lobbying hardest for their compulsory inclusion. Almost all of the pilot BIDs have property owner involvement with some providing start-up funding. The review will look at whether this voluntary support should continue down the road.

The inclusion of tenants who are within shopping centres is also an issue attracting national attention and was recently a topic for debate at the British Council of Shopping Centres Management Conference. These tenants are already paying a service charge towards the maintenance of the trading environment within the shopping centre and might question the value of a further contribution for the trading environment outside the centre. Amongst the pilots, tenants within managed complexes account for almost 20 per cent of the ratepayers in their current study areas. What a BID can do for these stakeholders is change the experience their shoppers have before passing through the doors of the shopping centre. If that journey makes an unpleasant impression because it is unclean, unsafe, or uninviting they will make the choice to go elsewhere next time. At present tenants in shopping centres have no way of affecting change beyond their doors.

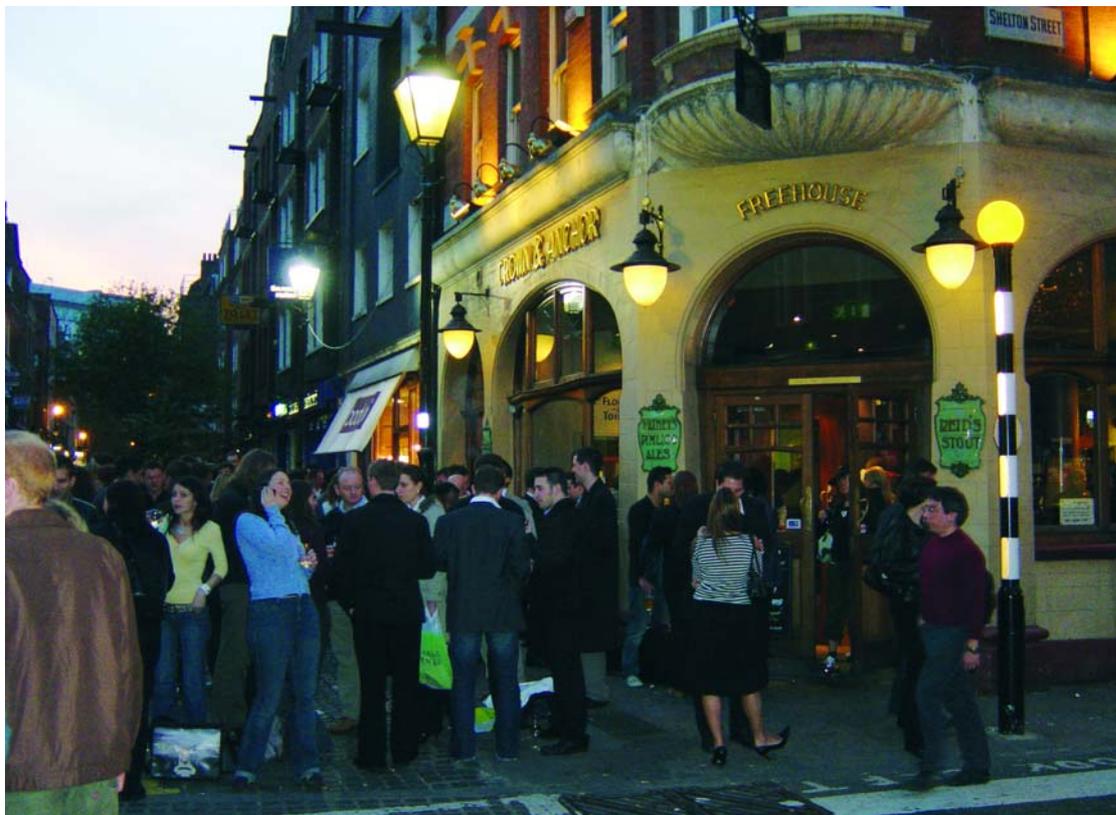
THE FUTURE OF BIDS

The UK BIDs model will provide a flexible tool which will enable public/private partnerships to work together to deliver projects and services that will have a positive impact on the public realm. Through the work of the National Pilot Project, government and key stakeholders, the legislation provides well thought out regulations and best practice guidance which equip BIDs with the firm basis for development in the UK. As the BID pilots come to fruition and provide tangible results demonstrating to businesses the benefits of their investment we expect to see this tool taken up with a swiftness that mirrors the adoption of Town Centre Management in the 1990s.

| **Jacquie Reilly, ATCM's Project Director for the National BIDs Pilot Project**

MANAGING THE EVENING/NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

Steve Tiesdell and Anne-Michelle Slater discuss the role of spatial and operational/temporal controls



British city centres have changed and are in the midst of further change, with recent years having seen the simultaneous emergence of two policy objectives and associated development trends relating to urban vitality – first, a shift towards more city centre residential development and, second, a shift towards the development of more vibrant evening/night-time economies (E/NTE).

Despite its economic and social benefits, a vibrant E/NTE often creates various environmental nuisances, which, *inter alia*, give rise to nuisance and disturbance to a city centre resident population. Hence, the pursuit of one desirable dimension of urban vitality can drive out another. A case for better management of urban vitality can therefore be justified by the need to reconcile competing city centre interests to ensure sustainability. Noise disturbance, for example, reduces the sustainability of city centre living. Equally, promoting city centres as places where people live should not inhibit commercial activity to the point where it becomes unsustainable.

Providing the background context for more active forms of management and policing, planning and licensing controls

are the two main sets of contextual controls for the E/NTE. Planning controls are primarily, although not exclusively, spatial. Licensing controls have a spatial component but are primarily temporal and operational.

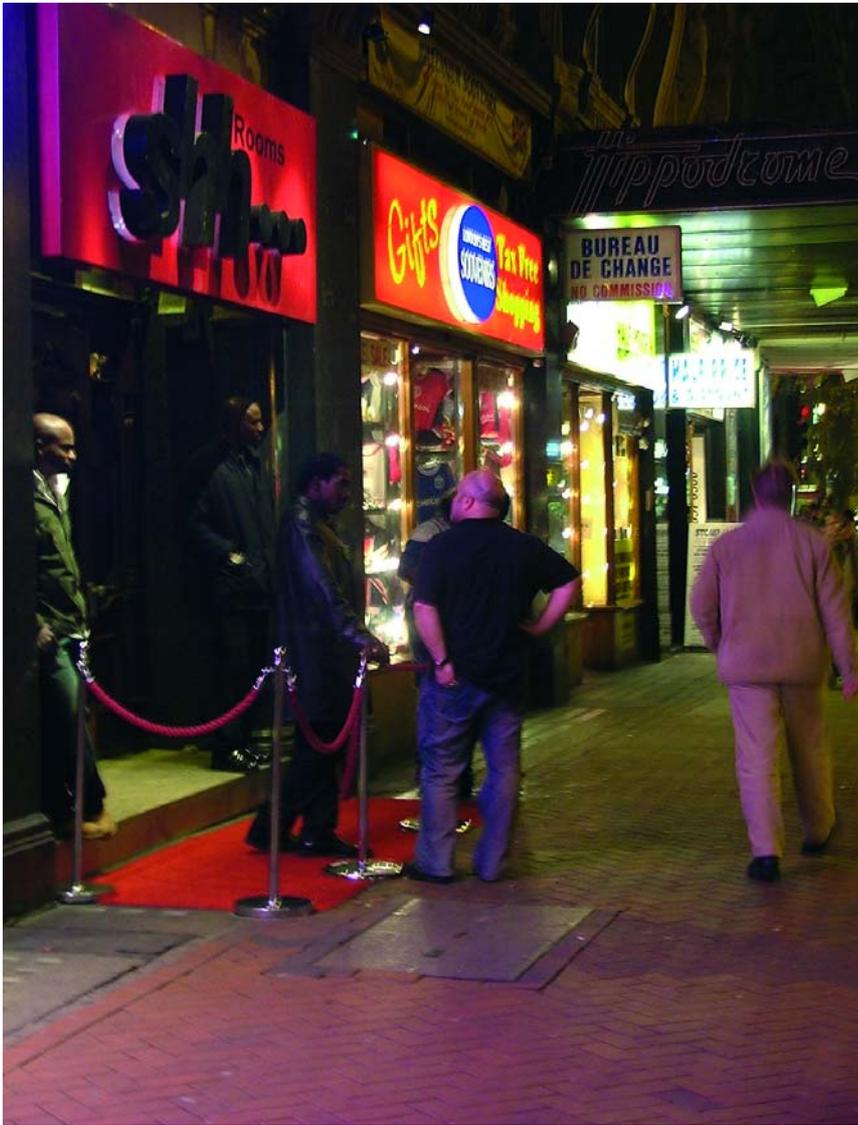
This article draws upon a research project supported by the RICS Foundation examining the role of planning controls in managing the E/NTE. The research involved questionnaires sent to 54 local planning authorities (LPAs) in the UK's larger towns and cities (excluding London) and yielding a response rate of 52 per cent.

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

The contemporary E/NTE differs from that of previous decades. City centres have increasingly become 'playgrounds' for certain social groups, where normal rules of adult behaviour do not seem to apply and where there is no obvious sense of accountability or responsibility to society for the costs of this conduct and behaviour. This new E/NTE also tends to have a narrower basis – first, through an emphasis on youth (particularly 16-25 year olds) and, second, through an emphasis on alcohol. In extreme form, the latter becomes merely a

Clusters of pubs and nightclubs do not create crime and disorder – people, within and around such clusters commit crime and disorder

| Above The E/NTE may have economic and social benefits, but can cause conflicts.



form of intoxication rather than a stimulus towards entertainment through social interaction. While there has always been a balance between alcohol as a means of entertainment and of intoxication, a recent shift has been towards a greater proportion of intoxication. The emergence of pubs designed to facilitate MVVD - Mass Volume Vertical Drinking – epitomises this shift. Furthermore, while the drive towards developing the E/NTE has been seen as a Europeanising of British cities, young Britons are often compared unfavourably with young Europeans with regard to the prevailing social and particularly drinking cultures. Management problems and challenges of the E/NTE derive from the growth in the number, size and character of E/NTE activities and the conflict between these and other city centre activities.

GROWTH IN THE EVENING/NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

The challenges of managing the E/NTE result from a number of interrelated changes, including increasing numbers of licensed premises, increasing size/capacity of such premises, increasing competition between venues (with excessive competition frequently generating a series of undesirable externalities and forces operators into poor or irresponsible hosting practices) and increasing spatial concentrations of alcohol-based E/NTE venues.

Expanding on the latter, pubs, café/bars and restaurants benefit from agglomeration economies. Successful entertainment premises attract competitors for customers who locate nearby, while fast food

outlets cluster near to pubs and nightclubs to benefit from the multiplier effect. But this growth and change has led both to the emergence of over-concentrations of entertainment venues and the erosion of functional diversity. Drinking streets (Bromley, et al, 2000) and clusters of pubs/nightclubs often form hot spots of disorder and crime. But, while alcohol is inextricably linked to disorder around licensed premises, clusters of pubs and nightclubs do not create crime and disorder – people, within and around such clusters, commit crime and disorder.

Problems arising from spatial concentrations are frequently compounded by temporal concentrations. The mass evacuation and slow dispersal of people from pubs and nightclubs create congestion and flashpoints. Other problems occur through street urination, acts of vandalism to cars or property and littering, especially littering from fast food. These problems are not solely related to opening hours. Many city centres lack the necessary infrastructure – such as public transport, taxis, public conveniences, etc – to minimise such problems, but fixed opening hours, especially early terminal hours, may serve to concentrate and thereby exacerbate the problems.

LAND USE CONFLICTS

The conflict between entertainment and leisure uses and retail uses is primarily economic (competition for location); the conflict between entertainment and leisure uses and residential uses is primarily environmental (noise and other disturbance). The latter is of interest here.

Non-noise-related disturbance results from crime, social and physical incivilities, and from anti-social behaviour (people fouling and urinating in doorways, vomiting, general rowdiness, public copulation, etc). To a limited extent such problems can be designed out, but avoiding such activities, except through physical distance, is often problematic.

The prime sources of noise – undesired or unwanted sound – are deliveries and refuse collections, the break out of noise from within premises, the use of outdoor drinking areas, the intrusion of noise into residential properties, and people on the streets (street noise). Powers available under planning, licensing and environmental health legislation and practical measures can address the first four, but street noise is less easily controlled.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

As the majority of responding LPAs were planning for an increase in the number of people living in (92%) and using (85%) the



| **Opposite page** Private police are an increasing presence in the evening economy.
Right Appropriate management is one of the challenges for the E/NTE.

city centre, particularly for entertainment and leisure purposes (77%), the potential for conflicts between land uses is likely to increase, further requiring LPAs to anticipate such conflicts. As relatively few LPAs were intending to plan for significant increases in the number of pubs (19%) and nightclubs (16%), most LPAs proposed broadening the E/NTE but not necessarily through alcohol-related activities.

Apart from a broad and general policy requiring all residential developments to provide an acceptable level of amenity, only one third of respondents had explicit development plan policies relating to the E/NTE. Indeed, nine respondents accounted for most (86%) of the positive replies. A possible explanation is that the development of the E/NTE has happened since the current version of the local plan was approved. The nature of the problems associated with it may also have changed from those of *stimulating* growth to those of *managing* growth. While new versions and updates of development plans will probably contain additional planning policies, it is open to question whether the potential problems should have been anticipated earlier. The questionnaire survey therefore revealed a significant gap in planning policy-based responses to the challenges of the E/NTE. Essentially, there are two main planning responses to the management of urban vitality and to the issue of conflicts between land uses – spatial and operational.

SPATIAL STRATEGIES

Spatial responses involve keeping potentially conflicting land uses separate – that is, avoiding problems of conflict by physical distance. Although some form of

spatial zoning can help, for example, to keep potential noise and disturbance uses away from residential areas (and/or residential development away from entertainment and leisure areas), in its present form the A3 Use Class lacks sufficient sensitivity for this kind of spatial zoning. The problem is the breadth of activities included in the class – restaurants, cafes, snack bars, wine bars, hot food shops (including takeaways) and pubs. As premises can change between these land uses without the need for an express planning consent, there is no opportunity to refuse consent or to introduce conditions to moderate adverse environmental impacts. Thus, relatively quiet restaurant quarters can easily become much noisier pub quarters. Changes to the Use Class Order are forthcoming: the proposal is for new use classes for pubs (A4) and for hot food takeaways (A5). These measures will undoubtedly help, but it may already be too late for many cities.

A fundamental issue for spatial strategies is whether city centre pubs, café-bars, nightclubs, etc, should be clustered and concentrated in space (and possibly also in time) or dispersed in space and time. The rationale for clustering is that as disorder is inevitable, it is better for it to happen in a known place where it can best be managed. The rationale for dispersal is that disorder is not inevitable and that problems of disorder are principally those of congestion (too many people concentrated in space and time); if concentration is reduced, then so are problems. These attitudes also inform temporal strategies – in principle, early terminal hours exemplify the first attitude; flexible hours exemplify the second attitude. Some LPAs, will seek a clustering but also seek to avoid an over-concentration.

Areas of over-concentration may be an unintended consequence of planning policies or an unavoidable consequence of market-led restructuring. Many LPAs do not have development plan or SPG policies giving them powers to deal with the issues of concentration. More positively, while many LPAs might seek to avoid the inadvertent creation of over-concentrations, drinking streets may in effect, create a tolerance/containment zone deflecting problems away from other parts of the city centre. A crucial issue is the point at which concentration becomes saturation – a term capturing the sense of limits to an area's capacity to accommodate licensed premises.

OPERATIONAL/TEMPORAL STRATEGIES

As spatial zoning strategies may be both undesirable and difficult to achieve in practice, operational strategies seek to manage conflicts



| The new E/NTE is based on encouraging alcohol consumption.

The transfer of powers to local authorities should lead to more joined-up planning and licensing systems

between spatially proximate land uses. Even when the first strategy is used, there are still locations where land uses will come close together and a more operational strategy is required. Potential conflicts are usually managed through conditions on planning consents and through liquor licenses. Where planning consent or licensing approval is not required, then it is more difficult to manage land use conflicts.

PLANNING CONDITIONS

Conditions on planning consents are a means of anticipating and, through the condition, avoiding or moderating potential problems. A positive precautionary approach may be to prevent noise break out and to ensure that all premises are adequately insulated. However, the permissible scope of anticipatory conditions is subject to debate and to differing practices, and in addition, could be open to legal challenge on the grounds of necessity. The key question is how much change it is reasonable to anticipate and to require developers to take precautions against, with some LPAs being more willing to push the envelope than others. Our research found differential use of conditions among respondents, which may indicate that those authorities acknowledging existing or immediate problems are using conditions

but also that many LPAs do not use conditions in a precautionary and anticipatory way, and, hence, are storing up problems for later.

LICENSING CONTROLS

The 2003 Licensing Act promotes a strategy of flexible hours, where each operator decides when to close his/her venue. Indeed, it does more than this - it effectively outlaws any other approach, thereby, potentially undermining any attempt at the temporal management of the E/NTE.

The new licensing system's most radical element is the removal of standard permitted hours including the centrally imposed terminal hour of 11.00pm (10.30pm on Sundays), with the introduction of a more permissive regime, in which operators propose opening hours that are then authorised, amended or not authorised by local licensing authorities. There is also a presumption in favour of longer opening hours in order to avoid fixed and artificially early closing times and so that customers leave for natural reasons slowly over a much longer period. While concentrations of people may naturally occur, the argument is that these concentrations should not be exacerbated by arbitrary concentrations created by common or even staggered opening hours. The likelihood, however, is that *de facto* terminal hours are likely both to emerge and to be later than the current hours – which in part is the point of the legislation – but also later than might be acceptable to the local community, hence, further exacerbating conflicts between revellers and residents.

JOINING UP PLANNING AND LICENSING SYSTEMS

The management of the E/NTE must be considered in terms of an integrated spatial and temporal strategy. While there might be overlaps between planning and licensing policy (a situation of belt and braces), there might also be gaps between them (neither belt nor braces). In many localities, various ad hoc efforts to join up licensing and planning controls have been tried at different times. These have often worked for a short period but lapsed over the longer term. Although magistrates had been responsible for the previous licensing system, the magistracy's commitment to independence often militated against more joined-up policy and action. The transfer of licensing powers to local authorities should therefore lead to more joined-up planning and licensing systems.

The active management is often the responsibility of the public police and increasingly the private police. The private police are an increasing presence in the evening economy, with the commonest form being door stewards of pubs and nightclubs. The number of registered door staff regularly working in most cities both dwarfs public police numbers and may also contribute adversely to the E/NTE's ambience and character (see Hobbs, et al, 2003). As spatial and temporal controls set the underlying context for the management of the E/NTE, making that task either easier or more difficult, there are a series of interesting questions regarding the relationship between the structured context established by the spatial and temporal controls and the agency of the police and other actors within that context.

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WHERE NEXT FOR TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT?

Simon Quin highlights some challenges and opportunities



Many of our town and city centres continue to face real challenges. They operate in an increasingly competitive environment. Although the planning system has favoured development in town centres for almost a decade, the major out of town malls, retail parks, larger supermarkets with a growing range of comparison goods, and e-commerce are all impacting on the High Street retailer, as evidenced by recent announcements. Whilst we have seen significant retail-led renaissance of many of our larger centres, this investment has yet to cascade downwards on any scale to the majority of centres.

Our network of town and city centres is not only an important part of our heritage and a key contributor to local economies, but is also vital to the concept of sustainable communities. Many interests therefore have a stake in helping town and city centres to respond to the challenges they face and in ensuring they are welcoming and attractive places that attract both visitors and investment, and town centre management provides a means of doing that.

Town centre management (TCM) has existed in the UK since the late 1980s. Adapted from US models and from the experience of shopping centre management, it was introduced as a focused response to the decline of many town and city centres. The Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) held its first conference in 1991, and from a dozen or so members it has grown to be a body with more than 400 members representing TCM initiatives in over 300 locations.

Our network of town and city centres is vital to the concept of sustainable communities

| **Top** Regeneration in Manchester goes hand in hand with rebuilding the city centre.

TCM initiatives are concerned with creating clean, safe and well-maintained centres



| Tombland Street Cafe, Norwich

The ATCM counts major property owners, developers, retailers, local and national government amongst its membership, as well as TCM practitioners. This wide involvement demonstrates the partnership approach adopted by the majority of TCM initiatives, and also the success that has been achieved on the ground. And yet, most initiatives rely on voluntary or discretionary funding. This means that many have limited resources and spend a considerable time fund-raising. In addition, there is still a wide disparity in the way the role of the town centre manager is defined in different locations. The ATCM is therefore working to ensure that the experience of the best is more generally applied.

TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT TODAY

The fact that TCM varies from place to place reflects the complex and diverse nature of town centres and that it is about providing a local solution to a local problem. It is, however, potentially confusing for the outside agency.

There are two broad functions of town centre management: the strategic approach and the operational one. Whichever approach predominates, it will almost certainly be accompanied by a marketing role as well. An effective initiative needs to blend all three, but this is where the issue of resources arises.

At a strategic level many TCM initiatives are involved the development of visions, strategies and action plans for their centres, often having a role as the body that brings all the key interests together. This is not

universally so, however, and the ATCM has therefore welcomed the fact that the government's consultation draft PPS6, issued in December 2003, firmed-up the guidance to local planning authorities, requiring them to be pro-active in identifying sites for development and to work with the private sector to develop visions, strategies and action plans for their centres, and to establish centre management initiatives.

From the TCM perspective, there is no doubting that the changes introduced to planning policy in the past decade have had a beneficial impact on town and city centres. What is clear, however, is that there is still substantial pressure for development out of town and many town centre managers have an involvement in seeking to identify opportunities for and focus investment in town centres, and are often a key part of the marketing of a centre as an investment location.

Part of this new investment has resulted in the development of evening economies in town and city centres. Whilst the much-heralded 24-hour economy may not actually have yet occurred, the latest changes to the licensing laws permitting round the clock drinking could yet bring it about.

The development of evening economies has radically changed British town centres. It has brought substantial investment into buildings and areas that may otherwise have lain vacant, as well as employment and diversification of activity. It has also brought challenges. Some of the safety and security issues resulting from the evening economy have been well documented. Less obvious have been the challenges of getting people to and from the centre, of cleaning up after them, of ensuring that they do not disturb the growing number of town centre residents, and of seeking a broader range of activities to attract people from throughout the community. All of these issues require some form of managed approach.

The Government Response to the report of the ODPM Committee on Housing, Local Government and the Regions into the evening economy made clear its view that existing partnerships, particularly those established for the purposes of town centre management, were the natural vehicle to provide the necessary strategy and management structure. Indeed, this reflects the success of many established TCM initiatives, such as Manchester, Norwich and Nottingham, who already work extensively in this area.

It is not only after-dark safety and security that has become an area of involvement for many town centre management initiatives. Most are involved in retail and business crime initiatives and many have been instrumental in their centre securing the Safer Shopping Award. The new Action Against Business Crime partnership, set-up with Home Office funding, is set to expand this.

Initiatives on street crime and anti-social behaviour have also been a focus in recent years, and in many instances, town centre management partnerships have been the driving force behind delivering local success. In other instances, TCM partnerships are now actively involved in developing business continuity schemes for centres and in contributing to evacuation plans and major incident response planning.

More widely on the liveability agenda, TCM initiatives are concerned with creating clean, safe and well-maintained centres. In many instances TCM partnerships are instrumental in working with local authorities to address issues of cleansing, and looking at delivering quick-responses to evident problems such as graffiti and



vandalism. They will also work on a variety of environmental improvement programmes ranging from major street enhancement works to planting.

The key to all of this work is to make town and city centres a better experience; for the visitor, shopper, worker, resident, investor and businesses located in it.

THE FUTURE FOR TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

We now have a good idea of what town centre management can be, of what works and what perhaps does not. Whilst not doubting that improvements are happening in town centres where the role is almost entirely operationally focused, where budgets are very constrained, and where the town centre manager has been appointed on a limited salary, I believe that there is evidence that much more is achieved where the whole approach is more ambitious.

The bringing into effect of legislation permitting Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in England later this year will have a significant impact on the development of town centre management. BIDs permit all businesses within a designated area to identify an agenda for action to improve the trading environment and then to vote on whether they all contribute to pay for it. If more than half vote for it, all have to pay. The experience of the 22 BID pilots that the ATCM has been working with through the National BID Pilot Project is that, as in North America where the idea originated, there will be a significant focus by BIDs on improving the basic environmental quality of the commercial area and on marketing.

BIDs established in town centres will fulfil many of the functions of town centre management but with a more certain financial base. At this stage it remains to be seen in how many locations they are established, but I would foresee a gradual roll out across the country when the benefits have been proven. BIDs will help centres to establish a competitive advantage on an equitable basis and I think businesses will want a part of this success wherever they trade. However, as is shown in the US, the need for BIDs to be focused in delivering against targets, or else not be renewed, means that they cannot have a significant strategic role.

However much BIDs proliferate, I think there will still be a requirement for strategically focused town centre management which is undertaken by a partnership as required under the new PPS6. The key question is, how is this funded? If retailers and other business occupiers in the town centre are funding the BID, will they also contribute to the strategic partnership? Unlike in the US, it is the business occupier who will pay for the BID rather than the property owner, but owners are encouraged under the legislation to contribute voluntarily. Whilst clearly this is desirable, it may also be



the case that property owners, with their longer-term interests, should, as many are today, be partners in the strategic partnership.

The next few years will be interesting, not only in determining the composition and remit of partnerships managing our town and city centres, and looking at how they are funded, but also in testing and developing the skills of the individuals concerned in the process. All being well, we will need a whole army of well-skilled BID board members, executive directors, marketing and operational directors, supervisors and operatives, as well as people able to deliver on the aspirations of the strategic partnerships. A challenge indeed.

| **Simon Quin, Chief Executive, Association of Town Centre Management**

| **Top left** Night shopping, Lister Gate, Nottingham
Top right Ice skating outside the Forum in Norwich, Christmas 2003
Below Nottingham Long Row

LEEDS CITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT

Pauline Foster shares her experiences of city centre management



Good design has always been recognised as an essential ingredient

Set up in 1993, City Centre Management spearheads the work of Leeds City Council and partners to improve the city centre. The City Centre Management Unit (CCM) operates under the direction of the Board of Leeds City Centre Management Initiative (LCCMI), a private/public partnership organisation set up to improve, promote and sustain the city centre. The LCCMI leads the marketing and promotion of the city centre and promotes business improvements, including customer services.

ORGANISATION AND AIMS

CCM's work includes transportation improvements, refurbishment of key shopping streets and public spaces, better

footpaths, enhanced lighting, encouraging housing in the city centre, landscape planting, visitor facilities, car parking improvements, upgraded care and maintenance of the public realm and an entertainments programme. This work is a team effort involving the council's City Services, Leisure and Lifelong Learning and Development Departments, together with Metro, West Yorkshire Police and other key organisations. Partnership with the private sector is a key objective.

CCM coordinates, assists with and, in many cases, directly manages projects. The unit also helps promote the city centre via publications (including the twice yearly *City Centre Bulletin*), press releases and information, and helps with investment and public enquiries. CCM provides a first contact service for city centre retailers and other businesses, property owners and investors, the media and, of course, consumers – shoppers, workers and visitors.

THE VISION FOR LEEDS

The vision for Leeds incorporates the development of a vibrant city centre with a prosperous economy and a distinctive environment which matches the highest European standards. Good design has always been recognised as an essential ingredient. Since the CCM unit was established in 1993, architects, planners, landscape architects, engineers, artists, surveyors, developers, interest groups and members of the public have worked with the unit to ensure high quality buildings are complemented by high quality streets and spaces. This has included substantial remodelling of the pedestrian shopping area, enabling the introduction of pavement cafes, street entertainment and over two miles of traffic free shopping. Extensive refurbishment of the historic yards and arcades has also created safer, more people friendly environments. Attention to detail in these narrow streets - so often forgotten in our towns and cities - was one of the first priorities.

New covered spaces, have also been created including the Victoria Quarter – previously an open street. This unique shopping quarter is now covered with Europe's largest stained glass roof designed by the internationally renowned artist Brian Clarke, and is home to many of Leeds' designer outlets. Lighting improvement programmes were kick-started with grants. Now high quality lighting schemes are a common feature of new developments.

Top Leeds City Square before regeneration
Above Leeds City Square, after improvements

More recently the 'Pride in the City – Leeds Initiative Millennium Project' identified a number of key public spaces and gateways to the city centre and highlighted connections between them. The project succeeded in attracting Millennium Commission funding for Millennium Square, a new public square which is the most technologically advanced outdoor performance space in Europe. This public investment has resulted in significant investment surrounding the square, including a Heritage Lottery funded new museum, a theatre and numerous mixed-use developments. Work continues in Leeds on a new urban renaissance visioning exercise for the city, which explores linkages between the city centre and surrounding communities. It recognises the continued growth of the city by developing ideas about the extension of the public realm and identifying opportunities for connections with outer areas.

THE PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT

At the commercial heart of Leeds city centre is the pedestrian precinct – a complex of historic shopping streets converted, mainly in the early 1970s to traffic free shopping (this was one of the very first schemes of its kind in the UK). It is one of the linchpins of Leeds' success as a shopping attraction. The precinct forms part of an even more extensive network of pedestrian shopping malls, arcades and historic yards, providing over two miles of traffic free shopping (one mile indoors). In 1991 the city council initiated a renewal and expansion programme in a distinctive new style, designed to stimulate city centre shopping and spearhead the development of Leeds as a European city.

The style emphasises:

- colour – in paving, banners and flower displays
- high quality lighting levels, to promote a safer 24-hour city centre
- opportunities for enjoyment and relaxation with spaces for entertainment, seats and pavement cafes.

The precinct is governed by a pedestrian zone traffic order which generally restricts vehicle access for deliveries to before 10.30am and after 4.30pm, providing a traffic free environment for most of the day. Access is allowed during restricted hours for emergency services and, for special purposes, by permit. No parking is permitted at any time, except in bays for disabled people in Central Road. A one-way system operates with access from the Public Transport Box which surrounds the precinct. In a few areas, traffic is excluded at all times.



| Above left Leeds Yard before regeneration
Above right Leeds Yard after regeneration
Left Dock Street lighting

THE FLYPOSTING INITIATIVE

In 1994 Leeds City Council launched a partnership scheme to tackle what was a growing problem of unsightly illegal flyposting on buildings and street furniture. By 1997 the scheme had proved successful, covered the whole city centre, and was being extended to other nearby areas. The scheme is based on a formal agreement between the city council and Street Sites, a consortium representing the city's major flyposting operators, formed with encouragement from the council. The package developed in detail principally by CCM and the Department of Planning and Environment, involves two main ingredients:

- approval and planning permission (under the Advertising Regulations) for new poster drums or boards on agreed sites. These are erected and maintained by the consortium which is granted exclusive rights to their erection;
- an undertaking by the consortium not to flypost on other than the agreed drums and boards.

The completed coverage of the city centre - from the university campus in the north to the motorways in the south -

provides 49 drums and 14 boards. The principal results are:

- an almost total reduction in illegal flyposting and a significant improvement in the appearance of the city centre;
- substantial annual savings to the city council: prevention, removal and control action is now restricted to the occasional removal of the stickers and posters of, for example, small political or religious groups. A small anti-graffiti team inspects regularly and deals with stickers, occasional graffiti and furniture paint damage, and illegal poster boards attached to furniture;
- prominent 'what's on' displays of what Leeds has to offer in the way of entertainment to students, local residents and visitors, mostly, but not exclusively in the younger age groups. In this way posters can be seen as a positive contribution to the development of the 24-hour city. The condition of the drums and the general elements of the agreement are maintained through continued contact between CCM and the consortium.

| Pauline Foster, Leeds' City Centre Manager

TOPIC URBAN CENTRE CHALLENGES

Paul Pinkney examines three town centre management schemes



The town centre management (TCM) function in the Cherwell District Council area is provided through the Urban Centres Manager, who manages three locations: the town centre of Banbury, Bicester town centre, and the village centre of Kidlington. Banbury and Bicester town centres are working through agreed business plans over a three year cycle (2003–2006).

OBJECTIVES AND INITIATIVES

Pragmatic and achievable objectives were established in a number of practically focussed action plans which set out the work programme for the partners over a three year period with measurable outcomes. Key elements of the business plans have already been achieved: Banbury Town Centre partnership has, for example, gained the Safer Shopping Award, late night public transport pilot schemes have been implemented along with improved pedestrian and vehicular signage for users of the town centre. Bicester Town Centre partnership has introduced a town centre wide alcohol free zone, a more effective pedestrianised main shopping street (Sheep Street), and increased and upgraded its CCTV provision.

Following the CB Richard Ellis study on the commercial viability of the village centre, stakeholders in Kidlington opted to create a management board to progress TCM objectives and issues. There is no agreed business or action plan at the moment. Therefore, challenges are created for the Urban Centres Manager through the unique issues surrounding three very different centres, with three partnership bodies, three individual sets of stakeholders and their individual aspirations.

BANBURY

Banbury town centre has seen significant growth in its commercial and retail offer. The Castle shopping centre has undergone refurbishment and extension, re-branding itself as the Castle Quay. This has brought key retailers to the town centre who were not previously represented, such as Debenhams and Gap. The Castle Quay development opened up the popular Oxford canal to the town centre and brought forward a new tourist information centre along with the award winning Banbury Museum/Tooley's Boatyard heritage area.

The planning of improvements continues with initial work ongoing to develop a Banbury Cultural Quarter, a multi-modal interchange and the redevelopment of the canal side areas. With the evolution of the town centre have come challenges for TCM. For example: pedestrian routes, circulation patterns and footfall have changed and evolved; sign-posting and other measures have been pro-actively progressed to ensure that visitors to the town centre are aware of everything that Banbury has to offer. Changing attitudes and aspirations also need to be catered for - with the growth of a café society and a desire for customers

to enjoy the main shopping areas of town centres in car free environments. Pressures such as these have brought to the fore issues relating to street furniture, licensing for cafés, bars, and other servicing of the leisure economy as well as plans for further pedestrianisation in key areas of the town centre.

BICESTER

Bicester has seen the establishment and success of the factory outlet centre, Bicester Village, which attracts customers from a wide area. This has grown, to a large extent, without materially affecting the town centre. There are pedestrian and vehicular links to the town centre from the factory outlet centre, but they are not particularly direct or easy to follow (although, measures have been put in place to try to attract customers of the retail village to use the facilities in the town). However, due to the growth of Bicester Village, Cherwell District Council has foreseen the possibility of strengthening the retail and leisure offer in the town centre and a further study into its commercial viability is about to be commissioned. A large proportion of the town centre is now being progressed as a re-development area. It is the ambition of Cherwell DC to secure a mixed-development, including a multiplex cinema, a library, a public transport hub and a supermarket.

KIDLINGTON

Kidlington village centre, which is only four or five miles from the centre of Oxford, has come under different pressures and has different opportunities. The centre has a high representation of convenience retail and services with a low representation of comparison retail offer: in essence, it serves a local customer base. The main issues affecting the village centre are the redevelopment of a privately owned key site on which the weekly Friday and Saturday market operated, and the subsequent relocation of the market. The market area site is being redeveloped to provide a mixed development. This has brought the issue of the location of the weekly market into question. Cherwell DC has been eager to ensure that it continues operating on a weekly basis in the village centre. Through a determination to see the market carry on its business, and with the help of other stakeholders, the market is still economically buoyant. It ensures that the area remains vibrant and brings colour and increased activity to the heart of the village centre.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

All three centres have seen an increase in activity in the evening/night-time economy, most especially Bicester and Banbury, where late night Public Entertainment Licences and extensions to the licensed hours have been most noticeable. This has brought different pressures on social, economic and urban design issues. Potentially, there are more challenges ahead with the alteration in the licensing procedures and the proposed policies of Planning Policy Statement 6: Town Centres. This could allow for greater management tools to deal with elements such as late night takeaways, refuse created through the evening/night time economy, exit strategies, and the increasing customer offer in the town centre.

The evolution of Banbury town centre will include the extension of pedestrianised areas: it could incorporate a cultural quarter, a multi modal interchange and/or a canal side regeneration area. The redevelopment of the western part of Bicester town centre could deliver a more attractive centre for the quickly growing residential population and a draw to the customers of the Bicester Village factory outlet centre. The rationalisation of Kidlington village centre could follow from the recommendations of the CB Richard Ellis study and the establishment of a Village Centre Management Board. All three centres will face the challenges of managing the evening economy, so that it is a safe and attractive place/time to spend leisure time and to work. All three centres will benefit from TCM looking



| Opposite page Market Street lighting trial, Banbury
Top Bicester Village
Above Castle Quay Canal, Banbury

Managing the different centres under one scheme creates challenges for the TCM function

pro-actively at the day-to-day issues, medium-term issues and more strategic possibilities.

Managing three different centres under one scheme creates challenges for the TCM function. However, the wider challenge for TCM (and, therefore, the ACTM) is the rationalisation of the job role, the creation of professional qualifications and ongoing professional development. All of this will help town centre partnerships be more aware of the possibilities and parameters of progressing objectives through a TCM function. For too long, the ATCM has viewed the possibility of BIDs as a panacea and have not focussed on the real issues facing the membership of their organisation.

| Paul Pinkney, Urban Centres Manager, Cherwell District Council

GRAVESEND TOWN CENTRE INITIATIVE

S Sangha describes Gravesend's moves to maintain the vitality of its town centre



Even the most unpromising of places has something unique to offer, the key is finding out what that something is

Gravesend Town Centre Initiative, a partnership with the county council and town centre businesses has focused on rejuvenating Gravesend as a business and retail centre so as to compete effectively with the nearby Bluewater and Lakeside regional shopping centres. The initiative operates from Towncentric, a modern information and regeneration centre at the heart of the town. The council was awarded Beacon Status in 2001/02 for its work in rejuvenating Gravesend town centre.

Over the years, Gravesend and the work of the town centre partnership have been the focus of a great deal of interest. How is it, we are continually asked, that you have managed to survive and carve out a role in the shadow of two retail goliaths, one of which is reckoned to be the biggest and best in Europe? The answer is not simple. Town centre regeneration for places like Gravesend is not easy and requires long-term commitment, clarity of purpose and perhaps, above all, passion. Our success is based on the premise that even the most unpromising of places has something unique to offer, the key is finding out what that something is.

CONTEXT

Gravesend's links with regeneration through town centre management (TCM) go back to the early 1990s when the town was first confronted by the prospect of two regional shopping centres on its doorstep. It is an understatement to say that the magnitude of the threat helped concentrate minds but it did so in a way that led to the formation of the Gravesend Town Centre Initiative (TCI). The TCI was, and continues to be primarily a partnership of the private and public sector comprising Gravesham Borough Council, the business community (including retailers and landowners) as well as other stakeholders.

The TCI partnership came up with very simple strategy for coping with the unprecedented competition: to 'hang on to what we'd got!' We figured that if we lost any of our major attractors of footfall, it would be the beginning of the end; so we channelled our energies into working closely with our anchor stores to ensure that they stayed with us. We started by tackling what have been described as the janitorial issues of TCM - keeping the town centre clean and tidy, safe and secure together with a good programme of events and

promotional materials. We wanted our town to be a place where people felt comfortable and at ease, as we knew what we offered would inevitably be compared with the sanitised malls that were just a few minutes away.

PARTNERSHIP AND STRATEGIES

Even in those early days we were also concerned to work closely with our partners and listen carefully to their concerns. We were keen to understand the factors that would help businesses thrive and those that would be used when deciding whether to stay or leave; factors that could make or break our town. As a result a major concern came to the fore: the physical quality of the town centre and allied traffic management issues. We picked up very early on that an enhanced town centre environment together with the removal of traffic could have a significant impact on trading and strengthen the economic base of the town.

At that time our primary shopping street was also the main traffic route through the town and was a designated A road. Some retailers were quoting that pedestrianisation together with environmental improvements could result in an uplift of trade of anything up to 15 per cent. So, on the back of forced closure of Main Street to traffic in order to carry out major emergency repairs we decided to run an experiment. We would see if traffic could be excluded from the core areas during shopping hours on a permanent basis by rerouting it around the town centre. A scheme of environmental improvements was only designed and implemented after the diversionary route had been shown to work, and a traffic free core area had gained popular support among the businesses and the local community. The scheme redressed the balance between the needs of the pedestrian and those of the motorist and transformed the heart of our town; its success led to a phased programme of pedestrianisation throughout the core areas. What was a noisy, fume filled environment where the motorcar reigned supreme and the pedestrian was made to feel unwanted and unwelcome, became a busy, bustling thoroughfare inviting people to linger, or sit and watch the world go by.

LONGER TERM PLANS

Once the town centre had been stabilised and the presence of our major anchor

retailers had been secured without any losses, we turned our attention to a longer term strategy and evolved a vision which identified a possible long-term role for Gravesend town centre as:

- a vibrant and lively shopping and service centre for Gravesham and the surrounding area
- a place for people to do business and find employment
- a place where people want to live
- a place to visit for a good day or evening out
- a place for people to stay when visiting London, the South East and the Continent (as the advent of the Ebbsfleet international station will provide a direct connection to mainland Europe via the Channel Tunnel Rail Link)

The first three strands are common to most town centre strategies and we had been working on these with gusto since we started. The two new elements have proven to be the focus of our work in recent years. In particular we have concentrated on making more of our heritage and riverside setting in order to develop visitor potential and strengthen the offer and appeal of the town, both for the resident and visitor. This led to a landmark scheme to redevelop Gravesend's Old High Street and restore key buildings located in the historic heart of the town. The Old High Street had been the hub of the town centre in its heyday but it had fallen into decline over the past 50 years or so. Over this period more and more businesses had abandoned the cramped and outmoded units in favour of more spacious and modern premises located in New Road which rapidly became the town's main shopping street.

The £4.7 million mixed-use development scheme comprises 51 residential units largely to rent for key workers together with 10 commercial units. The scheme was developed in partnership with the Places for People Group, SEEDA and Gravesham Borough Council. It includes the restoration of five key buildings and in addition the local council has made the brave decision to buy and restore Gravesend Town Pier, located at one end of the Old High Street. This flagship scheme has involved restoration of existing units, replacement of shop fronts and total reconstruction of buildings and has won countless awards for the quality of its design and materials used. These have included the best town centre mixed-use development in the Association of Town Centre Management 2003/04 awards and an Evening Standard accolade.

These initiatives have acted as a catalyst for regeneration of the heritage quarter and



| **Opposite page top** High Street, Gravesend, before improvements
Opposite page bottom High Street after improvements
Left Gravesend from the air
Top Restored Town Pier
Above Town Pier interior

led to private sector investments which have not been seen for years. The street that until recently had been littered with boarded up shops and holes in the ground where properties had once stood, with vacancy rates of up to 50 per cent, is now a busy construction site where most of the remaining derelict buildings or spaces are being worked on to bring them back into use.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In order to maintain momentum and keep Gravesend in its modest way at the forefront of town centre renaissance a special delivery vehicle was established in February 2004, the Gravesend Delivery Board, modelled on the Urban Regeneration Companies and aimed at delivering key ODPM priorities for the town centre and bringing an even stronger focus to our activities.

Its primary aim is to regenerate the Heritage Quarter and the board is currently in the process of selecting a preferred

developer partner. It is charged with the difficult task of cranking up our activities in an era where the regional shopping centres, together with the larger centres and cities, are getting stronger and stronger and putting even more pressure on average size towns such as ours.

| **S Sangha MBE, Gravesend Town Centre Special Projects Manager**

The Rebuilding of Stonebridge

Alain Head explains how the community was kept intact throughout the regeneration process



Stonebridge, the result of a late 1960s slum clearance programme, was a typical high and medium-rise concrete panel estate. Its 1,775 flats were built with walkways at second floor linking them to three multi storey car parks. In common with many similar estates these walkways and car parks were removed in the 1980s in an attempt to improve manageability.

The failure of the previous housing played an essential part in the brief for the new housing. Residents had lived in buildings up to 21 storeys where lifts were consistently out of order and many access decks and stairs were seen as unusable through fear of attack. Not surprisingly, when together with Terence O'Rourke we started talking to residents in 1995, they wanted to live in houses with gardens, flats they could walk up to, and above all a safe environment.

The masterplan that emerged from the discussions was a return to the traditional urban form, almost to the houses that had been demolished 30 years previously. Not quite such a return as the numbers of homes required was much greater now, but housing with a recognisable and safe street pattern with around one third of the residents living in houses and the remainder in four-storey flats. Three varying ratios of flats to houses and descending areas of open space were offered to residents. Not surprisingly given their history of living in a very exposed public realm, they selected the scheme with the lowest amount of public open space and the highest number of family houses.

PHASING

Developing the masterplan was the first part of a long process of change. The complexity of the redevelopment programme has been one of the most difficult items to come to terms with. The first phase was the most obvious – we built on pieces of open land around the estate: some public open space that was to be reprovided later, land that had been reserved for highways works and the sites of the previous multi storey car parks.

The second and subsequent phases were far more complex. It had originally seemed that issues such as where roads and services would be built would inform the phasing but it emerged that the buildings

themselves, the land they occupied and their tenancies were equally significant. Planning a new phase to decant a block with over 200 one and two-bedroom flats became impossible. The result would have been to have large swathes of the site covered with blocks of flats and then on a following phase equally large numbers of family units. The masterplan had foreseen an integrated mix of accommodation across the site with the smaller units in four-storey blocks of flats in key locations to give a structure to the urban form with terraced family units between. The existing residential distribution made that very difficult to achieve.

The ideal phasing, one of moving across the site in a logical manner dictated by pragmatic servicing requirements had to be set against the housing demand in each block and the ability to decant the building into the new housing. The larger blocks with a single type mix ended up being partially decanted with many residents waiting another three years until the next phase. Above all, residents who had initially been hostile to yet another rebuilding proposal saw that the new housing was finally being delivered and many made the not inconsiderable sacrifice of moving temporarily into existing flats to allow demolition to take place. The result was that phasing changed according to the housing demand. Stonebridge became more of a jigsaw puzzle than had been envisaged. Terraces that would eventually join up were built on either side of retained buildings and the task of fulfilling the ultimate concept was more piecemeal.

TENANTS INVOLVEMENT

The redevelopment of Stonebridge was designed for the tenants and in a very large part with the tenants. Over 750 households have now been rehoused and a further 320 are awaiting their homes in the third phase by which time some 1,150 will have been rehoused, in all. But there were 1,775 homes – what has happened to the remainder? There is always natural demographic change but here quite a number of residents decided that a 10 year wait for a new home was not worthwhile and moved on of their own accord. Which makes one think: Is it right to subject residents to living on a building site for so long? Stonebridge will



have taken perhaps 15 years to rebuild when the last home is completed. In that time children will have grown up surrounded for all their lives by building sites. Is this right? Would the 1960s approach have been better?

The 1972 slum clearance took much less time to rebuild, the 75 acres of land were cleared and the buildings were erected in much less than 15 years. But the time taken to compulsorily purchase the houses and find homes to decant the tenants to took much longer. Residents lived for years in partially boarded-up streets. At Stonebridge there was none of this, residents saw their homes being rebuilt and only moved out when their home was ready. Only then did their buildings get demolished. And today the residents who have suffered the poor living conditions get to benefit from the new homes together with their neighbours. The whole community remains in place transferring a structure that has taken 30 years to establish into new homes – a benefit that is paramount in rebuilding a sustainable community.

History has shown us that rebuilding communities is far harder than rebuilding their buildings. And it is only right that the residents benefit from the new investment in their area having suffered from inadequate homes for so many years. The question is how to deliver large regeneration schemes without inflicting decades of building works on the communities. The holistic approach to regeneration that Stonebridge and other Housing Action Trusts pioneered is the right approach. The retention of the community and its development by working on health, education and employment issues as well as the buildings are essential. Perhaps what is needed is a bolder approach to regeneration – the ability to identify and utilise land outside the area to make more space available, allowing larger and more efficient rebuilding contracts that will speed up the whole process. An approach that mixes the obvious economic and programme benefits of wholesale clearance with today's understanding that the community contributes to the sustainability of our towns and must be nurtured.

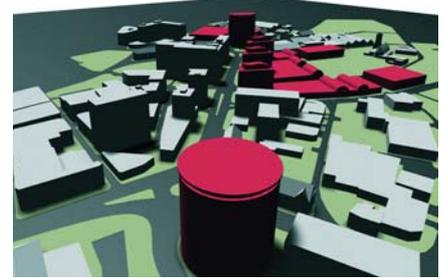
| Alain Head, Director, Shepherd Epstein Hunter



| **Opposite page left** 1970s Bison block of old Stonebridge
Opposite page right Old pre-HAT Stonebridge Estate
Top left Crescent facing onto canal feeder
Top right Entrance to block of four-storey flats
Above Stonebridge aerial view

Sheffield City Centre Urban Design Compendium

Brian Evans and James Arnold describe their work for the production of design guidance



In 2000, the Urban Regeneration Company Sheffield One, in partnership with Sheffield City Council, commissioned Koetter Kim to prepare a masterplan to deliver on the economic development objectives to enhance the city's competitive position. The resulting City Centre Masterplan set out "a clear and unambiguous strategy for Sheffield to regain its status as one of Europe's leading cities". It identified key strategic projects to be implemented to ensure the successful regeneration of the city, including the New Retail Quarter, Heart of the City Project, Integrated Transport Strategy and Public Realm improvements. A key recommendation concerned the preparation of an Urban Design Compendium to guide the quality of new development.

Building on the overall vision of the masterplan, the *Sheffield Urban Design Compendium* (UDC) is intended to provide the detailed design guidance required to raise the quality of Sheffield's built environment overall, and ensure cohesion in the urban form and public space of the city centre. One of the aims is to ensure that the focus of design quality is not limited solely to the key strategic projects but that it also covers the in between areas. In developing the strategic and quarter specific guidance, every attempt has been made to capture the essence of Sheffield's distinct characteristics and to establish a framework within which design innovation and excellence can flourish.

Gillespies was appointed to prepare the UDC, reporting to a client team from the city and Sheffield One with an advisory board whose members included representatives from CABE, Yorkshire Forward Urban Renaissance Team, English Heritage, the two universities and the local development industry. The client/consultant team and the advisory board met monthly during the genesis of the work. This regular reporting was augmented with the establishment of a stakeholder group to meet on a similar cycle to ensure the involvement of those who would

use the Compendium, including elected members, developers, architects, development control officers, highways (design and maintenance) as well as conservation bodies, local professional groups and the like.

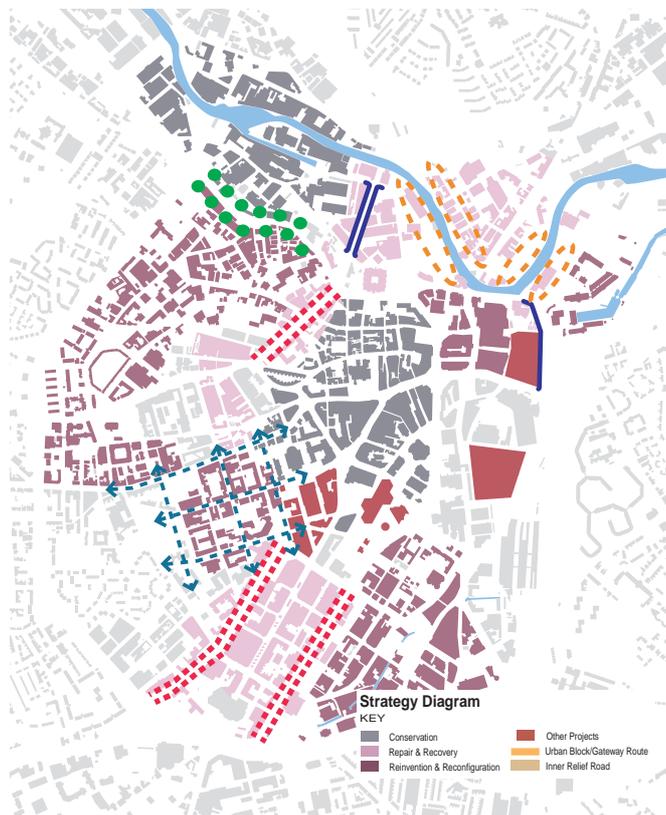
METHODOLOGY

To generate the content, Gillespies worked with the approved masterplan and employed a methodology developed from that used to generate public realm strategies in Glasgow and Grainger Town, Newcastle. It involved an analysis of 'the inherited city' – urban form and public realm – 'use and perception' of the city centre, and 'access and circulation' in respect of mobility and legibility. The work drew on the Llewelyn Davies *Urban Design Compendium* prepared for English Partnerships and other contemporary publications prepared by CABE and others. The findings of this analysis informed a series of workshops with stakeholders and the advisory board, which in turn were used to build recommendations for the city centre in respect of the level of intervention which could be considered. In turn, these ideas were 'workshopped' and refined. Work then moved on to the preparation of detailed guidance for various quarters identified within the masterplan and for the public realm. As each stage in the project was undertaken, its draft output was considered in workshops with client, advisory board and stakeholders.

The document produced is in four principal parts that deal with the findings of the analysis, strategic guidance for the city centre as a whole, the individual quarters and the public realm.

The compendium offers a series of propositions for the continuing evolution of the city centre including the:

- redefinition of urban blocks to improve legibility and provide gateways into the city centre
- revitalisation of the river as an important element of the city's identity



| **Opposite page left** Aerial view of Sheffield City Centre
Opposite page top right Existing situation at Tenter Street
Opposite page bottom right Development proposition to create a strong urban gateway at Tenter Street
Above Analysis of key streets and spaces within the city centre
Left The Strategy Diagram highlights the degree of intervention that should be applied to each city centre quarter.

- creation of new urban villages
- promotion of a renewed identity for the city.

NEIGHBOURHOODS

To help guide the delivery of these propositions, the urban design analysis and the workshop outputs were used to establish the degree of intervention which could be considered for different neighbourhoods in the city centre, including:

Conservation in areas with a reasonably intact and robust urban form – generally conservation areas – with a variety of well-defined spaces, building blocks and streets with a positive character. Often a legacy of Georgian and Victorian expansion, these areas were identified for well-managed change and a considered approach to demolition, alteration and new build; new development would be required to fit within existing urban typology in respect of character, form and street pattern. However, innovative interventions are encouraged, particularly in respect of adaptive reuse of existing buildings and new buildings that interpret the rhythm and structure of street, building and block.

Repair and Recovery in those areas where continued and managed intervention can be considered through the preparation of action plans and development briefs. Many of these areas have elements of distinct character and quality which should be retained and which may require a high degree of repair. There is, however, scope for innovative and experimental design - new intervention to recover or evolve aspects of identity and character.

Reinvention and Reconfiguration in areas that lack any distinctive character and could accommodate quite radical change in terms of land use and/or urban form. A new identity can be considered for these areas through the implementation of innovative and pioneering projects which will have a positive effect on the physical, social and economic well-being of the city centre in pursuit of Sheffield's emerging 21st century identity.

The degrees of intervention were considered further in order to develop design guidelines for urban form and the public realm. Tall buildings can have a dramatic effect – both positive and negative – on any city skyline. This effect can be exaggerated in a city with a

pronounced topography like Sheffield. The team made a study of existing tall buildings in the city and examined the opportunity for introducing new tall buildings which could have a dramatic and appropriate effect through consideration of city-wide factors of visibility and legibility; contribution to density; and, potential for city landmarks. In particular, opportunities were explored to group tall buildings in support of the aims of reconfiguring a new identity for the city centre.

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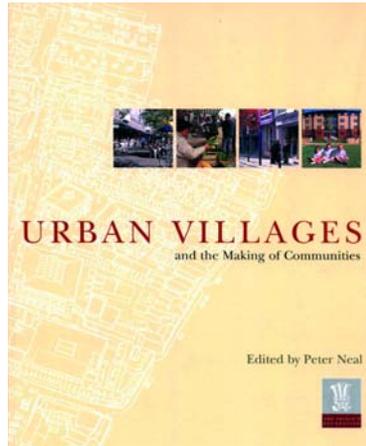
The neighbourhood guidance for the city centre quarters seeks to celebrate and enhance existing character and distinctiveness within the overall framework described above. In contrast, the guidance for the public realm is intended to bring cohesion and integrity to streets and spaces which will enhance legibility and support the aims of *Connect Sheffield*, a strategic project directed to wayfinding and navigation whether by walking or other modes of transport.

Once a coherent draft of the document was assembled and refined in draft form, it was subjected to a thorough public consultation process including presentation through public lectures during urban design week, a public exhibition and a web accessible and downloadable draft from the council's website. A questionnaire was prepared by the city council to accompany the exhibition and nearly 200 replies were received which gave over a 60 per cent positive response to the strategic guidance, tall buildings, the public realm and the city centre quarters. The response from formal design watchdogs and public agencies has been overwhelmingly positive. The negative response from the public was around 20 per cent or less. Following the consultation period, the city council and Gillespies has endeavoured to address valid criticisms in the production of the final document for presentation to the city council's cabinet and for publication.

| **Brian M Evans**, partner of Gillespies and professor at Chalmers University, Sweden
James Arnold, Urban Design and Conservation Team Manager at Sheffield City Council

URBAN VILLAGES

PETER NEAL (ED), THE PRINCE'S FOUNDATION AND SPON PRESS, 2003, £25.00



| ISBN 0 45 26273 9

It is refreshing to read in the Prince of Wales' Foreword that the title of this book is an oxymoron, an acknowledgement that Peter Neal repeats in its first chapter. The authors have obviously been stung by the accusations against the terminology and the book tries hard to respond to these accusations. For this it starts by reprising the evils of modernism, sometimes mixing metaphors and placing in the same bag the evils of the European post-war large estates and American suburbia. Neal and his co-authors establish the pedigree of urban

villages by invoking Herbert Gans and Jane Jacobs, New Urbanists, the mayor of Seattle and a wide supporting cast.

After the introductory chapters, the concept of urban villages is developed in a series of papers by well-respected figures such as Peter Hall, David Lock, William Mitchell, and others. These are eminently sound and cover a number of issues in a way that any urban designer would welcome. Some of the debates started by the Task Force's report are taken forward here, although some of the papers repeat what their authors have said elsewhere. Therefore, the middle section takes the form of a well-presented reader of urban design/regeneration ideas.

The last section of the book is 'a compendium of case studies' with examples that vary from urban infill (Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham) to greenfield urban extensions (Poundbury). The introduction to this chapter describes them as regenerated urban neighbourhoods and emphasises their mixed-use character. It also refers to the urban villages principles although these are not listed. They seem to include mixed tenures as well as uses, facilities for cyclists and pedestrians and opportunities to live and work.

It is when looking at these and the

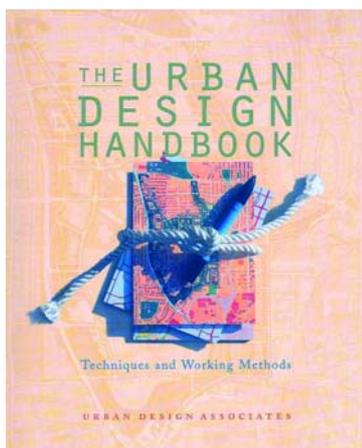
other examples in the book that questions raised early on come once again to mind; what do these places have in common? Is Poundbury a regeneration scheme? Is Brindley Place an urban village? What are the authors talking about and is 'neighbourhood' not a much better description for them all? The book appears to desperately want to show that there is such a thing as an urban village and that it has a well-established tradition. It cannot avoid being intellectually muddled and at the end unconvincing; the impression of it being an oxymoron is not dispelled. Urban village – as applied in Clerkenwell for example – is a commercial label, successful as such but not a serious concept. It works on some kind of romantic image attached to the word 'village' and it is closer to the theme park than to reality. And 'communities' are not 'made' as implied by the subtitle of the book.

Having said this, Parts 2 and 3, on Principles and Implementation respectively are interesting, the book is beautifully produced and illustrated and may be very useful as a source of references for a variety of good urban design ideas.

| Sebastian Loew

THE URBAN DESIGN HANDBOOK

URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES, WW NORTON & COMPANY, 2003, US\$33.97 FROM AMAZON



| ISBN 0 393 73106 5

The *Urban Design Handbook* introduces us to the world of the American practice, Urban Design Associates (UDA). It sets out the practice's design philosophies and working methods as a procedures manual or, as UDA calls it, an 'in-house handbook'. UDA's approach to the design process is based on a menu of tools and techniques which results in an ability to respond more effectively and efficiently to individual projects. The method supports quality control and assists in re-assessing completed projects. The book also provides an overview of the firm, its growth, services and major projects since conception in February 1964 in Pittsburgh.

The handbook initially focuses on the practice's 'Six principles for urban design': the design of a broad-based public process; the creation of diverse neighbourhoods; design for all means of movement; accessible public spaces and community institutions as key shapers of

the physical environment; and the utilisation of architecture and landscaping to frame and celebrate the physical environment and its elements. The principles align strongly with the Charter of New Urbanism, and are illustrated with project examples throughout the book.

UDA's perception of 'urban structure' (as set out in chapter 2) is a key component of its work. Urban structure is evident in the relationships that exist at various scales of the physical environment, from the regional down to the individual building. In order to formulate these relationships, UDA proposes a clear understanding of the physical environment's framework (skeletal structure) and resultant development patterns (flesh of the urban community). It identifies a series of generic urban design elements, combined to produce an 'urban assembly kit' or method for understanding and

designing neighbourhoods and various interrelationships. UDA notes that a commonality of form and function is (should be) found in all frameworks, ie a hierarchy of streets, public open spaces, blocks, lots and buildings, and these are expressed as a number of perspective layers on an aerial drawing. This enables the audience to see and feel the place rather than just looking down on a two-dimensional plan.

The handbook goes on to describe the 'process of design', (chapter 3) ranging from the initial building of relationships with the community and stakeholders through to forging visions, devising strategies and marketing sites. Again a standardised visual expression of this process ensures a clear understanding and easy revisit. As in the case of designing the physical environment, UDA recommends first of all defining a structure for the process: who is in charge, who participates, responsibilities, timing, and the use of charrettes (designing in the town with people from the town with a well resourced team, rather than at your desk

hundreds of miles away).

In the following chapters, UDA's 'Three phases of the urban design process' are explained. Each phase consists of a number of detailed steps from the practicalities of setting up a design project through to running it. This is where the book offers valuable advice for students/start-up companies still defining their own process. More established companies might see this 'how to' guide as being restrictive to the creative processes, but the systematic approach does highlight basic good practice. Phase one (understanding) is explained through the principle of x-ray drawings at various scales and details, while phase two (exploring) goes into more detail regarding preparation, execution and report back of charrettes, again illustrated through project examples. Phase 3 (deciding what to do) is the final stage of the design process where the plan is developed, preferred alternatives are discussed and the final report is prepared.

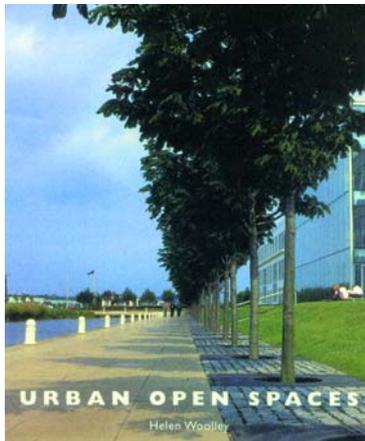
The handbook also describes UDA's 'pattern book process'; understanding

the context of a place, developing the palette, defining patterns and production of the pattern book. Its 'Architectural design process' is also set out from exploring design possibilities through to developing the design. UDA promotes its approach as a revival of the tradition of creating pattern books explained through visual images and examples with emphasis on an approach based on hand-drawn drawings rather than pristine computer graphics.

The book concludes with a series of appendices providing useful support for the start-up company in its explanation of filing, graphics and writing style preferences and guidelines. It is easy to forget about the importance of these over time and the handbook provides a timely reminder that the basics of running a design company are as important to the success of the projects as the creative knowledge element involved in projects. The handbook makes you think... or at least organise!

| Liezel Kruger

URBAN OPEN SPACES HELEN WOOLLEY, 2003, SPON PRESS £23.50



| ISBN 0 419 25690 3

In March 2004 CABE through its latest 'department', *cabe space* (lower case), published two short documents *The Value of Public Space* and a *Manifesto for Better Public Spaces*, which landed on my desk together with this book. Much is happening in the landscape world.

Helen Woolley, a lecturer at the University of Sheffield and a practicing landscape architect, has undertaken research for government inquiries and parliamentary select committees on urban regeneration and the roles that open space, in the form of parks and

green spaces can play. She is also a co-author of *Improving public parks, areas and green spaces* for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Her book has a sizeable (12pp) bibliography of the growing field of reports on urban regeneration. It is set out alphabetically by author but could have been more usefully grouped under subject categories and commented on.

Urban Open Spaces is set out in three parts. Section One 'Benefits and opportunities of open spaces' assembles the issues covered in CABE's 'campaign' in another way, and elaborates the use categories in more detail: children's play, water, passive and active recreation, educational resources, health, wildlife and aesthetic appreciation, environmental, economic, employment, property values, etc Section Two 'Urban open spaces-spaces for all' discusses useful typologies with the user as the focus of attention, developing three typologies with an increasing scale: domestic/urban open space, neighbourhood open space, and civic/urban open space.

Section Three 'Case studies' includes seven neighbourhood and recreational urban open spaces, and ten civic/urban ones. "This includes the rather more

marginal places which provide so much meaning in local life: the small play areas, allotments, and city farms, which architects and landscape architects too frequently ignore in their preoccupation with the more prestigious city centre spaces" (Ken Worpole in a good foreword).

The concluding section describes a range of recent landscape design initiatives, costing from £35,000 (Croydon sensory garden) through £4 million (Chatham Dockyard Maritme), to £19 million (Stockley golf course), which show that the art of place-making is slowly being rediscovered. This is the most useful part of the book and more of the 100 examples which were said to have been collected and researched would have been welcome. I would have liked more information too - plans drawn at the same scale to show what can be achieved in different sizes of space, more tabulated and compared information, and more context from an urban (design) point of view. Two other recent books already reviewed in UDQ, Alan Tate's *Great City Parks*, and Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzoe's *New City Spaces*, have shown the way.

| Peter Eley

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WE MUST ALL HANG OUT TOGETHER OR WE SHALL ALL HANG OUT SEPARATELY

I was recently presenting an urban design proposal for the rebuilding of an inner city 1960s estate, to an audience comprising council and 'new deal' officers, police, school heads, ward councillors, the local MP, and others. One element in the scheme was a modest piece of public space in front of the new shops, workspace and community centre, which I hopefully labelled the 'town square'; with the intention of providing the district with a sense of a middle which it currently lacks.

One ward councillor spoke up sharply. "Will there be young people there?" This succinct question connected two interesting issues. One is the idea that urban design is predictive, that the way a space is located, designed and furnished determines to some extent the way in which it will be used. The other is the idea that young people (youths, teenagers, whatever we call them) in public spaces are by definition a problem, and that it would be preferable if in some way they could be not there.

I have a lecture about the fallacies of environmental determinism, but this wasn't the place to give it. Also, I had heard the councillor's pathological views on young people before at earlier meetings, so his question wasn't a surprise. So my straight-faced answer was "I certainly hope so, councillor. And elderly people, and mothers with children, and all sorts of other people."

Perhaps too glib a response. The idea that public urban space is common territory, in which all variety of people share space and learn to become citizens together, is a powerful principle. In practice it often requires some degree of differentiation to be workable. But the councillor's suspicion of young people is shared by many others in authority, and it has led to a culture in which it is now quite respectable to design public spaces exclusively for teenagers.

These are called 'youth shelters', or more generally, 'youth spaces'. I am giving a paper at a NACRO conference on the subject in June (over by the time this column appears) at which I shall express some gentle scepticism. Yes, teenagers want to express their independence from everyone else. But is it a good idea to reinforce this independence in the form of exclusive physical structures? We are back to environmental determinism here. Might not a 'youth shelter' also be a pleasant place for granny to hang out with her shopping?

My prescription is that we build lots of (unlabelled) responsive places around the edges of all public spaces, for occupation by all sorts of people at different times. William Whyte's advice on "undesirables" makes a good general principle. "The best way to handle the problem of undesirables is to make a place attractive to everyone else."¹

| Joe Holyoak

¹ Whyte, William H, *City: rediscovering the center*, New York: Doubleday, 1988