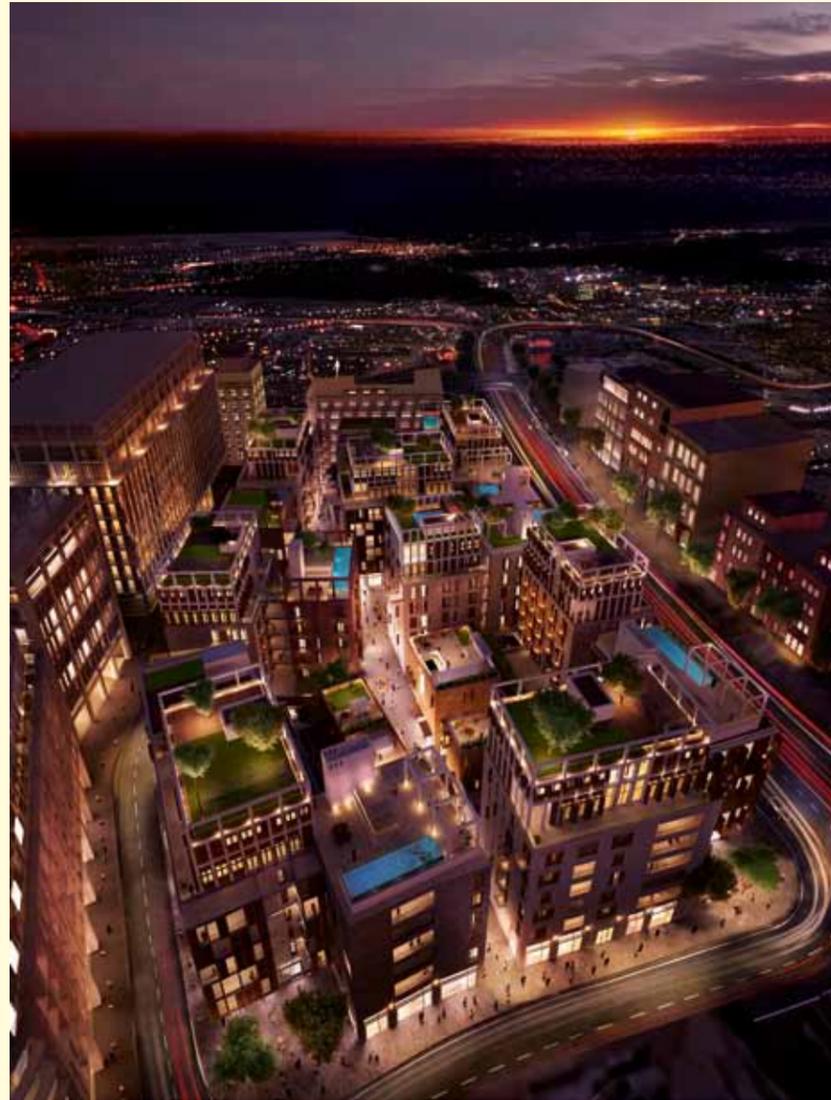


## DISTRICT//S

Allies and Morrison describe a contextual master plan in Beirut



Allies and Morrison are the masterplanners and architects for District//S – a 42,000 sqm scheme of high quality residential accommodation situated on the edge of Beirut's historic city centre. Twenty two new buildings provide 109 apartments ranging in size from 150-600 sqm, and a network of pedestrianised public spaces – a piazza, a sunken garden and a series of lanes – creates a vibrant public realm for a cosmopolitan mix of cafes, shops and galleries.

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

### PRINCIPLES & PROCESS

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

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

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

The first thing we noticed was the shape of the site. It seemed like a rectangle that had been broken. The natural break created a space that suggested a new informal square at the heart of the project.

✓ Twenty two new buildings provide 109 apartments ranging in size from 150 to 600 sqm, and a network of pedestrianised public spaces  
 ✓✓ Model of the scheme

This beneficial fracture would also form a new route that would thread through the site and connect it to the city. And so the new District //S would be sewn into the fabric of old Beirut.

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

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

Sketching the possibilities quickly revealed how important the spaces between the buildings would be. Each palazzo would be simple and individual, but the spaces that conducted the cross-breezes would be complex, inviting and

intimate. We recalled how a Japanese calligrapher, when placing the bold black brush stroke on the page, thinks also of the beauty of the white space contained within the structure of each letter.

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

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

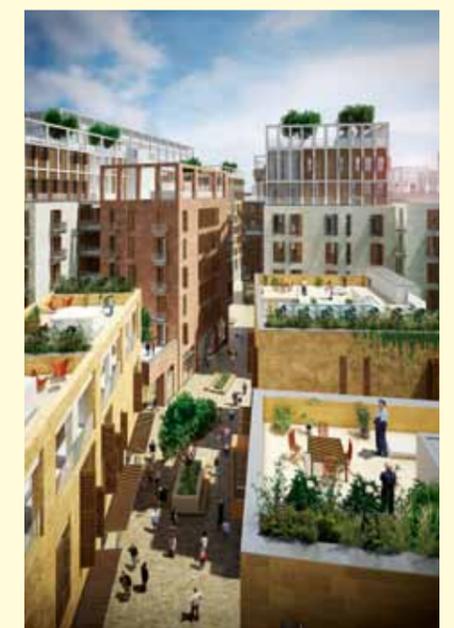
We knew from the beginning that District//S had all the right ingredients to be a memorable place itself. We were sure it would be an enviable place to live. And we hope those first impressions that generated our ideas will have matured into a design that is much a part of Beirut's history as it will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

### LESSONS LEARNED

In order to meet the aspirations of the city and the approvals process, we feel

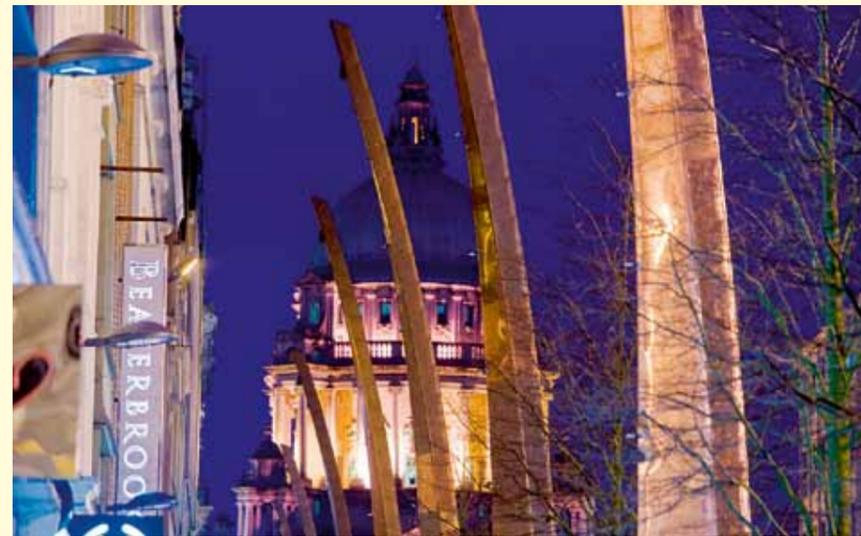
↓ Oversized timber shutters are a contemporary response to the traditional Lebanese balconies and shutters  
 ✓ View through the model  
 ↓↓ Eight jewel-like penthouses overlook a series of connecting rooftops with pools and terraces, creating a private landscape raised above the city

that it is as important to understand the physical context of a site as it is the political context. Beirut, as a city, is rightly immensely proud of its history and is confident in its aspirations. And as with every project, everywhere, there is no shortcut to ensuring that the proposed project fits absolutely with both the needs of the city and its ambitions. ●



# BELFAST STREETS AHEAD

*Atkins shows how the city is changing*



## BACKGROUND

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

## THE AIM

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

## THE DESIGN

Much of the project area falls within Belfast's designated conservation area. BSA seeks to deliver a responsive and contemporary environment, looking to the future whilst being respectful of the past. It strives to create sustainable spaces, seeking the right balance to deliver a visually appealing and stimulating city, whilst accommodating many associated city management activities along with

planned and impromptu events and celebrations. This requires an inherent flexibility in the designs. The spaces themselves – supported by a complex underground duct and IT network and in-ground power supplies – are simple and clutter-free providing ease of movement.

## THE MASTERPLAN

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

No buildings facing the street were included in the scheme, however there

was a need to synchronise design and implementation activities with major developments such as the Victoria Square shopping centre.

## SUSTAINABLE DESIGN ELEMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

## CONSULTATION

To deliver real benefits, the design was developed in an inclusive manner, informed through consultation with

- ✦ Close up of lighting masts on Donegall Place
- ↓ Arthur Square, with the 'Spirit of Belfast' sculpture
- ↘ Arthur Street
- ↗ Combined plan



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

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

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

## THE CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

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

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

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

These challenges amongst others required the team to develop numerous

design amendments, adjustments and innovations to take cognisance of the on-site constraints whilst at the same time delivering the client's vision to budget.

## THE ENRICHMENT OF BELFAST

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

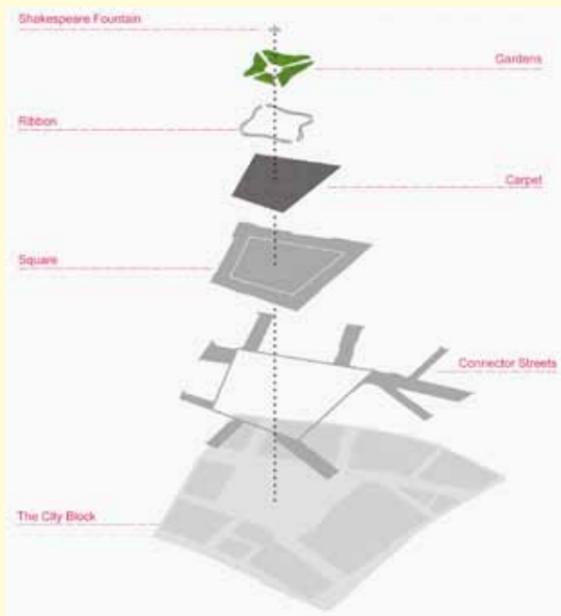
A sense of place has been created through the use of public art, like the 7m high Spirit of Belfast, a £200,000 sculpture made of four curved stainless steel parts.

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

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

# LEICESTER SQUARE RE-DESIGN

*Burns + Nice describe changes to one of London's most famous squares*



## BACKGROUND

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

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

## SCHEME DESCRIPTION

The new design used the historic qualities of the area as its inspiration – the late 19th century form of the central gardens surrounded by the wider urban square and connector streets – and translated these into a contemporary vocabulary that integrates the gardens with the surrounding streets. The constraints included the retention of listed structures such as the Shakespeare Fountain, four

marble busts and the London Plane trees; in addition the gardens are required to be physically enclosed by the London Squares Preservation Act 1931. These constraints were positively overcome: new railings and gates were introduced framed by the innovative informal seating element – a sinuous white ribbon. The gardens and the wider square take their design reference from the historic fountain at the centre. Everything radiates out from the fountain; the pathways widen towards the gates giving the illusion of greater distance and space; the gardens and ribbon are framed by a carpet of dark granite, the shape of which creates a legible link to the surrounding square.

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

## URBAN DESIGN CONTEXT

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

## PRINCIPLES

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

## CONCEPT

The re-design of Leicester Square offered the opportunity to consider the garden, square and connector streets as one entity, and create a coherent design that captures the intrinsic qualities of the London square and its gardens. There was also the

✓ Layer diagram showing the design rationale

✓✓ The 200m long white Ribbon is illuminated from beneath, the Shakespeare fountain is encircled by 40 up-lit water jets, both the gardens and the adjacent Swiss Court have contemporary bespoke light columns with multi-directional luminaires, all street lighting is wall mounted

opportunity to express the unique historic qualities of the site that have been eroded through the various changes in its basic design over the last century.

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

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

## PROCESS

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

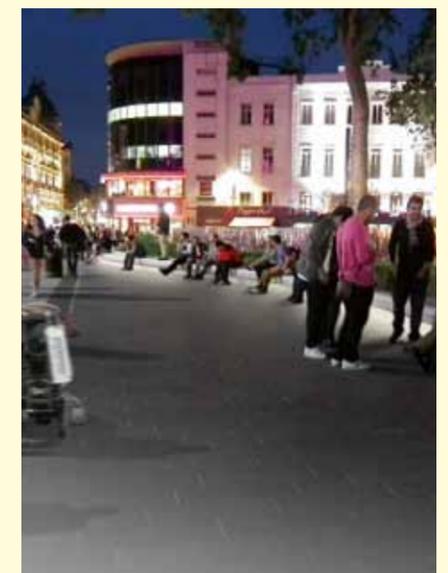


## LESSONS LEARNED

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

The scheme demonstrates how improvements within the public realm contribute to regeneration by improving the existing economic context, and assisting in creating a confident and stable environment for investment. It has already become a catalyst for incoming investment and new development such as W London, M & M World and a New Premiere Inn. Furthermore a committed client and the establishment of a technically experienced and integrated design team enabled the scheme's design challenges to be solved innovatively, whilst retaining the integrity of the vision for the re-design of Leicester Square. ●

- ↓ The connector streets
- ✓ The fountain, the Ribbon, the carpet, the animated edge, the square
- ↓↓ Lighting contributes to place-making and legibility



## STRATFORD CITY / 2012 ATHLETES VILLAGE

*Fletcher Priest Architects with multiple other consultants on masterplanning within an evolving context*



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

### RESPONDING TO THE OLYMPIC BID

The project was coordinated with the Olympic bid during the determination period for the original masterplan. The two schemes aimed to align but not trip each other up. It was seen as important that the relatively slim chance of success should not impede a regeneration process already underway. Various overlaps were

agreed, including use of the town centre streets as arrival routes for visitors, and location of the Athletes Village within residential districts proposed for the north of the site. The bid success accelerated the pace of delivery and extended the scale of transformation, enabling wider connections to be formed and legacy sporting venues to be embedded in a robust urban context. Initially half in and half beyond the Stratford City footprint, following the success of the bid the Village was fully located within the Stratford site.

### PRINCIPLES

From the outset, the guiding principle was of long-term city making, creating an armature of pedestrian movement between the existing town centre and onward to the Lea Valley Park. Off this spine, a series of streets and spaces established linkages into the surrounding areas and focal points for urban districts with varying scales, characteristics and uses. The landscape framework was seen as the underlying basis for the project in recognition that specific needs on a project of this scale would emerge over time and should be allowed to evolve.

Masterplan 'fixes' were documented with a series of spatial parameters forming the basis for a comprehensive environmental assessment. Beyond any formal planning details, the guiding principle, strongly expressed by clients and local authority, was a 'not Canary Wharf' attitude to the surroundings. The intention has always been that the project will incrementally blur into its context, seeding transformation in the nearby neighbourhoods, encouraging social integration and connectivity with the diverse population of East London and beyond.

### PROCESS

In recognition of the vast scale of the project and the anticipated longevity of implementation, several processes were set up at the outline planning stage. These established zones that would be subject to a more detailed scale of masterplanning before individual buildings could be brought forward. To support this, a series of review panels – on design, sustainability and accessibility – were established. They were intended to guide the planning authority and bring

- ✓ Illustrative masterplan including future development, with boundary of 2012 Athletes Village highlighted
- ↓ Nearly 12ha of public open space delivered across the project with a range of scales and characters
- ↘ Courtyard housing typologies create clearly defined shared amenity space for residents
- ↓↓ Photograph showing main open space and vistas towards City of London

together clients, design teams and public sector stakeholders into a forum that could review and inform the scheme at all stages. These panels have been a key part of the process. In relation to the Village, the need to accommodate 17,000 athletes and officials during the Games required the rapid delivery of more than 2,800 homes – far more than any normal residential project would ever produce at one time. To achieve this, the northern zones of the project were consolidated and designed at the next masterplanning scale in parallel with commissioning at an architectural scale. To help guide the architectural teams, generally designing perimeter urban structures with approximately 300 homes around shared communal courtyards, detailed design guidance was created alongside comprehensive briefing. This had to balance individual diversity, site-wide procurement efficiencies, complex environmental standards, transition from short term intense occupation by athletes and long term space standards of housing with varied tenures and unit sizes. The project is the largest scheme ever built to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and,

in terms of the areas delivered to date, is split approximately 50:50 in terms of market and social housing, fully integrated across the site.

### LESSONS LEARNED

Many lessons have been learned and a number of these relate to the classic urban design balance between certainty and open-endedness. In many ways, the success of the project can be measured in the degree to which the original ambitions of the masterplan, created in a pre-Olympics context and a different economic setting, have remained robust. The structure of the masterplan has been delivered and has formed the basis for the wider Olympic and post-Olympic project overlaid upon it. Grids established in isolation now extend in every direction, linking sporting venues and longstanding communities in a way that could not have been anticipated a decade ago. The value of processes relating to review and design guidance have proven essential. Scales of land ownership have become important in ways that were not expected. Originally submitted as a single planning application for a single client consortium, the project

- ↓ Original Stratford City masterplan (pre-Olympics), with boundary of 2012 Athletes Village added
- ↓↓ Buildings vary in scale in response to context

had to cope with multiple changes of ownership, with Westfield delivering the retail town centre, the ODA (and Lend Lease as their development managers) the Village and Lend Lease/LCR the post-Games predominantly commercial areas.

### FUTURE

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





## DERWENTHORPE PHASE 2, YORK

*Richards Partington Architects describe a new residential quarter*



### PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

### SUSTAINABILITY

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

### SITE LAYOUT

The different sized houses are used appropriately to support the urban structure and provide enclosure and continuous frontages to the streets and spaces. Larger houses are used adjacent to the surrounding open spaces and at key points to punctuate the streetscape and terminate forward views. The smaller

houses are used to create short terraces with the elevations varied to suit the location of the houses, for instance at gables or corners. The main east-west street has three storey houses on the northern side and smaller houses on the southern side to maximise the sunlight penetration to the pedestrian realm.

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

At the centre of the layout is a well-designed public space with a semi-mature tree that adds structure and creates a recognisable destination and focus. The roads approaching this space have been carefully designed to create a high quality public realm following the principle of

- ✓ Neighbourhood Square
- ↘ Aerial view of whole development looking west
- ↘↘ Site plan showing connections to surrounding neighbourhoods
- ↘↘↘ Typical Street View

pedestrian priority advocated by Manual for Streets. The layout also provides for pedestrian and cycle links northwards and eastwards to adjacent residential areas and open space and north eastwards across the Sustrans pedestrian/cycle route to the central area of Derwenthorpe providing links back to York.

### DESIGN PROCESS

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

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

### LESSONS LEARNED

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



## SHORTLISTED PUBLISHERS AWARD BOOKS

For the third year, the UDG Awards programme will include a Publishers Award. Publishers in the urban design field were invited to nominate one of their books published in the last 18 months. The six finalists are reviewed on the next two pages by the review panel which comprises Juliet Bidgood, Marc Furnival, Jonathan Kendall and Laurie Mentiplay, and is chaired by Alastair Donald. The panel will choose the winner, which will be announced at the Awards event in February 2013.



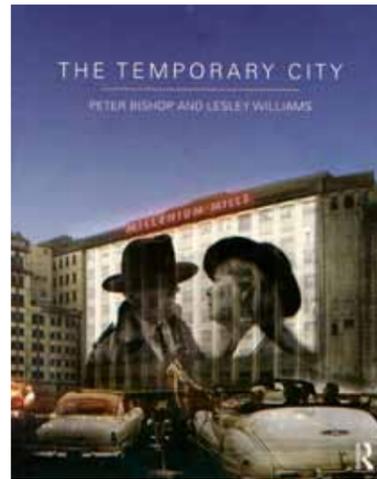
### ReThinking a Lot: The Design and Culture of Parking

Eran Ben-Joseph, MIT Press, 2012, £17.95  
ISBN 978-0-262-01733-6

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

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

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



It is in the tension between visual landscape and multifunctional opportunities that the book is limited. One would have liked the terms of reference to extend beyond aesthetics towards opportunities for meaningful diverse land use: my mind immediately went to photographs of sports pitches overlaid on car parks by Alex Maclean in *Taking Measures Across the American Landscape*.

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

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

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

● Jonathan Kendall

### The Temporary City

Peter Bishop and Lesley Williams, Routledge, 2012, £29.99  
ISBN 978-415-67055

Many are beginning to wonder whether the extended recession is merely part of a recurring economic cycle or instead a readjustment to a different mode altogether. Similarly this book gently poses the question, what if the city could be shaped by forces other than capital – even if only for a while? Or if shaped

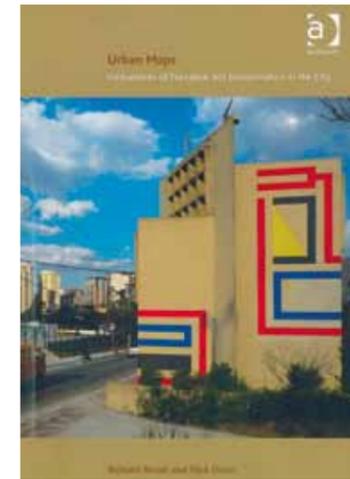
by capital at all, by the individual and the re-configured consumption of - ideas, belonging and being there - brought about by the digital revolution?

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

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

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

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



variety, against a backdrop of increasingly bland high streets, and for enjoyment of the moment'.

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

● Juliet Bidgood

### Urban Maps – Instruments of Narrative and Interpretation in the City

Richard Brook & Nick Dunn, Ashgate, 2011, £50  
ISBN 978-0-7546-7657-7

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

Film, and other artistic media, including graffiti, can also be highly engaging modes of enquiry that 'reveal aspects and patterns that are latent and buried deep within the temporal state of cities'. Such investigations

demonstrate the value of and ways to engage with less tangible aspects of the world around us, which are key to understanding these complex conditions.

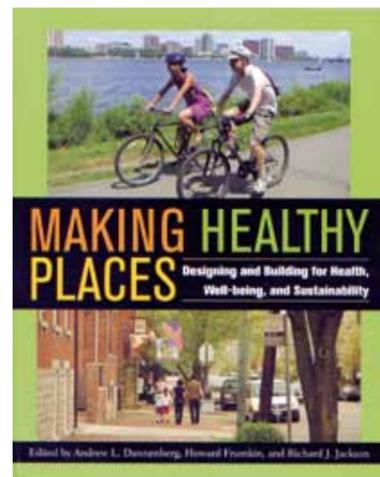
Between a full introduction and shorter conclusion chapters, *Urban Maps* is divided into: Brand, Image and Identity; Networks; Films; Marks; and, Object, illustrated with a host of black and white images. The introduction is a little uneven, in the academic norm, but the remaining chapters settle down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

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

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

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

This underpins the need to further explore how architecture can re-engage with cities' inhabitants and users, whereby the



architect and urban designer act more as catalysts, so that places can evolve and we are 'equipped for creating strategies to address the urban landscape'.

None of us is a benign influence on behaviour and interaction, and in this book we are provided with good arguments for expanding the ways that we see and think about the world around us.

● Marc Furnival

## Making Healthy Places, Designing and Building for Health Well-being, and Sustainability

Edited by Andrew L. Dannenberg, Howard Frumkin and Richard J. Jackson, Island Press, 2011, £25, ISBN 978-1-59726-727-4

Making Healthy Places opens with the observation that rising obesity in the US could lead to the current generation of Americans being the first to have shorter longevity than their predecessors. Equally CABI's report *Future health: sustainable places for health and wellbeing* cited that in the UK obesity and related diseases costs the NHS £4.2 billion a year; both evidence of the value of interrogating how much health and wellbeing are part of our current thinking.

This book explores how the built environment continues to impact on health (and consequently life chances) and sets out how planners, policy makers, designers and educators can influence this dynamic and engage with the 'perfect storm of intersecting health, environmental, and economic challenges'. These include: escalating health care and social costs, environmental threats from resource depletion and climate change, peak oil, ageing populations, and, a lack of an interdisciplinary approaches to education.

The three editors are experts in environmental and public health, and have choreographed input from forty-six contributors

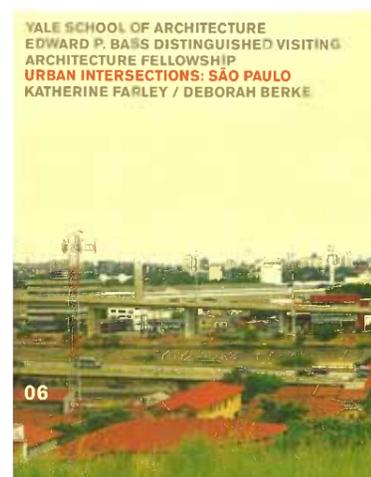
from a broad range of disciplines including prevention, epidemiology, architecture, planning and sustainable communities. Although the book is embedded in US practice and policy it is interesting for comparing notes or inspiring policy or curriculum development.

Structured in four parts, it opens with the background on how the discipline of public health has evolved historically from the need to ameliorate the conditions of rapidly industrialising cities. The second part expands on the interrelationship of design, resource availability and health. As well as physical health, food environments and access to healthy food are also explored along with air quality and water supply, mental health social capital and vulnerable populations.

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

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

Making Healthy Places concludes that all cities should be seen as part of resource flows, belonging to a wider ecosystem. The transition to a healthy city is, the authors, assert the transition to a resilient and sustainable city; less dependant on cheap liquid



fuels and where the most vulnerable are less exposed to climate change impacts such as heat and cold stress, flood risk and food and fuel poverty.

● Juliet Bidgood

## Urban Intersections: São Paulo

Katherine Farley and Deborah Berke, Edited by Nina Rappaport, Noah Biklen and Eliza Higgins, W W Norton & Co, £25, ISBN 978-0-393-73352-5

If Rio is Brazil's glamorous city of Copacabana and Carnival, São Paulo is its grittier big brother. Rapid growth fuelled by mass immigration has transformed the city into one of the largest in the world, a vibrant, multi-cultural megapolis of over seventeen million people.

In *Urban Intersections: São Paulo*, we learn that the city is facing huge challenges. Public infrastructure is struggling to cope with the rate of development (67,775 residential units built in 2010 alone) and there is rising inequality, crime and traffic congestion. The number of people living in the organic *favelas* (shanty towns) has grown from 1 to 20 per cent in twenty years, while the growing middle class live in 'vertical gated communities of towers' or *periferias* (suburbs).

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

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

The book starts with a scene setting dialogue between the project leaders Katherine

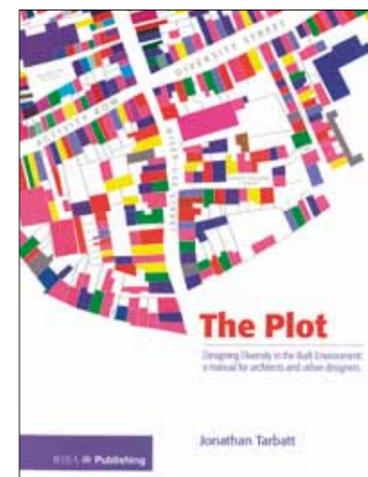
Farley (Tishman Speyer) and Deborah Berke (Yale). The conversation covers a range of issues including design quality in property development, the value of fusing global and local expertise, and the importance of students understanding the commercial reality in which they are designing.

This is followed by Vanessa Crossman's essay on São Paulo's development history and contemporary challenges. We learn about city plans that were built, including Maías's car-friendly Plano de Avenidas and Barry Parker's garden city *Jardin America*, as well as unfinished plans and plans for the future. São Paulo's tradition of closed communities has according to anthropologist Theresa Caldeira, resulted in a city of walls where 'layers of urban experiments, development, and auto-construction have resulted in a vibrant, multi centred city characterised by disjunction.'

The main section of the book showcases ten student projects. The students get a crash course in property development before travelling to Brazil to meet planners, architects and visit the site and comparable developments. The students are asked to go beyond a masterplan framework and realise detailed building solutions.

The commercial requirements and site characteristics result in a diverse range of responses. We see a wide variety of layouts, scales, densities and typologies, some taking the lead from the built form, others using the landscape as their starting points. The more successful schemes integrate micro-climate, topography, security and environmental sustainability with financial considerations of phasing and value. There are some innovative and thought-provoking architectural and landscape responses referencing city precedents such as Brazilian Modernism and *Jardin America*.

Some schemes feel more like islands, while others try to integrate with the surrounding neighbourhoods. As it is a standalone commercial scheme, it is easy to forget that the site is located in a city with extreme inequality and segregation. The project leaders recognise that 'housing the poor in emerging countries is a problem



of enormous significance', but 'it is not something you can address in a developer studio. It is a governmental issue'.

While we can understand why they have said this, it would have been interesting to see the students given a wider brief for innovative ways of tearing down São Paulo's 'city of walls' and making better connections with the wider city context.

● Laurie Mentiplay

## The Plot: Designing Diversity in the Built Environment: a manual for architects and urban designers

Jonathan Tarbatt, RIBA Publishing, 2012, £39.95, ISBN 978-1-85946-443-4

From its title onwards, *The Plot* is thoroughly written in a clear and accessible style. Beyond any specific detail, its role is advocacy. It seeks to promote the urban qualities that can be achieved through plurality of design interventions at a plot scale. Helpfully, the definition of the plot and its history is described within the book, so the reader can understand the differences between plot, block and lot, all of which could be used interchangeably and unthinkingly. There are important differences, and Tarbatt promotes scales and methodologies of urban design that strike a balance between precision and open-endedness.

The work is not abstract or academic in the sense of remoteness from day-to-day activities and processes. It is fully up-to-date, including references to the National Planning Policy Framework and the Community Infrastructure Levy, for example. Such detail, including commentary on regional differences across the UK and Ireland, are useful but also risk becoming quickly outdated as policies change.

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

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

The book is graphically clear and well presented, though it is a disappointment that often the text and images are coincidentally adjacent to one another rather than strongly linked. Some of the illustrations appear slightly ad hoc, rather than embedded within the argument.

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

In its aims, the book manages to be highly ambitious but also quite pragmatic. It is a comprehensive text that is useful on many levels. Our cities would be experientially richer if those ambitions could be achieved, overcoming the pragmatic economic and cultural obstacles that tend to impede them.

● Jonathan Kendall