

How to Make People Friendly Places

Lessons from the
National Urban Design Awards

**URBAN
DESIGN
GROUP**

How to make People Friendly Places

A guide for politicians, professionals, and citizens

The job of urban design is to work with communities to bring together all the components that make a successful street, neighbourhood, town or city, making them fit together, look attractive, and work well.

This report celebrates the best of the work from this year's National Urban Design Awards, and the communities, firms, and local authorities who demonstrate how it can be done.

Surveys repeatedly show that we are building in the wrong places, in unsustainable locations, creating neighbourhoods that don't reflect current government guidance, and are designed around vehicles, rather than people. These awards demonstrate that we don't have to do this.

We can create quality development in any community in Britain. We can build in the right places that offer people access to the work, opportunities, and services they need for a fulfilled life, and that are not exclusively dependent on car ownership and use. We can follow current Government and industry best practice guidance, and it will produce excellent results.

The message of the 2021 National Urban Design Awards is that we can make outstanding urban design common place. Build in the right place, to a good quality, to current best practice.

The Urban Design Group is a campaigning membership charity (Registered Charity No.326123). We care about the quality of life in our cities, towns and villages and believe that raising standard of urban design is central to its improvement.

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National Urban Design Awards 2021

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We would like to thank the National Urban Design Awards judging panel for 2021 for their hard work, expertise and invaluable insight:

Co-chairs

Christopher Martin, Urban Movement
Alan Thompson, AP Thompson Built Environment Consultancy

Judges

Jas Bhalla, Jas Bhalla Architects
Jane Dann, Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design
Roger Evans, Studio REAL
Helen Forman, West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Peter Frankum, Savills Urban Design Studio
Tim Hagyard, CPRE
Emma Spierin, O'Mahony Pike Architects
Dr Deb Upadhyaya, Homes England

Student Shortlisting

Dr Patricia Aelbrecht, Cardiff University
Dr Husam AlWaer, University of Dundee
Dr Philip Black, University of Manchester

Book Award:

Dick Cole (Chair), Urban Design journal editorial board
Georgia Butina-Watson, Oxford Brookes University
Geoff Noble, Heritage + Urban Design Consultant
Judith Ryser, Urban Design journal editorial board
Katja Stille, Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design

How to make People Friendly Places

A guide for public, politicians, and developers

Challenges

Over the next ten years around three million new homes will be built in the UK together with supporting buildings such as shops, cafes and restaurants, schools and workplaces. At the low densities typical of most mass-built housing, around 90 square miles of land will be needed, roughly the size of Surrey.

POOR DESIGN QUALITY

The quality of around one fifth of new housing development is so poor that planning permission would not have been granted had national policies been correctly followed (Housing Design Audit for England Place Alliance 2019). Street design is one of the worst features. Vehicle dominated street design standards from the 1950s and 60s are still in widespread use, even though Government withdrew them nearly twenty years ago.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE WRONG PLACE

We are building in the wrong places – there are hundreds of proposals for new housing in isolated, car-dependent locations. These are generally too small to be self-reliant and will lock in inactive lifestyles, poor health, and high energy use indefinitely.

Location determines design

The choice of location for a new development determines much of its design, and its ability to meet the Government's climate targets and health and wellbeing agenda. If the location for the housing is away from workplaces, shops, schools, and other facilities essential for everyday life, or lacks a frequent rail service, people will have to use and own cars; often several per family.

Acres of tarmac - less land for houses and gardens

The area of land needed for parked cars can be greater than the land area available for housing. Roads will have to be increased in size to accommodate the traffic; more than half the surface area of the development may end up being covered in tarmac.

The drainage system will need to be changed to manage rainfall on tarmac, and further areas of land must be set aside for flood detention basins to prevent flooding downstream. All this reduces the available land for gardens, parks, and play areas.

Much more traffic - congestion, pollution, danger

Nearby towns will also be affected by the heavier traffic, bringing congestion, pollution, noise, and safety concerns. Residents will walk and cycle less, and will be worried about encouraging their children to do so. Loneliness and the illnesses that follow from inactive lifestyles are the consequence.

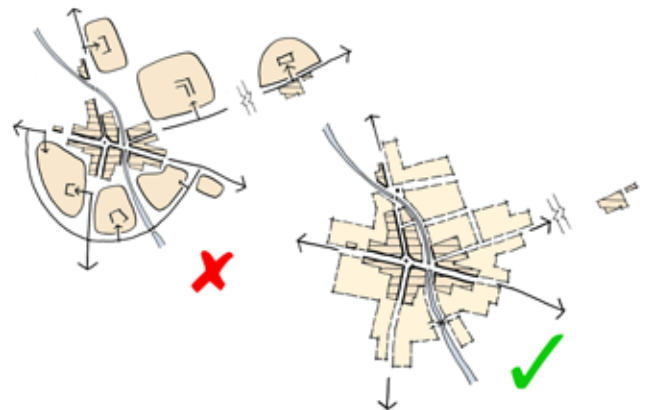
If the location enables people to walk, cycle, or use public transport to go about their daily lives, energy use and carbon dioxide emissions will be minimised, and there will be plenty of space for parks, gardens and play areas.

The current approach to planning, starts with the council issuing a 'call for sites' to landowners and developers for sites to be included in the local plan. The result is a random scatter of sites, many of which will be isolated and unable to offer the residents a range of services and job opportunities within walking distance.

This is no basis for creating people friendly places.



Good urban design avoids the creation of places that are hostile to people and the planet © Roger Evans, Studio REAL



New housing schemes are best when designed as seamless, harmonious, and beautiful extensions of a town, and enable walking, cycling and public transport. They should not be created as a series of isolated estates, totally dependent on car ownership and use, and costly major road infrastructure. © Roger Evans, Studio REAL

BUILD IN THE RIGHT PLACES IN THE RIGHT WAY

We should build as planned growth to sustainable towns, or, where there is a need, carefully located new settlements, large enough to be mostly self-sufficient, and connected by frequent public transport services and strategic cycle routes.

The density of development should be similar to that found in the centres of our finest historic towns and cities, enabling '15-minute neighbourhoods' where most of our needs can be met within a short walk, and where there are sufficient numbers of people to make public transport financially viable. The low densities of current suburban development do not enable this.

We shouldn't just build housing, but balanced communities which enable the enterprise and energy of the local people to flourish.

1. Implement the right policies and guidance

Have the right policies and guidance

A NATIONAL MODEL FOR BETTER DESIGN

The English Government has produced a national model design code which provides guidance for local authorities wishing to produce design codes to ensure quality development in neighbourhoods or specific sites.

This is a welcome step forward, but its use depends on local authorities having the staff and skills to produce the codes. Currently two thirds do not. There are not even the resources to manage the work being undertaken by the private sector.

CREATE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Many parish councils are taking charge of the future of their area by creating their own Neighbourhood Plans. The people of Shenley, through their Parish Council, have produced a plan that is a model example, giving an analysis of the character and attractiveness of the area, and guidance on the improvement of walking and cycling links, and the quality required of new development.

SET CLEAR QUALITY STANDARDS

Most local authorities have issued climate declarations, but without specific, measurable policies and standards to back this up, the declarations are meaningless.

The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Sustainability Guidance and Checklist sets clear quality standards, with specific numerical targets in critical areas, including energy efficiency and carbon reduction, renewable energy, green infrastructure and biodiversity, sustainable movement, water management, circular economy, waste management, air quality, health and wellbeing, community strength and social infrastructure, economic growth and job creation.

INVOLVE THE PUBLIC IN PRODUCING GUIDANCE

Research suggests that the public appreciate their local environment so much more when they are involved in its design.

Haringey Council's Wood Green and Turnpike Lane Design Manual is a leading example of how to create public realm improvements with the involvement of the broad sections of the community.

Implement the policies, guidance, and standards

Implementation of policies and guidance requires coordinated action by local people, business, and local authorities.

Nottingham City Council Design Quality Framework has been produced through the combined and continuing efforts of the local community, the local design and development industry, and local business, as a jointly owned system that is ensuring high quality design in Nottingham.

- A set of guidance documents that clearly state the quality of new development that the council, local business and local people expect
- A streamlined process for assessing planning applications, using the guidance documents, which has cut 10 weeks off the time taken to approve quality schemes
- A comprehensive training programme across the council, and communities to ensure everyone understands and can act as advocates for improved design quality
- A mission for Zero Carbon by 2028, being led by local business



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2. Use urban design frameworks



Birkenhead 2040

Birkenhead 2040, Optimised Environments

A highly ambitious, creative and people centric regenerative transformation programme of a remarkable waterfront town on a scale of national significance. It coordinates a series of public realm improvements, new development projects and new infrastructure.



Andover Town Centre

Andover Town Centre, NEW Masterplanning

A Vision, Masterplan and Public Realm Framework that creates an achievable future for this market town centre. It identifies the potential to restore a river, relocate a college, upgrade the shopping area, and reduce the dominance of the surrounding roads.

Use urban design frameworks to set out a long-term vision and a coordinated programme for action

An urban design framework is a broad vision for the future of the area, produced with the involvement of local people, local business, and the local council. It identifies opportunities for improvement and is used to coordinate individual projects and to attract funding from both public and private sectors. Coordination of projects is very important. Individual developments, such as a new housing scheme, or business units, rely on supporting facilities and infrastructure. The people in new housing need health centres, parks, safe and attractive walking and cycling routes, access to buses and trains, that can take them to shops and workplaces. Frameworks allow public and private sectors to play to their strengths.

The Birkenhead 2040 Framework identifies the area's most attractive features such as the waterfront, areas for new office and commercial development and new housing, along with improvements to transport infrastructure and a district heating system. It has already been successful in winning funding for the town.

The Andover Town Centre Masterplan is a Framework that identifies a whole series of projects, such as removing roundabouts, providing a site for a college, reviving the town centre, and making a feature out of the River Anton. Created by using the ideas and vision of the local community, it is solidly supported by people, politicians, and press.

The next stage for Andover is to progress the individual projects identified in the framework through more detailed masterplans, design, and feasibility studies.

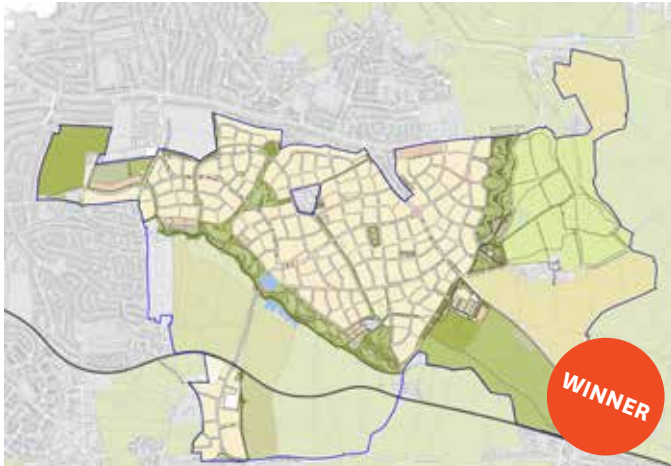
Deliver using masterplans

Masterplans are concerned with the detailed arrangement of a new development. They are produced for a single landowner (or landowners who have agreed to collaborate).

The masterplan coordinates the many different disciplines that need to be involved, including ecology, water management and drainage, landscape, movement and transportation, utilities, architecture and so on, as well as the public sector, such as the education department in the local authority, over the location and design of new schools. Larger sites will be developed as a series of phases, and this will be set out in the Masterplan.

Sometimes, additional documents will be produced to support the masterplan, setting out detailed design requirements, such as building heights, materials to be used, style, the environmental performance of buildings, the design of streets and so on.

3. Deliver using masterplans



Nansledan, Newquay

Nansledan, Adam Architecture

A 218 hectare mixed use, mixed tenure sustainable extension to Newquay for the Duchy of Cornwall, will evolve into a community of 4,000 homes and 4,000 jobs.



Oakfield, Swindon © MW + Nationwide

Oakfield Masterplan, Metropolitan Workshop

239 high quality, fairly priced homes of mixed tenure, suitable for local people, from first time buyers to families and over 55s. A step change for the quality of housing, street and urban design in an area of 1960s suburban housing.



Love Wolverton | image courtesy of DarcStudio

Love Wolverton, URBED

£35 million regeneration of a town centre site in Milton Keynes providing new streets, energy-efficient multi-generational homes, independent shops and an energy micro grid, 10 minutes' walk from the railway station.



Coal Orchard, Taunton | image courtesy of AHR / MACE

Coal Orchard, Lavigne Lonsdale

The redevelopment of a town centre car park as a mixed-use quarter, with housing, business units, cafes and restaurants, a new town square, an attractive waterfront, and a renewed connection between the historic town centre to the river and theatre.

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4. The result: People Friendly Places

The result: People Friendly Places

In 1992 in his seminal text, *Making People-Friendly Towns*, the Urban Design Group's Founding Chairman, Francis Tibbalds, set out 10 key principles for creating places where people really want to live, work and play:

- Places matter most
- Learn the lessons of the past
- Encourage the mixing of uses and activities
- Design on a human scale
- Encourage pedestrian freedom
- Provide access for all
- Build legible environments
- Build lasting environments
- Control change
- Contribute to the greater whole

30 years later they still reflect best practice, further enhanced by an increasing awareness of how the built environment can contribute to the mitigation of climate change and socio-economic inequality.

Good urban design can be difficult to achieve, especially where the property market is weak, or where political or public aspirations are limited. It is rare that a scheme will be able to achieve perfection in all aspects - often compromises need to be made to turn a visionary design into something that is politically, financially, and practically achievable.

At the Urban Design Group we will continue to campaign and support all those with a passion for and commitment to making People Friendly Places.

Robert Huxford, Director, Urban Design Group



City Park West, Chelmsford © Jim Stephenson



The Park within Elephant Park © Aurelien Langlais

High quality housing and public realm: City Park West

A new residential quarter in the heart of Chelmsford comprising more than 600 homes alongside cafés, restaurants, landscaped public realm, sculpture, workplaces and community facilities 5 minutes' walk from the railway station.

People friendly urban parks: The Park within Elephant Park

A spectacular green oasis in inner London, designed for all ages, featuring play areas, seating, fountains, waterfalls, trees, hedges, and flowers to create a place of fun and beauty.

People friendly main streets: Sauchiehall Street

A replicable model for main streets, that has turned a traffic-blighted environment into a place for all the community: local businesses, shoppers, active commuters, adding trees, seats, and public art.



Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow

Reflections from the Urban Design Awards judges

HAVE A VISION AND CARRY IT THROUGH

Every community needs a vision for the future. It needs to be practical and achievable, able to unite the community and attract funding. It is not a PR exercise. The aim is to make a difference.

CREATE A TEAM - KEEP IT TOGETHER

Too many schemes fall apart because there is no individual or team with overall responsibility.

The job of urban design is to assemble the parts that make a successful place, such as streets, houses, transport, schools, drainage, lighting, parking, parks and play areas. They need to be designed and managed together, otherwise they won't fit well, and there is the risk that overall costs will rise owing to incompatible decisions.

The quality of the design and the vision developed with the community can suffer if a succession of different consultants is appointed as a scheme progresses from consultation, through planning and technical design, and into construction and completion.

- To ensure success, create a team with overall control and responsibility for delivering the vision for the project, including coordinating the various technical specialists that will be involved, such as drainage, landscape, utilities, highways etc. Keep that team in place until the job is done.

BE A GOOD CLIENT

Whether you are a politician, a landowner or developer, your role as a client is of huge importance.

- Set ambitious environmental, social and economic objectives in your brief and follow them through. Don't let the quality of the scheme be watered down as it progresses from visioning, through masterplanning, technical design and into construction.
- Choose consultants you can get along with. Work with them in partnership: as a team, taking responsibility for the whole scheme, including the design and delivery.
- Make sure this team has sufficient skills and resources to enable you to act as a competent client. Keep these skills in place for the duration of the project. Don't try to run a long-term project through a series of short-term contracts: this invites delays, inefficiency, increased costs and reduced quality.

THINK BEYOND THE SITE

Many planning proposals ignore the importance of what happens in the neighbouring streets, town, and landscape.

- Only choose the sites where there will be a sufficient range of workplaces, parks, leisure facilities and shops within a 10-20 minute walking or cycling distance unless you intend to provide these facilities within the new development.
- Make sure that strategic walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure beyond the site will be delivered. Obtain funding through planning agreements to make the necessary changes. Create legal agreements to ensure these are carried out.
- Think about how the design and facilities offered by the site can contribute to the surrounding area.
- Development guided and coordinated by an urban design framework for the wider area is likely to be the most successful.

USE DESIGN GUARDIANS

A role for an individual or team to ensure the quality and integrity of a scheme as it progresses from inception through to completion.

ESTABLISH ONE STOP SHOPS

Local authorities should establish single multi-disciplinary teams to provide a one-stop shop for advice on new development and its approval and adoption, including planning, development control, highways development control, highways adoption and drainage. This arrangement ensures consistent advice, avoids conflicts and uncertainty, and helps to speed the delivery of development. This is challenging, but especially important in two tier government areas, where the county council is highway authority and the district council the planning authority.

TACKLE THE CLIMATE CRISIS

It is easy to make a climate change declaration. What matters is action.

- What contribution does each scheme make to easing the crisis?
- Does the location and design of the scheme minimise the need for long distance travel, car ownership and use, and maximise the potential for walking and cycling?
- Has consideration been given to topography? This includes allowing natural airflows across a site and thinking about the prevailing wind direction, angles of the sun at different times of day and year, and the orientation of streets and buildings.
- Does the scheme consider micro-climates: sun-traps and shelter in winter; in summer, shade and cooling through water evaporation from trees; avoiding temperature increasing dark surfaces?
- Will the design of buildings minimise energy and carbon embedded in their construction, and required for subsequent use and maintenance?

THINK ABOUT SHOPPING CENTRES

- Are town centres dominated by indoor shopping malls compatible with a healthy and thriving town?
- Should we demolish under-used shopping areas to create parks or open streets? Or should we try to find alternative uses for these buildings?
- In new development, should we gather the shops together in one location, or distribute them around the neighbourhood to create tiny local centres?

REPAIR THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY HEAVY ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Many towns are girdled and pierced with very wide roads and junctions. They are noisy, ugly, take up land, and are difficult to cross.

- Should we humanise these roads – reallocating unnecessary road width, introducing central medians, trees and landscape, and reducing the speed and volume of traffic?
- Should we bridge over them where possible?

MAINTENANCE

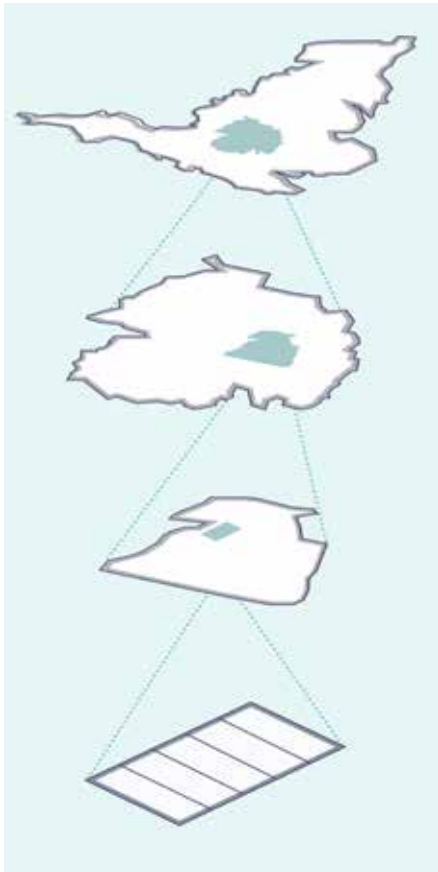
- Is successful development possible without good maintenance and stewardship of streets, trees, landscape and public areas?
- How can maintenance best be funded?

IN CONCLUSION

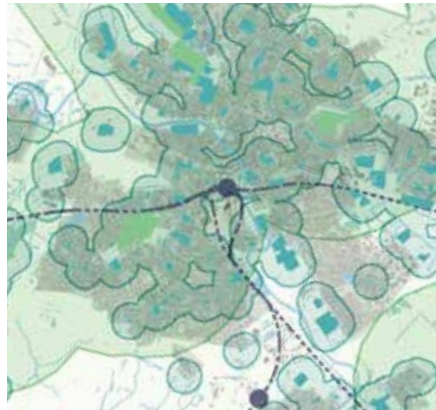
The Urban Design Awards provides exemplars of best practice for the different stages of the planning and development process. Raising the quality of both built and natural environments is essential if we are to meet the challenges ahead of us in the 21st century.

The National Model Design Code

The National Model Design Code and associated Guidance Notes are a major contribution to embedding good design in national and local policy



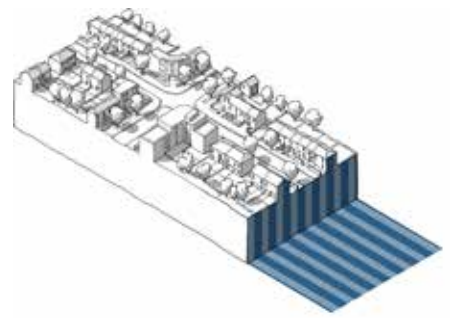
Step 1: Scoping



Step 2: Baseline and Design Vision



Step 3: Area Types



Step 4: Coding Plan

PROJECT TEAM

URBED, MHCLG in house team under Chief Architect Andy Von Bradsky

KEY FACTS

TIMESCALE 1 year from commissioning to publication

APPROX. COST £80,000

JUDGES' COMMENTS

The National Model Design Code is a huge and much needed boost for spatial planning and 3-dimensional urban design frameworks in England; where town planning has been pre-occupied with written policies and management process for decades, with disastrous results.

It communicates good design in an easy-to-understand way. It rightly states that codes need to respond to local topography, geology, ecology, and character. It also illustrates best practice in technical design, such as SuDS, energy supply, tree planting and street layout.

But success depends on local authorities having the resources to create local design codes tailored to specific sites. Two fifths of local planning authorities have no access to in-house urban design advice; two thirds no landscape advice; three quarters no architectural advice. (Place Alliance Urban Design Skills Survey 2021: The Design Deficit)

URBED introduce a landmark in national guidance for improved design quality

When the National Design Guide was published in 2019 it contained much that most of us would regard as common sense. Principles that were controversial not so long ago are now accepted as motherhood and apple pie. The question was therefore why, if everyone is in such agreement, are these principles of good design still so widely ignored?

The draft National Design Guide therefore included a placeholder for a future National Model Design Code intended to give the guide its teeth. This Code was subsequently commissioned, and we at URBED spent the second half of 2020 working collaboratively with Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government on the document that was published following consultation in June 2021. The result is not a 'model code' but rather a suggested process

Comprehensive guidance on the production of design codes that could transform design quality across England, as long as local authorities are given the resources to implement it.



MORE INFO

by which local planning authorities can develop their own design codes in partnership with their local community.

In the UK design coding is quite rare and most 'codes' are little more than design guides. A true code fixes a set of specific and non-negotiable rules to a specific plot of land. The rules are also normally enforced through land ownership powers rather than planning.

ZONAL PLANNING SYSTEMS

In most of the world planning systems operate on a similar basis. Land is zoned and each zone is regulated by a set of rules that are non-discretionary. It means that everyone knows exactly where they stand, and the planning system simply involves checking compliance with the rules. The Planning White Paper in England published last year proposes that the UK planning system should be reformed along similar lines. This would clearly have implications for the National Model Design Code, but our brief was very clear that we had to produce something that would work with the current planning system.

The governments national planning policy (The National Planning Policy Framework) now requires every planning authority to prepare a design code although these do not need to cover their entire area. Lots of codes will therefore be produced in the next few years and these are likely to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents giving them 'weight' within a discretionary planning system but leaving plenty of room for negotiation.

COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

The National Model Design Code sets out a collaborative process working with local communities to produce codes based on 7 steps:

1. Scoping: to agree the areas to be covered by the code and what it should contain
2. Baseline: analysis of the area to be covered such as the road network, local facilities and the character of the landscape and buildings
3. Area Types: the identification of a series of 'Area Types' of relatively consistent character and the development of a vision for how each of these types should develop
4. Coding Plan: the mapping of these Area Types
5. Masterplanning: the preparation of a



Step 5: Masterplanning of development sites

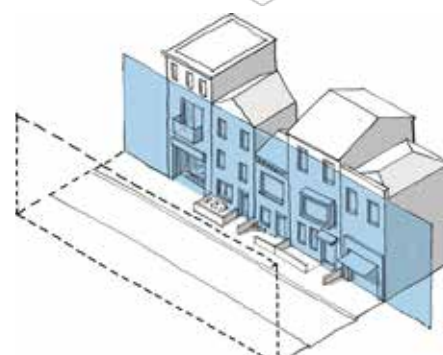
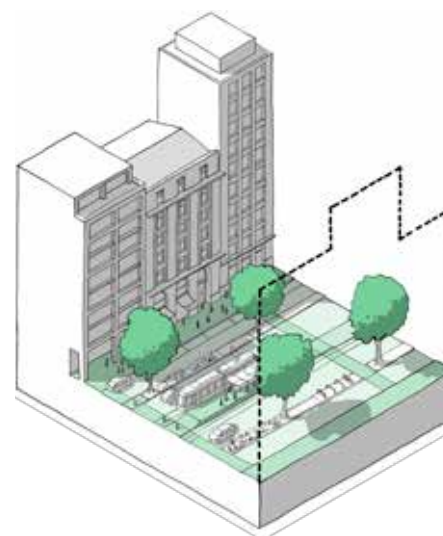
plan for each major development site specifying some basic principles and importantly which Area Type will apply

6. Area Type Coding: the development of rules and guidance for each Area Type covering issues such as street type, built form and land use
7. Code-wide Guidance: the development of rules and guidance that applies to all Area Types

The model code is accompanied by illustrated guidance notes that set out the issues likely to be covered by codes and how these issues can be coded. The code also includes ten examples of Area Types and shows how three of these (Town Centre, Urban Neighbourhood and Suburb) might be coded.

IN CONCLUSION

The contribution of the National Model Design Code is not therefore to add to the excellent guidance on urban design that already exists. It is rather designed to change the way that this urban design



Step 6: Coding for Area Types

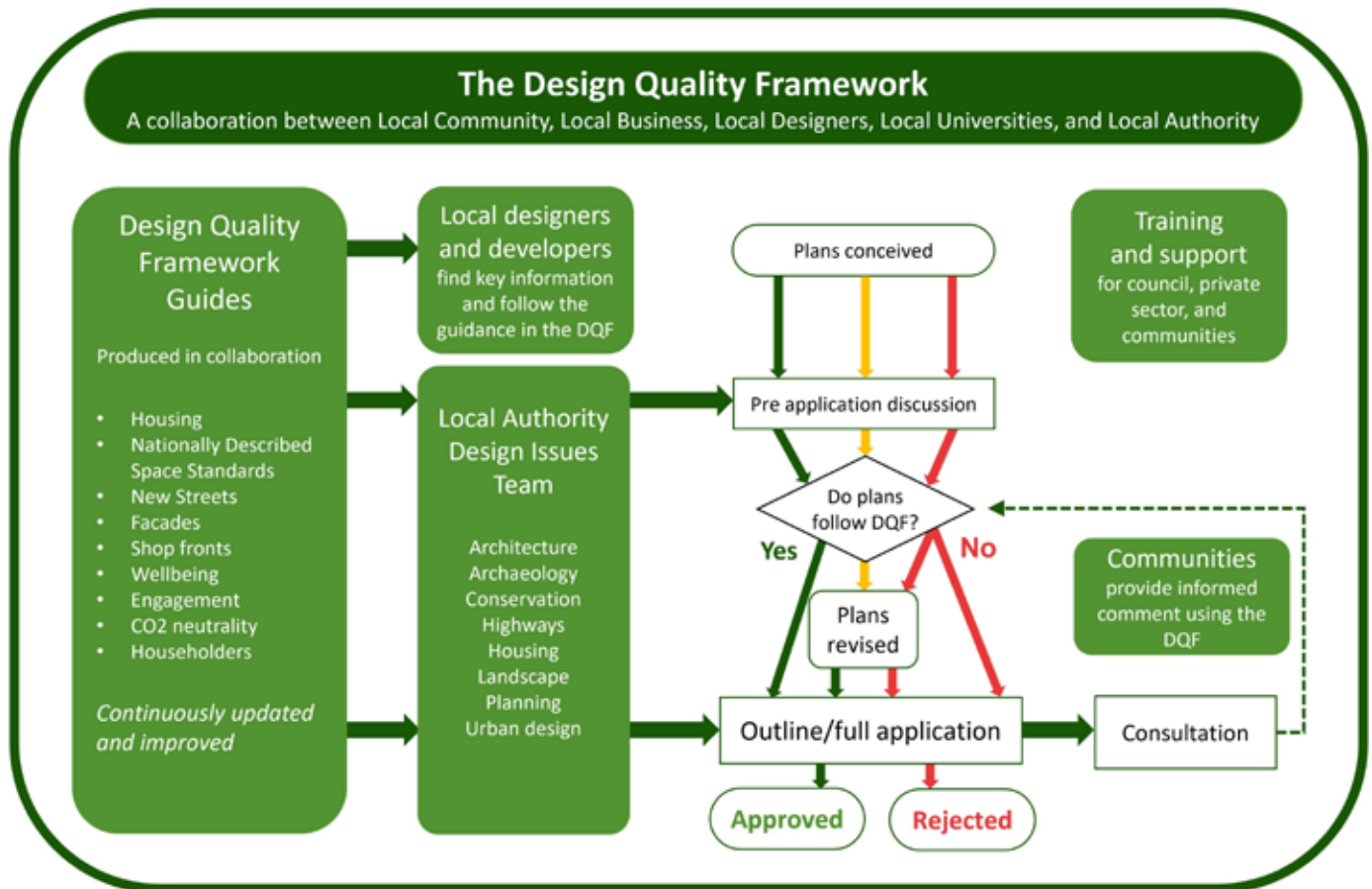


Step 7: Guidance applicable across the area

guidance is applied by planners. Rather than design guidance being framed as subjective aspirations, it shows how guidance can be codified, where possible in a way that is verifiable and measurable. These codes should be drawn up in partnership with the local community and once agreed should mean that everyone knows where they stand and what is expected of new developments. The hope is that it will remove the fear that local people often have about the new development because they assume that it will be poor quality. It should also empower all planners, not just urban designers, to engage with urban design.

Nottingham Design Quality Framework

Achieving quality through collaboration, cooperation, and consensus



PROJECT TEAM

Nottingham City Council, Community Organisers Nottingham, Nottingham Good Food Partnership

KEY FACTS

TIMESCALE 18 months to produce the first 7 guides

APPROX. COST £100,000 plus huge commitment from local authority staff, local community representatives, and local development industry

A major initiative to create a system that creates a positive force for quality design through collaboration by local people, business, design and development communities and the local authority, supported by a suite of guidance documents.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

One of the major difficulties of the systems involved in regulating the built environment is that they can be adversarial, with some people trying to ensure standards are adhered to, and others trying to secure permission or authorisation with the minimum of expense.

Where reputation and quality are the priority, positive results follow, and this is what Nottingham City Council has been working towards with its Design Quality Framework. By encouraging openness and joint working between the various stakeholders in the production of the Design Quality Framework Guides, community trust of the council has grown, the council sees the private sector as a force for innovation and improvement, and the private sector sees the council as facilitator, not a barrier.

Over the coming years, Nottingham's reputation as a city will advance as the culture of quality and innovation grows.

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL explains how it introduced a ground-breaking programme to transform the quality of design in the city

KEY COMPONENTS

- A system for co-working that leads to action and generates goodwill
- A set of design guides produced and owned by the community, the development industry and the local authority
- A governance structure to ensure quality in new development

In 2017, Nottingham City Council received a Planning Delivery Fund grant from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government which triggered a project dedicated to review the quality of development in the city.



MORE INFO

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The first step was to carefully review planning applications received by the council over the previous 5 years. Poor design and layout was commonplace, yet easy to correct, including:

- Oversized streets and unnecessary areas of tarmac, wasting land which could be reallocated to gardens, play spaces, and additional houses
- Uniform streets: same width, same materials, same houses, bringing a dull uniformity, and lack of character
- Lack of response to local context, materials and form
- Failure to create landmarks
- Poor internal layout of buildings: unusably narrow kitchens; wasted space on internal corridors; poor natural lighting of rooms

The review also revealed that applications that had engaged with the council through pre-application discussions took significantly less time than those that did not (on average 19 weeks rather than 21). Getting quality right from the start could save weeks. Pre-application discussions were also found to reduce the number of planning conditions required on schemes (on average 11), offering a significant saving in officer time.

CREATING THE FRAMEWORK

A group was established comprising Developers and Housebuilders, Local Authority, and Local Community. During subsequent meetings each party began to not only understand and respect each other's position but also agreed that the Design Quality Framework should work for all: for the community, the development industry and authorities.

Objectives were set:

- Speed up planning
- Offer up-front information to planning applicants
- Provide consistency in evaluation of planning proposals and feedback
- Increase place democracy
- Move to the digital age
- Deliver Nottingham's Carbon Neutral Action Plan

Work then began developing the guides and a complex outreach programme targeted children, young people and traditionally under-engaged minorities, bringing everyone

together in the neutral environment of Nottingham's Urban Room to shape the contents of the Design Quality Framework. The co-working way of drafting the guidance has had the added benefits of:

- Raising awareness about the technical and legal constraints of development amongst the different agencies
- Acting as a melting pot where parties, age groups and sectors come together to create a shared place vision
- Triggering a series of projects and working groups that volunteered efforts and skills to meet the Carbon Neutral 2028 aspirations

THE DESIGN QUALITY FRAMEWORK

In terms of status, the Framework sits under national, regional and local planning policy. It has been adopted as formal guidance in order to give it weight. Because the Framework has been created under a collaborative process it is seen as an aid, not an imposition. There has been no need for it to have become a Supplementary Planning Document, and since introduction applicants have rarely been unwilling to improve their designs to reflect the guidance.

Guides produced or in draft so far:

- **Nationally Described Space Standards**
- **Housing**
- **New Streets**
- **Facades**
- **Shop fronts**
- **Wellbeing** produced by the community
- **Engagement** co-produced with Community Organisers
- **CO2 neutral** being led and produced by industry - 2022
- **Householders** extensions, conversions etc

The Framework focuses on both the quality of the product and the process. A Design Issues Group, previously set up within the council operates the Framework. It is composed of all relevant sections within the council, including archaeology, architecture, drainage, highways, parks and landscape, planning and regeneration. All relevant staff are trained in the use of the DQF.

It is available online for accessibility by blind and partially sighted users, also enabling auto-translate for people who do not speak English. The guides are regularly updated, and the online format ensures current version is available to all.

Nottingham City Council has also created the delivery tool Co-PLACE, the Community Programme to learn and Action in the City Environment that brings communities, authorities and industry together, joining the principles of Community Organising with the tools and strategies of Placemaking to deliver better places and a more democratic planning system.

RESULTS

- Design quality improved
- A faster, more predictable planning process, with 10 weeks saved on average
- Bureaucracy reduced by reducing the need to specify planning conditions
- Consistency in planning decisions
- Trust and understanding between community, development industry, and local authority
- The development industry in Nottingham has felt liberated to innovate new designs and technologies to meet the climate, social and economic challenges of the 21st century

NOTTINGHAM'S URBAN ROOM

The Urban Room located at 38 Carrington Street provided an open, neutral environment for everyone to engage in co-design, placemaking and place keeping and plays a major part in the development and uses of the Design Quality Framework.



Shenley Neighbourhood Plan

An adopted Neighbourhood Plan for a growing 21st century rural village



Participants testing some of Shenley Plan's draft design codes during a Design Day at Shenley Grange

PROJECT TEAM

Shenley Parish Council, ImaginePlaces,
Shenley Neighbourhood Steering Group

KEY FACTS

AREA 1,400 hectares

TIMESCALE 4 years

APPROX. COST £41,000 plus substantial time
commitment from parishioners

FUNDED BY Parish Council and Locality

JUDGES' COMMENTS

This is an excellent demonstration of urban design at a rural village scale. The project has been community-led and involved a huge effort by local people. It is what planning and urban design at a local level should be about, and is an approach that should be considered by other communities.

The Neighbourhood plan provides a rigorous analysis of local character and conditions, the landscape, and contours. It is specific to the area, with local examples.

Existing highways policies, the constraints of the current planning system, and an Examination in Public which led to important sections being deleted, prevented the plan from being bolder, and looking further into the future, including facing up to climate change, the net zero carbon target, and how to adapt.

SHENLEY PARISH COUNCIL

explain how they have created a progressive community driven neighbourhood plan

The Plan is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the neighbourhood area.

The adopted Shenley Neighbourhood Plan combines a range of strategic spatial land use and design policies supported by a design code, a precedent study and extensive photographic evidence.

OBJECTIVE

Maintaining and improving our distinctive character and heritage as a beautiful rural village, surrounded by farmed land and countryside, with accessible facilities, better serving the needs of our growing community, is at the heart of our vision.

A model example of a community led adopted Neighbourhood Plan combining a range of strategic spatial land use and design policies supported by a design code, a precedent study and extensive photographic evidence.



MORE INFO

We believe that good new streets, buildings and spaces should be shaped by their surrounding topography, sun path, wind and weather conditions. As well as having a positive relationship with local landscapes and nature, they should be inspired by what is cherished, has lasted, and delights for a range of reasons not just appearance.

Designing for the needs of children and elderly relying on walking has very much shaped our thinking and policy making. In our view, the '15-minute Village' is as much needed as the '15-minute City'.

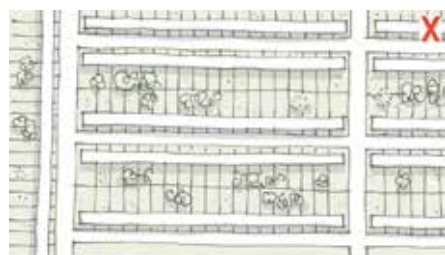
DETAILS

The Neighbourhood plan comprises strategic design policies aimed at protecting and reinventing tried, tested principles of 'Rural Village Character' for 21st century living, and a design code, supported by a detailed precedent study and photographic evidence, intended to assist design teams, officers and planning committee members to develop a richer understanding of the cherished and valued characteristics of our rural built and landscape environment.

There are seven policies in the Shenley Plan, supported by eight Design Principles and Codes.



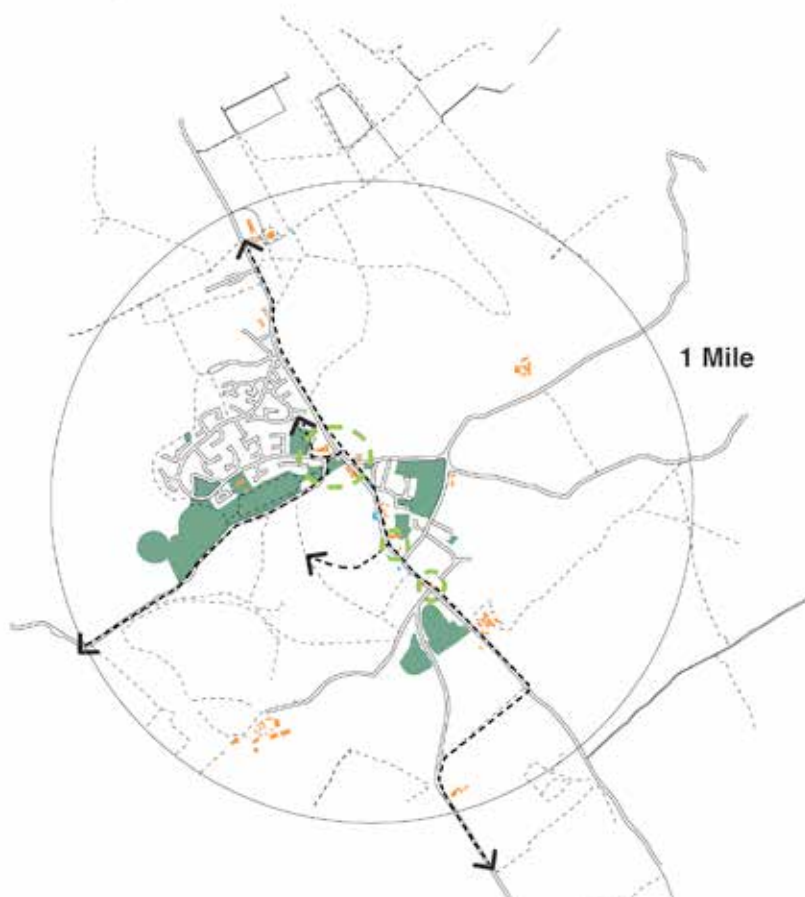
Rural Settlement Pattern:
Irregular and responsive plot size pattern



Suburban or urban Settlement Pattern:
Regular and linear plots of equal size

Connecting Shenley Village

↙ New and improved walking and cycling routes



Policies cover:

- Rural Character
- Local Green Space
- Housing Mix and Choices
- Connecting Shenley Village
- Community Infrastructure Facilities
- Local Knowledge for Good Design
- Building for Life

Design Principles and Codes cover:

- Local Patterns
- Design Scrutiny
- Layout: Rural Settlement Pattern
- Buildings: Less is More, Simplicity
- Buildings: Massing and Roofs
- Boundaries and Edges
- Rural Landscape
- Healthy Trees and Hedges

We have further developed 12 Community Priority Projects, to be delivered with CIL and in partnership with local organisations and landowners.

CHALLENGES

The draft codes included codes for courtyard buildings, farmstead type clusters and terraced cottages, because of their excellent thermal and social faculties, as well as a code for passive solar design. They were removed by the examiner who was otherwise complimentary of our design-coding work for the Parish.

HGGT Sustainability Guidance and Checklist

Sustainability translated into specific, measurable requirements

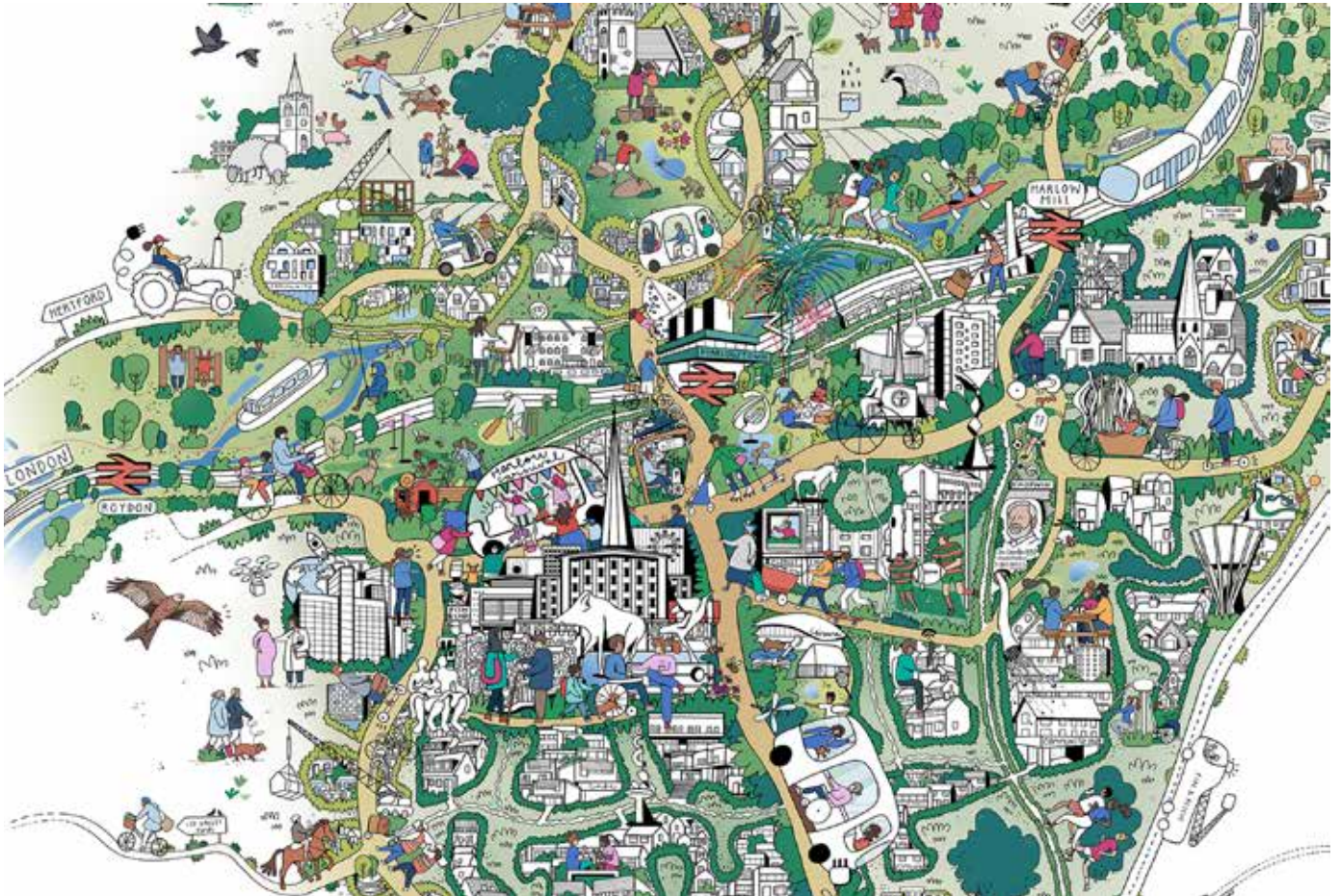


Illustration by Nerea Bermejo Olaizola

PROJECT TEAM

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Team, East Hertfordshire District Council, Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council, Harlow District Council, Hertfordshire County Council

KEY FACTS

HOMES 16,000 up to 2033, 7,000 proposed beyond this plan period

The HGGT team have produced much needed specific and achievable targets for the sustainability of new development, that deserve to be applied nationally to prevent climate change and ensure the wellbeing of future generations.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

The track record of sustainable development is one of warm words and vague commitments translated into weak policies and negligible change. Quantified targets that will bring about transformation are needed. The HGGT Sustainability Guidance and Checklist answers this requirement by setting detailed, quantified standards and quality thresholds. It goes beyond the narrow yet challenging confines of environmental sustainability to cover social and economic sustainability: essential if the needs of future generations are to be met.

The guidance documents cover a comprehensive range of best practice in technical design including: sustainable energy use, waste disposal and circular economies in construction and operation.

The joint working between five local authorities is a commendable way of sharing workload and economising resources.

HARLOW AND GILSTON

GARDEN TOWN explain how to use their ground-breaking sustainability guidance and why other authorities should produce similar documents

The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Sustainability Guidance provides practical and technical guidance on how to apply sustainability policies and indicators to new major developments across the Garden Town. It supports the commitment by the Garden Town Authorities to become Carbon-Neutral by 2030, and will make it easy for residents to adopt sustainable lifestyles.

It is written for all officers, regardless of expertise, to ensure that sustainability can be embedded throughout the development process, without the need for separate consultation or processes.



MORE INFO

WHO USES THIS GUIDANCE

Applicants and Agents

Developers, designers, consultants and contractors, from the earliest stages the design of proposals ensuring sustainability principle and targets are considered.

Local Authority Officers and Decision-Makers

The Guide has 'material' planning weight. The Checklist guides the assessment of planning applications for developments in the Garden Town. It informs pre-application discussions.

The HGGT Quality Review Panel

The QRP panel members are independent experts who use the Guidance in reviews. Applicants are advised that they need to be able to discuss issues on all categories raised in this guidance.

WHEN THE GUIDANCE IS USED

Masterplanning

As early as possible in order to reduce costly and time-intensive re-design at later stages.

Pre-Application

A completed Sustainability Checklist is expected to accompany pre-application discussions to demonstrate that sustainability measures have been considered.

Planning Application

A Sustainability Strategy incorporating the Checklist, with relevant evidence / certification, is to be submitted alongside planning applications.

Post-Planning

Planning conditions and obligations are aligned to ensure that sustainable measures are secured through to delivery and beyond through tools such as Post-Occupancy Evaluation.

QUALITY CHECKLIST		Minimum Requirement	Net Zero-Carbon by 2050	Net Zero-Carbon by 2030
En.1	What Operational Energy target does the development aim to achieve (KWh/m ² /y)	146 <input type="checkbox"/>	< 70 <input type="checkbox"/>	< 0 - 35 <input type="checkbox"/>
En.2	What Embodied Carbon target does the development aim to achieve (kgCO ₂ e/m ²)	1000 <input type="checkbox"/>	< 450 <input type="checkbox"/>	< 300 <input type="checkbox"/>
En.3	Space Heating Energy Demand (KWh/m ² /y) of net living space	54.26 <input type="checkbox"/>	25 <input type="checkbox"/>	15 <input type="checkbox"/>
En.4	Airtightness (air changes/ hr @ n50)	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	≤ 0.6 <input type="checkbox"/>
En.5	Ventilation Strategy (m ³ /hr/person)	Natural - extract fans <input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanical - with extract fans <input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanical Heat Recovery (30) <input type="checkbox"/>
En.7	What is the on-site reduction in CO ₂ emissions against Building Regulations Part L (2013)?	0-34% <input type="checkbox"/>	35%-50% <input type="checkbox"/>	≥ 50% <input type="checkbox"/>
En.8	For applications greater than 99no. units, what BREEAM Communities Level is met?	Very Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Outstanding <input type="checkbox"/>

Section of quality checklist for energy efficiency + carbon reduction

HOW IS IT EMBEDDED AND SECURED?

Each Partner Local Authority includes the HGGT Vision and this Sustainability Guidance in their updated viability checklists.

Reports to committees include a 'compulsory' section on meeting Garden Town Aspirations. In this way, the officers will be working with the applicants to meet HGGT's policies and processes.

The masterplanning review process has HGGT input as plans form at the earliest stages.

By providing a clearly defined checklist, plus guidance on how to improve performance, the Garden Town is defining its expectations of quality and holding developers accountable to the language and targets they provide e.g. if a developer ticks all red, they cannot claim to be a high quality development.

HOW TO PRODUCE A SIMILAR GUIDANCE AND CHECKLIST

- Engage the public, officers, developers and councillors to ensure the chosen definitions of 'high quality' and 'sustainability' are supported and understood across the system. This means regular engagement with all stakeholders throughout its development.
- Understand what sustainability means for the local area. Guidance should not be generic but focused on local issues with locally set priorities.
- Sustainability is broad, as is the expertise available in a council and a local area. Use this people power!



Illustration by Nerea Bermejo Olaizola

Wood Green and Turnpike Lane Design Manual

A public realm design guide founded on community involvement



Community engagement outside Wood Green Library

PROJECT TEAM

Haringey Council, Civic Engineers, Muf Architecture / Art, Robert Bevan, Objectif, Robert Bray Associates, Studio Dekka

KEY FACTS

TIMESCALE 2 years

APPROX. COST £120,000 including character study

COMMUNITY INPUT 22 local groups and events

Comprehensive 'how to' guide for developers, designers, council officers, stakeholders, businesses and residents that places community involvement and the safe, independent mobility of children at its heart: something that all councils should be doing.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

The extent of community involvement marks a change from the conventional public realm manuals. The focus on children and their independent mobility in the public realm is of great importance. This is covered by the Equality Act Public Sector Equality Duty.

The manual is visually interesting and communicates well, with inspiring pictures of playful environments, and other features such as a rain garden walk, and child benches, with excellent guidance on lighting and green infrastructure.

This type of manual is of increased value where all sections within the local authority support and use the guidance, including the highways department, and the highways maintenance section in particular. It also helps if utilities companies respect the ambition of the guidance.

HARINGEY COUNCIL explains how it produced design guidance for the public, by the public

The aim of the Manual is to shape the evolution of the public realm as the foundation of inclusive neighbourhoods.

The Manual's content focuses on sustainable design, the role of buildings, public realm, green/blue infrastructure, and meaningful engagement and promoting a co-design process for the future development of projects. The Manual also aims to safeguard locally distinctive character and heritage assets.



MORE INFO

AFTERCARE – LONG TERM STEWARDSHIP OF THE PUBLIC REALM

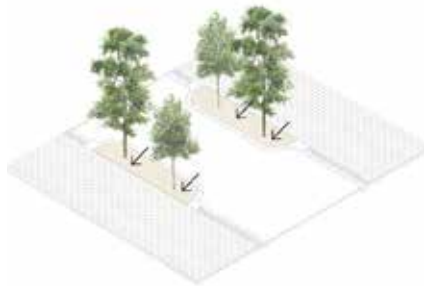
The Manual specifies a baseline ‘good ordinary’ quality material palette for paving and surfacing with the emphasis on how to use materials to ensure that the design quality can be upheld long term, even after repairs and maintenance occur.

QUICK WINS VS LONG TERM

During the evolution of the Manual the delivery of three of these projects, through a co-design and co-client process with community and business groups, tested and refined the design and engagement guidance and modelled new ways for local groups and officers to engage, design and maintain public realm improvements. Working closely with local groups, a number of early public realm projects have already been delivered as part of the testing and development of the Manual.

OUTSTANDING FEATURES

Engagement underpins the approach based on extensive and innovative engagement with a focus on the safe independent mobility of children. This extensive research identified a bank of small to medium scale projects that collectively and individually address community wealth building, the public realm of young people, tackling



Illustrative guidance for traffic calming through tree planting

climate emergency and improving street connectivity and legibility. The community will be involved in reviewing the project bank every two years.

HOW IT'S USED

The document will not be a formal planning document. Instead, it will be a proactive influencer setting out the aspirations and expectations for quality public realm and sense of place. The Council's Streetscene team will apply the material and design guidance.

HOW IT WAS CREATED

The project was jointly funded by the Mayor of London and Haringey Council. A cross departmental project group was formed to steer the project. The Manual evolved through extensive research with officers, third sector service providers, resident groups, local businesses, young people, and retailers, from stall holders to the managers of the shopping mall.

ANY ADVICE TO OFFER A LOCAL AUTHORITY THINKING ABOUT DOING THE SAME?

Similar Manual or Guidance can be applied where seeking to:

- Enhance town centres for high-quality social, cultural and retail experiences
- Make equitable public realm that meets the needs and aspirations of all generations, children, young people and older people
- Make an inclusive, safe and accessible public realm for the many ways people use shared space to socialise, shop, play, exercise and watch the world go by
- Maximise the potential of green blue infrastructure

The evidence base for the Manual is an extensive character study with a series of recommendations for positive change and the Manual outlines ways to support what is particular and unique and to improve what is lacking through design-based change.



Young people described how their everyday play was perceived as anti-social behaviour

© Santhosh Chandran

Birkenhead 2040

A highly ambitious, creative and people-led regeneration programme, defining and promoting the place led transformation of a remarkable waterfront town on a scale of national significance



Illustrative masterplan for town centre and waterfront

PROJECT TEAM

Client: Wirral Council
Lead: OPEN (Optimised Environments)
 Avison Young, Mott MacDonald

JUDGES' COMMENTS

This framework has taken a long-term view to 2040 and has integrated a very broad range of social, environmental and economic considerations into a comprehensive place-making vision and strategy with urban design at the forefront.

The range of scales addressed is ambitious; from the city-wide, down through neighbourhoods to individual projects and challenging density assumptions supported by demonstrations of how higher densities could be achieved. The framework has already proved successful in attracting public sector funding and support, and is enabling progress towards delivery.

Despite the scale and complexity of the proposals, the graphical presentation succeeds in communicating the different strands of strategy simply, clearly and in a coherent manner.

KEY FACTS

AREA 700 hectares
TIMESCALE 20 years
ANTICIPATED RESIDENTS 46,000
HOMES 21,000 new homes
DENSITY 60+ dwellings per hectare
EMPLOYMENT 6,000 jobs

KEY FEATURES

- Local Plan Document key to supporting densification and brownfield ambitions
- Strategic land acquisition by Wirral Council to enable major project / infrastructure delivery
- New district heating and mass transit systems proposed alongside investment in green and social infrastructure
- Framework used to secure almost £100 million in public funding to date
- Dialogue with Homes England to inform a £100m+ funding strategy for wider 'LeftBank' area
- Central government engaged, with potential Development Corporation proposed as delivery vehicle

Many urban design frameworks appear ambitious and stylish, but struggle to deliver for a number of reasons. For example, the community may not be behind the project; the scheme may lack commercial viability; or capital funding is not forthcoming. What makes Birkenhead 2040 exceptional is the geographic scale and the tie-in to delivery mechanisms, including funding streams.



MORE INFO

OPEN describe how quality of place and the value of good design has threaded through all stages of this ambitious programme of change

A SPECIAL PLACE - A RADICAL PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Once home to a formidable port, the resultant wealth in Birkenhead led to world firsts - from public parks to street trams and the Mersey tunnels - and an ambitious Georgian street grid. The legacy of this period can still be seen in the town and shipbuilding also continues, with famous recent vessels such as RRS Sir David Attenborough leaving Cammell Laird's yard in the last few years.

Despite this, the town and its image have suffered significantly with industrial decline and local deprivation. In response Wirral Council is preparing a radical new Local Plan, its most comprehensive development strategy since 1947. This aims to meet the Borough's development needs over the next 15-20 years within existing urban areas, and Birkenhead 2040 is vital to this.

BUILDING BELIEF

As part of the preparation of Birkenhead 2040, OPEN worked with the people living and working locally to define a shared vision for change, a process that helped lift ambitions and reignite a sense of belief in the town. This vision of Birkenhead was one of a healthy, active waterfront garden 'city': a thriving urban community on the Mersey. Glimpses of this vision can be seen in places like FutureYard, a music venue which has



Catalyst project – Dock Branch Park

transformed the abandoned high street and showcases local creativity; and the proposed mile-long Dock Branch Park at the heart of the town.

REGENERATION BY DESIGN

Building upon this understanding, OPEN sought to reconnect, reimagine, and rediscover Birkenhead for the future. By putting urban design at the heart of the process the team were able to set out a series of measures to lift quality of life and of place.

The resulting framework describes a town that benefits from the connectivity and convenience of a city region, whilst also enjoying a historic waterfront environment, green spaces, and a vibrant mix of homes, services and employment opportunities.

Proposals include:

- A commercial centre with new town centre offices
- A new market alongside a revived and reinvented high street
- Revived employment with space for 6,000 new jobs
- A 'cultural axis' joining the waterfront, high street, town hall, and historic Hamilton Square
- 21,000 new homes built to high standards
- The removal or calming of hostile roads
- A network of safe routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and people with reduced mobility including tree lined streets
- A new mass transit system
- A district heating network to reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty

This is about growth but more importantly about the people of Birkenhead living full, healthy lives in a place they can be proud to call home.

ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

By using clear, simple visualisations and a 3D model of the town, the team made it easy for the public to engage with the development of both the vision and programme of measures. A new design and public realm guide will build on this work to ensure new development is of high quality.

The quality of urban design outlined in the framework has helped secure funding support and buy-in. Birkenhead 2040 is not an unachievable vision but a practical, deliverable proposition for the people of Birkenhead.



Reconnecting the waterfront

Andover Town Centre

A Vision, Masterplan and Public Realm Framework for Andover creating a demonstrably achievable future the heart of this historic market town



A new 500m riverfront corridor will transform the western edge of the town centre and connect Andover College to Town Mills with footpaths and cycle lanes

PROJECT TEAM

Client: Test Valley Borough Council
Lead: Hemingway Design and NEW Masterplanning
Andrew Cameron Associates, Currie & Brown, Newsteer, Tulley Bunting

This visionary scheme successfully wrestles with a number of common challenges that are currently blighting many small towns. By reimagining the town as a network of pedestrian-friendly routes, the project tackles an unfriendly, vehicle-orientated road system. The proposal reconnects the town centre to the riverfront and re-establishes many other natural and heritage assets in the process.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

Overdesigned post-war ring road schemes have often isolated attractive, historic town centres within ugly, dangerous, noisy and polluted environments. Andover is a good example of the type of comprehensive approach required to rehabilitate such towns. A full range of specialisms were deployed here, including transport, traffic modelling, highway design, landscape, built-form and property. The masterplan also reaches out to address the town centre's integration with its wider surroundings.

Andover has set out a vision for the future, founded on extensive engagement with the local residents and the business community. This, together with the use of easy to understand computer-generated imagery helped win the hearts and minds of the community, and even the local press. The next stage will be to work on the commercial feasibility of the proposals to ensure that the strength of the vision is carried forward into delivery.

KEY FACTS

AREA 28 hectares
TIMESCALE masterplan - 18 months; implementation - 10+ years starting 2021
HOMES 500 new town centre homes
NEW + IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACE 5.5 hectares
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 4,200 people responded to consultation

KEY FEATURES

- Removal of gyratory, opening up 500 metres of river frontage
- Large roundabout removed, space returned to adjoining park
- Redevelopment of shopping mall and re-introduction of conventional streets, plus new shops, workspaces and apartments
- 'Well Being Quarter' developed around new linear park and leisure centre
- Facilities for pedestrians and cyclists improved through connected network of streets and removal of underpasses
- New and improved network of public spaces connecting key civic and community assets



MORE INFO

NEW MASTERPLANNING describe transforming a failing commercial centre into a diverse and liveable town centre

In 2019, Test Valley Borough Council recognised that Andover town centre needed to change. Despite significant population growth and a strong economic base, more shops were staying empty and the town centre was in a state of decline. The Council made the bold decision to buy and redevelop the outdated Chantry Shopping Centre. To make the most of their investment in a time of economic uncertainty, the Council sought a comprehensive framework, which would show a detailed understanding of Andover's potential and be able to secure widespread support across the town. It therefore commissioned the Andover Town Centre Masterplan.

The overarching theme of the masterplan is giving the town centre back to the people of Andover. It takes an essentially privatised, internal 'shopping-mall' environment and creates open streets and new public spaces, with prominent locations for the theatre and library. It redesigns unnecessarily large roundabouts and creates extensions to parks. It improves important civic buildings and spaces to make them relevant to the whole community. And it takes an important chalk stream, invisible inside a 250 metre long gyratory and six lanes of traffic, and shows its potential as a linear park for the town.

Giving these streets, parks, buildings and public spaces back to the people delivers wide social and environmental objectives: Andover naturally becomes greener and healthier, more permeable and more walkable, more sociable, more sustainable and more resilient to climate change.

GETTING THE COMMUNITY ON BOARD

The success of the masterplan was to make these quite radical proposals seem like the natural way forward (the feedback of one workshop group described it as "ambitious but logical"). This was helped by a strong narrative for change grounded in the priorities of the local resident and business community. Our positive engagement with the press and social media helped raise the



profile of the study and more than 3,000 residents provided their input. Workshops with local businesses emphasised the long-term importance of the independent business sector for Andover. Engagement with the College, Theatre, Leisure Centre, Church and key employers highlighted the importance of non-retail uses to the future of town centres.

The masterplan also worked hard to demonstrate the deliverability of change. Collaboration with Andover College ensured proposals for a new town centre campus met their long-term education needs and had a flexible funding strategy. County Council testing showed the technical feasibility of removing highway infrastructure. Soft market testing gave the Council confidence that there would be developer interest in the proposals and to commission more detailed feasibility work. A programme of short-term

action, 'pop-up' and 'meanwhile uses' showed how the initial momentum could be maintained, and work is already underway on a coordinated public realm strategy, town centre 'branding' exercise and events strategy.

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

In the words of the Local Enterprise Partnership Chief Executive, the masterplan process "changed the conversation about Andover town centre" and gave the town a renewed confidence in its future. And the Andover Gazette had to agree, stating that, "whilst it is the job of the press to hold local authorities to account, we also believe in recognising success. It is safe to say we were blown away by this Vision for Andover".

Nansledan, Newquay

A 218 hectare mixed use, mixed tenure sustainable extension to Newquay for the Duchy of Cornwall, will evolve into a community of 4,000 homes and 4,000 jobs



Aerial view of Nansledan development © Hugh Hastings + Bad Wolf Horizon

PROJECT TEAM

Client: Duchy of Cornwall

Lead: ADAM Architecture

ALA Architects, AWP, CG Fry & Son, Fabrik, Morrish Homes, Purl Design, Wainhomes, Yiangou Architects

JUDGES' COMMENTS

Nansledan is an excellent example of characterful, people-friendly urban design. Great care has been taken in creating a vision and translating this into a sensitive design code. Adequate resources have been earmarked to help ensure that the strategy is fully realised on the ground and that Nansledan adds to the character and distinctiveness of this part of Cornwall.

The project has the largest Local Development Order (LDO) awarded in the country so far, which offers effective control of development, while ensuring that its quality and character will be maintained as time goes on. Other local authorities or developers might benefit from using this planning model.

The majority of the project achieves high standards of traffic calming, appropriate vehicle speeds and safe, inclusive pedestrian crossings. We understand there are plans to revisit the areas that still pose a challenge.

KEY FACTS

AREA 218 hectares

TIMESCALE 50 years

ANTICIPATED RESIDENTS 8,800

HOMES 4,000 - 30% affordable

DENSITY 35 dwellings per hectare

EMPLOYMENT 4,000 jobs

INCLUSIVITY 25% of all homes comply with Building Regulations M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable standards

KEY FEATURES

- One employment space per household with retail, small enterprise units and conventional employment opportunities
- Homes tenure blind
- Detailed design code + Newquay Pattern Book
- Building stone and other materials locally sourced for identity and sustainability
- Zero carbon ambition for construction and zero carbon lifestyles

Where most new developments provide no more than housing, Nansledan is a genuine piece of townmaking. The project is compact, walkable, and when complete will offer a wide range of on-site jobs and facilities. The use of the Development Control Order planning model looks set to streamline delivery, while ensuring a high-quality outcome.



MORE INFO

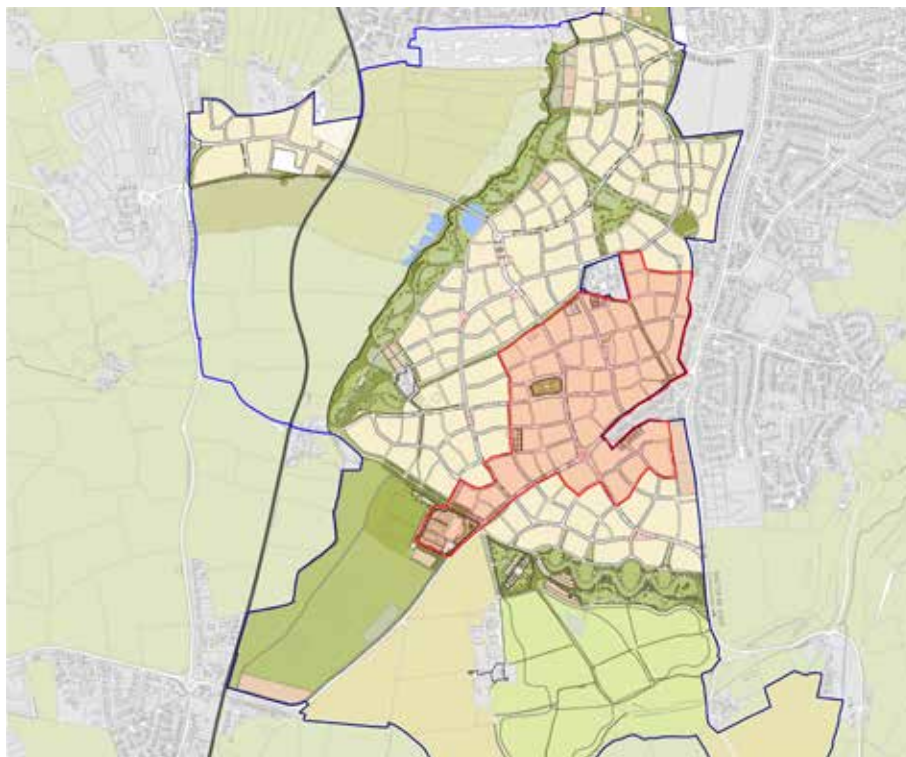
ADAM ARCHITECTURE

describe how Nansledan will be a place where people want to live, work and visit

In addition to the range of homes supporting all age groups and tenures, Nansledan is a great place to live, work and visit because it contains the essential elements of a mixed-use development: a diverse range of retail, office, community, education, and recreation facilities, all developed in close consultation with the local community to ensure that it responds to their needs.

This mix is arranged around local centres so that residents can meet their daily needs by foot and cycle. This helps to build a sense of community and identity; it improves health and wellbeing; it reduces car miles and supports the local economy. The variety of dwellings further enriches the community by providing people the opportunity to stay in their neighbourhood throughout their life.

Through the varied business space and commercial outlets, the aim is to create a minimum of one job per household - around 4,000 by the time the development is complete. This supports the aim of a sustainable walkable community by further minimising



Masterplan with red line depicting currently built area

the need for trips by car, thereby reducing the environmental impact and improving wellbeing.

The Duchy's aspiration is to go zero carbon by 2030, working with housebuilder partners to pioneer new low carbon construction techniques and to create a place that encourages a low carbon lifestyle.

REALISING THE VISION

To ensure the vision for Nansledan was fully realised a series of regulating documents have been developed between interested parties. The masterplan, together with the regulating documents form part of a Common Aspiration agreement between the Duchy and the three housebuilders. This agreement provides design guidance and controls the nature, character, detail, and quality of the development.

A Local Development Order has been granted by Cornwall Council. This is controlled by the Masterplan, Nansledan Design Manual, supported by the Pattern Book, Green Infrastructure Strategy and Highway Key Design Details.

As client, the Duchy maintain control of the design and have a sign-off process at every stage from pre-planning, planning through to construction. Residents sign up to a Design and Community Code to ensure that the vision is maintained in perpetuity.

IMPLEMENTING A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER

The Duchy-led consortium demonstrated by example that they could create a place to a higher standard than could be achieved through normal planning controls. The resulting confidence in the exemplary quality of the development led Cornwall Council to invite the consortium to apply for a Local Development Order (LDO).

Procedures and safeguards are in place to monitor this process and to ensure that Nansledan is delivered to the standards expected by Cornwall Council.

The Duchy now approve its own applications for development within the parameters established by the Nansledan LDO, significantly reducing the burden upon the Council, and providing flexibility and efficiency for the Duchy-led consortium.



Local resources and materials © Hugh Hastings



Shops enhance local economy © Hugh Hastings

Oakfield, Swindon

239 high quality, fairly priced homes of mixed tenure, suitable for local people, from first time buyers to families and over 55s



Illustrative street view of two and three storey family homes from the public square © MW + Nationwide

PROJECT TEAM

Client: Nationwide Building Society

Lead: Metropolitan Workshop

Alan Baxter Associates, Calfordseaden LLP, Geotechnical Engineering, Igloo Regeneration, Land Use Consultants, Lichfields, PRP Architects, Ruskins Trees, XCO2

This exciting scheme represents a well thought-through, aspirational alternative to a standard, low specification development. There is a strong commitment to social inclusion through a mix of types and tenures and the employment of a community organiser. The distinctive, high-quality architecture and pedestrian-friendly spaces between buildings set this scheme apart.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

Nationwide's first foray into development is also the first major intervention in Oakfield for over half a century. This suggests a commitment to long-term stewardship that could be transformative. The quality of the proposal also represents a step-change to the surrounding, comparatively deprived neighbourhood of mainly 1960s suburban public housing and light industrial units.

There has been an excellent approach to community interaction and social inclusion, embracing co-design of the development. The illustrations of the proposals express an attractive vision for future residents.

The scheme responds as well as it can to the demands of a town historically laid-out for the convenience of motor vehicles. However, the generous street trees may struggle to compete with the proposed quantum of cars and street radii do not always privilege the pedestrian. The detailed design phase may offer the opportunity to redress the balance.

KEY FACTS

AREA 5.2 hectares

TIMESCALE inception to planning - 3 years; construction - 20 months (phase 1)

HOMES 239 new intergenerational dwellings

DENSITY 44 dwellings per hectare

KEY FEATURES

- Mix of tenures: affordable rent, shared ownership and rent to buy, market sale and private rented
- Shared spaces and gardens for interaction
- Range of homes to enable people to remain within the Oakfield community as they have families, become 'empty nesters', or enter into old age
- Range of house-types (from 1 to 4 bed)



MORE INFO

METROPOLITAN WORKSHOP describes how community involvement lies at the heart of this new housing project

Oakfield is a new housing development on the site of a former school in a suburban location in Swindon. It is bordered by 1950s and 60s public housing estates, and an industrial estate. The site is owned by Nationwide building society, which has its head office in Swindon. Oakfield is Nationwide's first housing scheme, and it was determined to provide an exceptional development. Metropolitan Workshop was appointed by Igloo Regeneration on behalf of Nationwide Building Society to design the scheme.

The scheme provides 239 intergenerational homes with a mixture of tenures for people at every stage of their life, offering flats, houses, or cottages.

AN INVOLVED COMMUNITY

The design has been developed with the local community helping to identify local heritage, desired routes and uses desperately needed in the area. A full-time accredited community organiser was employed to assist in meeting and listening to local people to inform understanding of the place and create a tailored brief. Over a dozen events



Oakfield Masterplan

were held and the community organiser knocked on more than 600 doors, recording over 300 conversations. The design also went through numerous design reviews, including with Swindon's Design Review Panel, politicians, and local Parish. Planning permission was gained with no objections.

LANDSCAPE

The arrangement of home types, forming terraces around communal courts is designed to foster community spirit, and enable a higher proportion of the site to be devoted to soft landscape, even at high parking densities. The habitable rooms have been designed to overlook the streets to create a well overlooked public realm. Front doors are arranged in pairs to promote neighbourliness, a mix of traditional back gardens and communal courtyard gardens have been proposed across the site to ensure people have a variety of amenity space. Little 'pocket parks' and regular 'moments' are scattered across the masterplan, where streets and paths meet.

At the heart of the neighbourhood, a new larger park is proposed to draw people

in to enjoy the native species planted landscape and natural play area for children. Healthy living and carbon reduction is central to the design with the use of air source heat pumps, photo voltaic solar panels, energy efficient building materials where possible, electric vehicle charging and provision of Energy Performance Certificate A rated homes. Building for Life 12 has been considered as part of the Igloo Footprint approach and despite the car dependency in Swindon, the parking ratio has been reduced while providing new cycle routes to connect the already existing broken network across the development to encourage active travel.

The masterplan uses the '15-minute neighbourhood' to try and provide the basic amenities that residents would need close by, without dependency on car usage. The new neighbourhood aims to encourage further development on pockets of land to ensure that the area is populated with resources required to enhance the place.

GUARDING THE QUALITY

Metropolitan Workshop is acting on behalf of the Client as 'Design Guardians' to ensure the design quality is retained throughout the duration of the construction stages. We recommend that to ensure the design quality is retained throughout the construction stage, local authorities consider including a condition within the planning consent, for the continued use of planning design team members.



Illustrative view of park, community hub, and Age In Place cottages © MW + Nationwide

Love Wolverton

£35 million regeneration of a town centre site in Milton Keynes providing new streets, energy-efficient homes, independent shops and energy micro grid



Illustrative masterplan with red line site boundary

PROJECT TEAM

Client: TOWN

Lead: URBED

Civic Engineers, Crowle Consultancy, ImaginePlaces, Max Fordham, Mikhail Riches Architects, Mole Architects, Monaghans, Studio Allen

This street-based, highly contextual masterplan is simple but effective. The layout sensitively repairs the pattern of streets and blocks. The mix of tenures, active ground-floor uses, and car-free streets builds towards a strong, walkable community. There is a deep commitment to sustainability in every aspect of the design, from micro-energy-generation to the building fabric itself.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

The Love Wolverton proposal successfully remediates a very challenging site: part surface level car-park, part failing 1970s shopping centre. It is a great street-based scheme, where parking does not dominate and the proposed, coherent, and legible blocks relate well to existing context. There is a high standard of architecture and urban realm design that strikes an ideal balance between being contextual and inspirational.

The scheme has a comprehensive sustainable transport strategy, with reduced vehicle dependency and parking, car free streets, bike hire, and an electric car club.

There remains a challenging relationship with the Grade II listed church to the south, and the road running parallel to the back of the courts expresses itself with an ambiguous 'service road' character. However, such aspects could be successfully addressed by considering boundary treatments as the project progresses.

KEY FACTS

AREA 1.3 hectares

TIMESCALE design and planning - 3 years; construction - 2 years

HOMES 115 new dwellings

EMPLOYMENT 70 full time equivalent

RETAIL 8 new units

ENERGY / CLIMATE CO₂ emissions to 80% below current Building Regulations Part L

KEY FEATURES

- Mix of one to four-bed apartments and houses for market and (31%) affordable rent, plus an over-50s cohousing community, and small-scale independent retail
- Dwellings at or above nationally described space standards, dual or triple-aspect and with private as well as shared outside space
- Every dwelling has a private balcony, terrace or patio
- Compact courtyard blocks defining five new streets including two car-free 'little streets'



MORE INFO

URBED introduce a scheme based on community collaboration and continuity

Love Wolverton is a new development of homes and shops which will regenerate an important site in the centre of Wolverton, a former Victorian railway town. The scheme will replace a car park, and a failed late 1970s shopping and leisure building. It will reinstate an important street, Radcliffe Street, to restore the historic connection between the town centre's two main areas of commercial activity: Church Street and the Square.

The new design works with the opportunities and constraints of the town centre location, restrained car parking and an overall aim towards sustainability. It reflects the Victorian townscape through its choice of building density, type and layout. The architecture is designed with a mixture of practicality, contemporary design and local distinctiveness in mind. For example, the design draws on local brick tones, building proportions and porch and window details. However, it also makes use of roof parapets, which are uncharacteristic of Wolverton but useful for hiding the roof-mounted solar panels and heat pumps, which help the scheme to achieve an 80% cut in operational CO2 emissions.



View from The Square

DESIGN FOR PEOPLE

The development creates a grid of streets, including two car-free 'little streets', which are aligned with existing paths to help knit the site and the surrounding town together. There are six small blocks which overlook the streets and provide a safe environment for children's play and neighbourly living. Shops, cafes and restaurants are located on the most important street corners, bringing interest and life. Several will have spill-out spaces for outdoor dining and shop displays.

Inclusivity is at the heart of Love Wolverton and is achieved through a mix of market and affordable homes, including an over-50s

cohousing community, and shared facilities and spaces. As well as achieving almost 100% dual or triple-aspect homes, the open courtyard blocks encourage contact and friendship between neighbours. Homes have private outdoor spaces, and the central gardens are shared for food growing, nature-play and socialising.

BENEFITS OF WORKING TOGETHER

Extensive community involvement has positively influenced the masterplan and led to the inclusion of a youth-led community space on the high street. Another result is that the local authority has agreed to improve the surrounding public realm to help tie the existing town and new development together. The process helped local residents and stakeholders understand the sensitivities and pressures of delivering a high-quality yet viable scheme.

ENSURE QUALITY - RETAIN THE TEAM

To ensure that the final scheme as built remains true to the vision developed with the community, developer and stakeholders is successfully delivered, URBED has been retained as urban designers and architects, (along with Mole and Mikhail Riches architects) to see the project through from consultation to technical design, with a monitoring role during construction. This makes for a design process where all elements: the architecture, public realm, and overall urban design vision are combined together, without any dimension over-dominating.



Proposed car-free 'little' street

Coal Orchard, Taunton

Redevelopment of a town centre car park into a mixed use quarter connecting the historic town centre to the river and theatre



Proposed night time view of the scheme from the River Tone | image courtesy of AHR / MACE

PROJECT TEAM

Client: Somerset West & Taunton Council
Lead: Lavigne Lonsdale / AHR Architects
 Doug Pratt, Earth Environmental, Expedite, Grass Roots, Hydrock, MACE, Midas Construction, SDS, Stantec, Wessex Archaeology

The lead taken by the public sector has helped promote progress and underpins the emerging high-quality development. A place-specific vision stitches the area back together, deploying a diverse mix of activities / uses and a fine-grained urban approach. The scheme also creates a delightful focus for activity on the riverside and facilitates strong new pedestrian and cycle routes.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

This proposal is set to create an attractive, contemporary, mixed-use place adjacent to the historic heart of Taunton and the county cricket ground. Small, high-quality schemes, such as this, can represent a sea-change for a town, by stimulating other aspirational projects to come forward. Keeping the design team in place, through to completion, is likely to further underpin the final quality.

Both the urban design and the architecture respect the character of the surrounding area by including appropriately scaled blocks and taking a fine grain approach. It is a transformational move to open up access to the once neglected riverside and provide an improved civic setting for the theatre.

Although the new market square is potentially compromised by the public desire to retain significant surface car-parking, sensitive detailing might allow a transition to alternative uses at a future date.

KEY FACTS

AREA 0.7 hectares
TIMESCALE 2016 - 2021
COST £12m contract as part of a much larger regeneration project
HOMES 42 apartments

KEY FEATURES

- First step in wider regeneration strategy
- Re-connects the town centre with the river and the theatre area
- Local Authority funded at their own risk
- Combined public-private sector design and delivery team, with designers appointed to see project through from visioning and community involvement stages right through to completion
- Attractive new quarter in Taunton that opens up the river frontage
- Repairs the street network for pedestrians and cyclists
- Creates a better setting for the existing theatre, and easy access by foot and cycle



MORE INFO

LAVIGNE LONSDALE on turning a car park into a hub for the community and a destination for tourists

The Vision for Coal Orchard is to create a cultural quarter out of an unattractive, sterile car park next to a hidden river and a well-loved theatre within the heart of the town centre conservation area, that will be a destination both for residents of Taunton and visitors.

LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

This is a local authority driven project. From the outset, it was clear to the design team that there was strong direction and leadership in the council to deliver a much wider strategy for the town and this project was one of the early delivery projects. It had to be right! The council took a risk well before the pandemic and before the full effects of the internet could be felt on the high street. This was forward thinking and looked to repair a damaged piece of townscape in order to help with re-connecting other parts of the town, including the railway station to the town centre.



Proposed elevations and section

The process of developing ideas and a plan for the area needed to be transparent and easily understood to all stakeholders and the public. Yes, there were objections and difficult moments, but the clear aims were key in moving the project forward through all the stages of planning and delivery.

This was a collaborative effort by all parties and the continuity of the team has helped to deliver an exemplar project.

A PLACE FOR PEOPLE

The Coal Orchard scheme creates a range of spaces and uses in a relatively small area, which enable activity, both day and night, and support the town centre.

- A new town square that can be used for markets and other activity
- A new public space and terraced seating area leading down to the river, allowing boats to moor, and extra capacity to reduce flood risk
- Ground floor restaurants and café space maximise the river frontage location
- New street trees which double as sustainable drainage, holding back rainwater and stopping pollution from entering the river
- Flexible accommodation to suit varying sizes of businesses that can be converted between retail and business and creative uses
- Much needed housing in the form of apartments in the heart of the town centre
- Electric car charging points to allow for car sharing schemes

All these components will help provide jobs, accommodation, leisure and an attractive destination to the town centre in order to make a more robust and sustainable place to live, work and play.



Aerial view of existing site

City Park West

A new residential quarter in Chelmsford comprising more than 600 homes alongside cafés, restaurants, landscaped public realm, sculpture, workplaces and community facilities



Children play in one of the water features © Jim Stephenson

PROJECT TEAM

Client: Notting Hill Genesis

Lead: Pollard Thomas Edwards

AREA Landscape Architects, Beacon, Bidwells, Bouygues UK, Chelmsford City Council, EC Harris, Higgins, WSP, Whitecode Design Associates

Artists: Chris Tipping and Nayan Kulkarni

JUDGES' COMMENTS

Simply put, this scheme delivers an attractive place to live that respects the area and attracts life. Of note is the clear hierarchy and function of the place in relation to the surrounding town, and the fact that this will be a precedent for the delivery of high-quality, high-density housing design outside of London.

The integration of the site's surrounding landscape, and the identity created by this add greatly to this project. The potential for all to enjoy the development, with public access throughout is especially strong. The incorporation of the historic Burgess Spring as a modernised water feature in the development is to be praised, and overall, the judges commend the high level of thought that clearly went into the role of spaces, their distinctiveness and how they contribute towards local identity.

KEY FACTS

AREA 3.1 hectares

TIMESCALE 2012 - 2019

COST £130 million

HOMES 645 - 189 affordable, 65 extra care, 391 private sale

DENSITY 220 homes per hectare

CAR PARKING 371 spaces including car club

KEY FEATURES

- City-wide masterplanning reconnects Central Park to the rest of the city
- Restoration of heritage buildings and network of streets and public spaces revive charm of old Chelmsford
- The entire neighbourhood is car-free, walkable and cycle-friendly
- Range of home types and tenures opens life in City Park West up to all
- Water features on site of ancient spring and artwork in public realm celebrate Chelmsford's past and present

This project delivers on best practice across a number of disciplines to create a blueprint for development anywhere. The fact that this has been done on a complex site in a shire county town makes it a valuable model for urban regeneration, with high-quality architecture and human-scale public realm.



MORE INFO

POLLARD THOMAS EDWARDS explain how the site's surroundings inform the design of this new development

City Park West takes placemaking seriously. Located by the railway station, it features five newbuilds, including a 14-storey tower, four new public squares and, brought back into use to create local jobs, three refurbished heritage buildings. This pedestrian and cycle-friendly neighbourhood, as well as denting local vehicle-related carbon emissions, welcomes people of all ages: a range of home types and tenures means families, first time buyers and older citizens requiring extra care can all live in central Chelmsford.

INCORPORATING LOCAL HISTORY

Furthermore, on a city-wide, masterplanning scale, City Park West – which revives a derelict site once occupied by Anglia Ruskin University in 2008 – functions as a missing jigsaw piece. By reconnecting the large open green space of Central Park to the south with the civic quarter and historic district to the east and the popular theatre in the west, it gives ‘downtown’ Chelmsford a newfound reason-to-be.

This renewed sense of purpose is reinforced by a public realm strategy that has proved popular with locals who flock there every day. The landscape design and public art works on two levels: one the one hand it acknowledges local history, and the other it provides interesting, accessible play spaces for families with young children.



A place for families © Jim Stephenson

One of the public sculptures takes the form of text inscribed across the site – on benches, steps, and most prominently within a stream of granite paving that connects the two main water features of the site. It is inspired by the history of Anne Knight, the famous Quaker abolitionist and suffragette from Chelmsford – after whom the refurbished Quaker meeting house was named – with the carved words drawn from her writings.

MAINTENANCE

An operations manager ensures the smooth day-to-day running of City Park West with a small team providing concierge services and security, cleaning and grounds maintenance. Costs are covered by a residents' service charge.

LESSONS LEARNED

What could have been better? A more joined-up local authority approach would have seen axed council funding to improve and enlarge an underpass, granted – thus ensuring the planners' ambitions could flow beyond the site's footprint. Similarly, neighbouring landowners could have been positively incentivised to buy into the public realm vision so that they too would see off-message developments – for example, the walled parking space recently built on the fringes of City Park West – as detrimental to the neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, the aspiration for a sustainable new urban quarter in the heart of Chelmsford has been realised with City Park West. As well as being a direct response to the 2006 Town Centre Area Action Plan it is a visible celebration of Chelmsford's city status granted in 2012. What's more, not only is it a great place to live, it's also fun to visit, as the families found splashing in the fountains will no doubt confirm.



Masterplan concept



Site of ancient Burgess Fountain © Jim Stephenson

Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow

The Sauchiehall Street Avenue project transformed a four-lane city highway into a linear public space with segregated cycle tracks, continuous wide footways, seats and trees



The cycle track forms the first part of a connected city wide network

PROJECT TEAM

Client: Glasgow City Council

Lead: Urban Movement

7N Architects, idverde

JUDGES' COMMENTS

This scheme takes a bold vision and creates a simple solution. The design does its job without big gestures. The judges praised the attention to detail and the joined-up thinking across the authority's different departments which formed part of this design process.

The material palette complements the Glaswegian context and the inclusion of very regular benches in the public realm was especially strong - this is not a space just for people who can afford to enjoy the café culture of the street, it is a space for all.

Overall, the judges think that this project will form a precedent for years to come - seeking to normalise the creation of healthier and happier places for people, and undo the damage of car-orientated design.

This project is a replicable model for main streets throughout the UK. It shows how traffic dominated roads can be transformed into places for people, encouraging active travel, supporting businesses and creating relaxing environments for all. The creation of a truly democratic space in the city is especially important.

KEY FACTS

AREA 1.3 hectares

TIMESCALE 2013 - 2019

COST £6 million

LENGTH OF STREET 600 metres

STREET WIDTH 21 metres

NUMBER OF TREES 30

NUMBER OF SEATS 30 (three person benches with backs and arm rests)

NUMBER OF BIKE STANDS 30 (60 capacity)

KEY FEATURES

- 3m segregated bi-directional cycle track
- 3 - 5m wide footways
- 6.5m 2 lane one-way carriageway
- 2.5m central verge with integrated rainwater tree watering system
- 12 car taxi rank operating into the small hours most nights of the week
- Bus stops with extra large shelters and real time service information
- Light tree sculpture installation commissioned by Glasgow City Council



MORE INFO

URBAN MOVEMENT give a main road back to walkers, cyclists, and local businesses

FIRST OF MANY

The original idea for the 'Avenues', a connected network of walking and cycling friendly streets all planted with mature trees, came out of public consultations for the city centre regeneration frameworks and transport strategy. Sauchiehall Street was selected as the pilot project as it is an important route from the residential West End to the City Centre. Once the initial concept, halving the physical width of the carriage-way to create a new linear public space and avenue of trees, was tested in the traffic model and demonstrated to be feasible, underground survey work began to determine the position of utilities, allowing the design work to begin with confidence, which took around three years in total, incorporating lengthy bouts of community engagement, stakeholder workshops and conversations, and design review.

TANGIBLE RESULTS

Following construction, the street was reopened to the public in 2019 and has once



Widened footways creates space for eating and drinking as well as walking © Glasgow City Council

again become a popular destination – with old favourites and newcomers opening after lockdown, all with an increased or new demand for outdoor space. The redesigned street allowed for this increased flexibility, having a positive effect on the local economy with increased retail, leisure, and commercial activity evidenced by the number of people now simply 'out on the street'. In this way, the street invites more activity by simply giving people enjoyable places to

stop, rest and enjoy as well as simply move through.

Over and above the obvious visual improvements to the streetscape, air quality has been enhanced by the presence of the mature deciduous trees and the traffic calming effect of the reduced and re-configured road space. Early surveys by the council show that cycling levels have increased by 80% eastbound and 600% westbound (a fact of the street's one-way eastbound designation with new bi-directional cycling facilities). Most of these cyclists are new to the street and are helping to boost trade, improve safety with more 'eyes on the street', and support city life.

A PLACE TO BE STILL

The northern side of the street especially, is safe enough for young children to play in as it is separated from the traffic by the verge with the trees and seats. The thirty or so 'free to access' seats have proved very popular attracting a true cross section of Glasgow's population: office workers can be seen eating lunch; homeless people come to meet friends and old people simply take a rest. As Glaswegians are notoriously gregarious and friendly, and enjoy eating, drinking (and smoking) with friends or strangers, the street in general and the wider, clutter free, footways of Sauchiehall Street provide valuable places and moments for life to unfold.



Before and after looking west



The Park within Elephant Park

A spectacular green oasis at the heart of the ground breaking revitalisation of Elephant and Castle



View of Elephant Park © Aurélien Langlais

PROJECT TEAM

Client: Lendlease and Southwark Council

Lead: Gillespies

Bell Phillips Architects, Buro Happold, Careys, Mel Chantrey of The Fountain Workshop, Speirs Major, Treework Environmental Practice, Willerbys

JUDGES' COMMENTS

Few projects realise the recommendations of the 'Start with the Park' guide so well. The quality of the play space, the improvements to biodiversity, the use of water, and the balance of materials create a much-needed park early in the development process.

The scheme demonstrates an appreciation of the city-wide role of the space as well as relevance to the local community, discussing the wider socioeconomic role of improving space, including employment and training. The scale of the project, and the fact that it is a result of public-private partnership is commendable. The clear focus on landscape within the context of a new housing development will be a powerful precedent for all. Overall, the low carbon approach to materials, the emphasis on health and wellbeing, and the full consideration of climate change are integral to the success of this project.

KEY FACTS

AREA 0.8 hectares

TIMESCALE 2014 - 2021

EMPLOYMENT 1,527 jobs and 128 apprentice roles during construction, 26 permanent

SUSTAINABILITY Aims to be net zero by 2025

KEY FEATURES

- Richly planted rain gardens that absorb runoff from park and surrounding streets
- Interactive natural play space for children and adults of all abilities
- Habitat features including bat and bird boxes, log piles, invertebrate hotels, and a beetle stumpery
- Species rich lawns and natural play trails
- Drinking fountains and recycling bins to reduce waste
- Cycle stands with internal lighting for increased security
- Pavilion building with viewing deck, café, and community space (opening 2022)

This project creates a beautiful and verdant inner-city park in a dense urban setting - a park that caters for a variety of people and ages and will create a destination for years to come. The delivery and prioritisation of play within the space is a clear demonstration of best practice.



MORE INFO

GILLESPIES put play and nature at the forefront of their urban park

OVERVIEW

People have become increasingly disconnected from nature in our cities. Over the last decade, Lendlease has been tackling this issue head-on, delivering one of London's greenest inner-city developments. The £2.5bn Elephant Park project is breathing new life into Elephant and Castle, providing new homes, businesses and 11 acres of public space, including a two-acre park.

Lendlease tasked Gillespies to deliver a step-change in the provision of green public space within Elephant and Castle. The overarching objective for the Park was to create an inclusive green space where everyone feels happy, comfortable and has an opportunity to connect with nature. The result is a spectacular green oasis featuring expansive lawns, rain gardens, mature trees and a unique water play-scape.

AN INCLUSIVE SPACE

Elephant and Castle is defined by its multicultural demographic, so the Park had to deliver an all-encompassing offer to become embedded within its locality. The Park is designed as a series of interconnected spaces



Rendered landscape masterplan of Elephant Park

that offer a variety of experiences, seating areas and play clusters, surrounded by a unique mix of local businesses.

The vision for the Park was built on extensive community collaboration, beginning with the creation of a Park Advisory Group and then broader community engagement. This Advisory Group, made up of representatives from the Client, Local Authority, and designated members of the community, helped ensure the Park met the needs of this diverse community and instilled a sense of ownership and shared civic pride.

HOW TO CREATE A SCHEME LIKE ELEPHANT PARK

A landscape-led, two-phased approach to delivery addressed this project's 15-year design and construction period, ensuring that the community had access to green spaces and public realm infrastructure long before the buildings were constructed. A phased delivery approach of green spaces helps draw people into the site, fostering community spirit, and quickly bring life and activity to an area before a permanent development has even started.

Lendlease understood that bringing an expert team on board could elevate their vision to new levels of innovation, especially regarding the retention of 27 legacy trees. The Park was a truly collaborative process involving several specialists, including landscape architects, engineers, lighting designers, water feature designers, irrigation specialists and arboricultural consultants. When working with existing trees, it is essential to seek advice from an experienced arboricultural consultant.

Attention should be paid to the practicalities of installation and maintaining the landscape. The use of robust and sustainable materials will ensure long life and minimum maintenance. Furthermore, creating a long-term maintenance plan will ensure the space is maintained responsibly.



Children play at Elephant Springs © John Sturrock



Benches with charging points © Aurélien Langlais



A new interactive waterscape © Aurélien Langlais

Building Peace in Kosovo

Using the computer game Minecraft, residents from traditionally opposed ethnic groups came together to improve their urban environment



PROJECT TEAM

The Block by Block Foundation, Municipality of Pristina, UN Habitat

A powerful, innovative and truly inclusive way to involve hard to reach communities in the design of their neighbourhoods.

The project focused on the site of a former green market in Sunny Hill, one of Pristina's largest and most populous neighbourhoods. The site's temporary market structures had been removed, leaving an abandoned, concrete-covered space that was rarely used by the community's 4,000 residents.

After initial discussions on urban design and the importance of public space, the participants divided into small teams to model different solutions. The participants then co-created the final design on a multiplayer Minecraft server. The designs were presented to a wide audience of urban

professionals, including the mayor of Pristina. The final concept featured a range of facilities addressing the needs of various groups, including gardens, comfortable resting places, a playground, and Kosovo's first skatepark.

In 2020 Block by Block revisited the site and spoke to many of the residents who were involved in the original workshop. Not only were they still using and caring for the public space which they had designed, but the project had inspired another public space development to the North of Pristina.

Block by Block support the transformation of neglected urban spaces around the world by directly funding workshops and project construction, and also make their unique Minecraft-based methodology freely available to all.

The outcome is co-created public spaces that serve the needs of all kinds of residents, a deeply ingrained sense of ownership that increase the odds of long-term success, and ultimately, stronger communities. The process is designed to build momentum and mobilise community engagement and policy

change at the local, national, and global level.

"The most amazing thing about Block by Block is the methodology, using one of the world's most popular video games, Minecraft, for community participation in urban design processes. It's not a gimmick - it really works. Using a simple, 3D tool like Minecraft is a great way of helping hard-to-reach groups, such as youth and disadvantaged people in poor urban settings, make their voice heard."

Pontus Westerberg, UN-Habitat



MORE INFO

PERSON-ENVIRONMENT-ACTIVITY RESEARCH LAB (PEARL)

PEARL is a unique facility to explore the ways in which people interact with their environment. It is a massive space; around 400m² and 10m high enabling the creation of life-sized environments - a railway station, high street, town square, park... There is the ability to change the profile, type and material of the floor, simulate lighting of any colour and intensity to reflect any time of day or year, create sound from the tiniest bird song to the most massive explosion, add smell into the sensory mix and much more.

Much of our understanding about how cities work is based on a lot of assumptions about how people respond to, use and act in the environment. Many of these assumptions are based on experience over many years, but have never been scientifically tested. PEARL enables detailed study of how people actually interact with the environment and each other under controlled conditions. The resulting rich data, helps urban designers create towns and cities that truly reflects the needs of all the people who use them: thriving, vital, and evolutionary.



PROJECT TEAM

Professor Nick Tyler, UCL, Penoyre & Prasad

Providing urban design with a better research base is commendable and much needed.



MORE INFO

VIEWCUE

ViewCue is a set of tools for recording, mapping, and testing the visual character and quality of places, spaces, streets and landscapes by the objective analysis of images. By analysing Google Street View or bespoke images, it quickly identifies character areas, zones and segments, and can classify and map over 1200 images in under 15 minutes.

The core technique measures the level of visual complexity, variety and intensity of an image created by the composite contributions of all the components at different scales: from the overall configuration of ground plane, vertical elements and sky, through the size of buildings, extent of vegetation and landscaping, free standing objects, construction details and materials. Similar types of places, like highly enclosed urban places, semi-detached suburbia, open fields, highly enclosed wooded places, can be grouped by their common visual texture.

ViewCue helps with the production of characterisation studies and design codes by providing quantified assessments of visual character that complement human judgement.



PROJECT TEAM

Oxford Brookes University, Holistic City Ltd

Great potential. A useful tool for identifying areas lacking diversity in urban design.



MORE INFO

The Green Loop

On creating a virtuous circle between the types and mixes of land use and the economics of the public realm



PROJECT TEAM

He Wang (Cardiff University)

The development of virtuous cycles of diversity, engagement and prosperity using the Community Land Trust model gives physical expression to the truer sense of sustainability that most urban designers and planners would wish to see happen, and the emphasis on retrofitting suggests the strategy can be applied to already established areas.

The Green Loop project aims to create a new type of community that is economically and environmentally sustainable, through the use of Community Land Trusts (CLTs) and innovative urban design.

A study of different sites within Butetown, Cardiff suggested a 'green loop' dynamic based around two major components:

- Types and mixes of land use and their connection to the public realm
- Economics of and investment in the public realm

A more diverse area – one with a mix of uses: residential, commercial, offices – attracts a wider range of people who live nearby, sees a greater uptake of active travel, and in turn improves vibrancy and local economy. And the cycle starts again.

With this in mind, a plan was developed for a pilot scheme in Butetown, wherein eye-level development is built or retrofitted for the benefit of the pedestrian, new development combines uses, and CLTs are utilised as part of a critical sustainable and targeted investment strategy.

Buildings at ground floor should be varied, visually engaging, and easily accessible, spilling into public realm where appropriate e.g. outdoor seating for cafes and green space outside offices.

New development should have a mix of uses and seek to optimise its connection to existing buildings and the public realm. The project also proposes a departure from the conventional grid road network in favour of forming more varied small scale public spaces.

Currently, over 60% of Butetown is industrial and empty land, making them critical sites for future of the area. Some potential impacts of CLTs and the associated community involvement are more receptive residents and a sense of belonging, and genuine affordability and avoidance of gentrification.



MORE INFO

MILTON KEYNES PLACEMAKING

This project responds to Milton Keynes' lack of genuine, quality public space and aims to excite citizens about the potential of their urban spaces.

Starting with a thorough analysis of central Milton Keynes and how little there is to be genuinely engaged by, this idea takes the area's existing elements, such as avenues of mature trees, porte cochères (shelters) and redways (cycle lanes), and creates a series of unique spaces rooted in local character. Varied sketches and an online survey sent to local residents, with all ideas proposed as part of a temporary festival, helped develop a plan for an urban park.

The first phase proposed sees Mid-summer Boulevard closed to cars for the duration of a festival in order to allow people to slow down and engage meaningfully with what's on offer.

The final proposal turns the porte cochères from passive objects into part of a joined up superstructure that becomes a multi-tiered public space with enjoyment and active transport at its core.



PROJECT TEAM

Peter Livings (Leeds Beckett University)

Identifies an issue that needs to be addressed in Milton Keynes, one which gets back to the original vision for the town.



MORE INFO

STITCHING THE URBAN FABRIC

This proposal envisions the social and physical redevelopment and integration of a deprived Glasgow neighbourhood, delivering a cohesive urban fabric.

The principle objectives of the project were to:

- Ensure a diverse and lively neighbourhood that boosts community living and local economy
- Reinforce the neighbourhood's connectivity and ensure active sustainable networks
- Enhance the living environment by introducing safe and friendly public spaces
- Revive the heritage of the neighbourhood bringing in character and sense of place

The strategy for re-imagining the urban fabric chalks certain streets, physical structures and new developments for retention, and then aims to build a foundation that considers these structures. Following the local urban codes, a detailed masterplan is laid out, to integrate the neighbourhood in a coherent, interconnected and sustainable manner.



PROJECT TEAM

Aanchal Agrawal, Shinjini Basu (University of Strathclyde)

An excellent proposal for area wide regeneration based on sustainable and sound urban design principles.



MORE INFO

The Urban Block

A Guide for Urban Designers, Architects and Town Planners

Jonathan Tarbatt and Chloe Street Tarbatt

RIBA Publishing



Selected as this year's winner, *The Urban Block*, is a practitioner's handbook to the urban block and a refreshing addition to urban design literature.

Community-Led Regeneration was also to be commended for promoting an issue that should concern all urban designers and those involved with housing of all tenures. Given the subject matter, the judges applauded its accessibility as a freely downloadable ebook and as such an available resource for everyone.

THE SHORT LIST

The Urban Block

Tarbatt and Street Tarbatt | RIBA

Community-Led Regeneration

Sendra and Fitzpatrick | UCL Press

Designing Disorder

Sendra and Sennett | Verso

Estate Regeneration

Kilpatrick and Patel | Routledge

This year's short list was selected from the twenty plus books reviewed in the Urban Design Group's Urban Design journal during 2020 and 2021.

The selected books were diverse, ranging from theory to practice, community activism to urban form, demonstrating the broadness of the topic and leading to an engaging debate for the judging panel.

JUDGES

Dick Cole (Chair), Geoff Noble, Georgia Butina-Watson, Judith Ryser, Katja Stille

The Urban Block

This is a sound piece of work, that fills a gap on any urban designers' bookshelf. It builds on previous work of plot based urbanism and describes a vital element in the world of urban design in a clear and simple manner. The accepted orthodoxy of the perimeter block is thoughtfully examined and shows through examples how versatile it can be.

The book is well structured and following a brief introduction, the authors explore the urban block through history and theory; urban forms and block types and the relationship between buildings and streets. It concludes with a series of case studies, each with explained with diagrams, photographs and a useful critique on opportunities and challenges.

Community-Led Regeneration

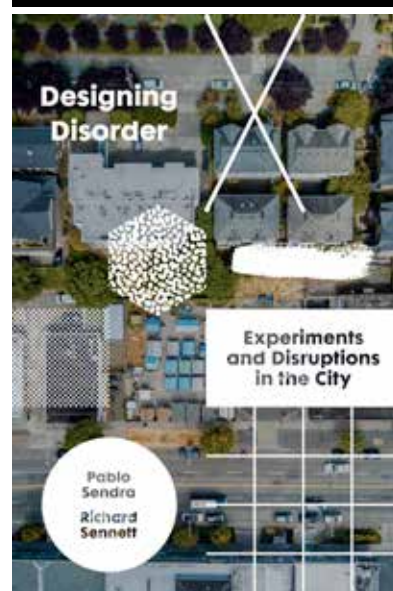
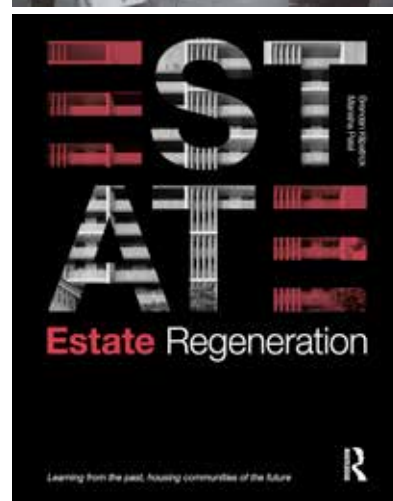
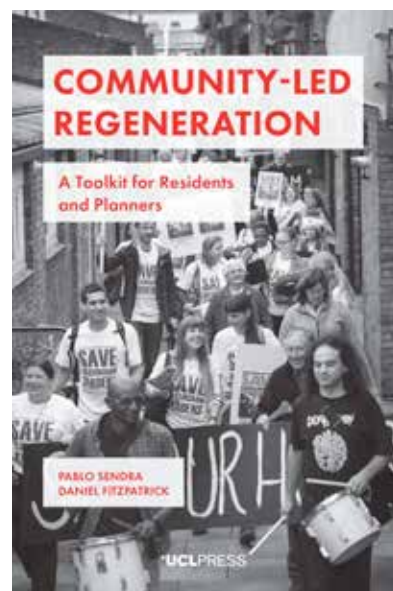
Orientated towards practice, policy and socially responsible governance, the book provides an insight into the bottom up approaches to social housing regeneration. The book is able to engage with different audiences, including local communities, developers, policy makers, researchers, architects and urban designers.

Estate Regeneration

This book provides a journey through 20 years of estate regeneration carried out by the authors' company (PRP). The heart of the book is a series of handsomely illustrated case studies, well supported by specially commissioned essays.

Designing Disorder

An ambitious book that presents a thought provoking extension of Sennett's earlier work combined with Sendra's practical work and participatory regeneration. It has the potential to shake up a formulaic planning and design response and calls for critical thinking and creativity.



READ FULL REVIEWS

JUDGING THE AWARDS

Over 100 entries were received for this year's awards. They were assessed by a panel of judges, using criteria based on real-world design guidance, standards and statutory duties.

People Friendly

Tries to meet the needs of:

- People who cannot or do not wish to own a car
- Young children, infants, and their parents/carers
- Primary schoolers
- Teenagers
- Blind and partially sighted people
- People with impaired mobility
- Elderly people
- People of marginalised genders and sexualities
- People of different ethnicities
- People of limited income

Statutory Duties

Helps local authorities meet their statutory duties including:

- Climate Adaptation and Mitigation + 2050 net Zero target
- Public Health
- Crime and Disorder
- Equality

Discharges the common law duty of care owed by planning authorities and highway authorities to both careful and negligent highway users.

Urban Design Quality

Reflects the 10 Characteristics of well-designed places in the *National Design Guide*:

- Context: enhances the surroundings
- Identity: attractive and distinctive
- Built Form: a coherent pattern of development
- Movement: accessible and easy to move around
- Nature: enhanced and optimised
- Public Spaces: safe, social and inclusive
- Uses: mixed and integrated
- Homes and Buildings: functional, healthy and sustainable
- Resources: efficient and resilient
- Lifespan: made to last

Technical Design

Enables or uses best practice in:

- Landscape and Trees
- Movement, Access and Street Design: placing pedestrians and cyclists first
- Lighting: functional, attractive and avoiding light pollution
- Waste Management: systems that avoid obstruction of footways
- Water Supply / Water Sensitive Urban Design: conservation and recycling systems
- Drainage and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)
- Sewerage: separate drainage and sewerage systems
- Utilities: combined utilities ducts and tunnels

WITH THANKS TO THE FRANCIS TIBBALDS TRUST

We are immensely grateful for the continuing support of the Francis Tibbalds Trust who generously provide a £600 prize for the winner of the Student Project Award, and a grant of £1,000 for the winner of the People Friendly Place Award to be used to support the furthering of people friendly work or projects.

Francis Tibbalds was an architect and town planner who gained over thirty years' experience in both the private and public sectors until his death in January 1992. He was founding Chairman of the Urban Design Group in 1979 and President of the Royal Town Planning Institute in 1988. His influential book *Making People-Friendly Towns* was published after he died.

The Francis Tibbalds Trust was set up in his memory by former professional partners, close friends, his wife, and sons. The Trust aims to promote excellence and good practice in urban design by awarding prizes, offering sponsorship, and other similar activities. The Trust also aims to encourage cooperation between the design professions and has been the mainstay of the Awards since their inception.

