**DESIGN FOR
AN AGEING
POPULATION**

URBAN
DESIGN
GROUP

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NEWS FROM THE UDG CHAIR

Our ability to communicate with one another and the resulting actions (or inaction) have become an important, if overdue, focus of debate. The storming of the Capitol building in the USA highlighted how words can lead to destructive actions. In England, to the amusement of many, a parish council meeting has gone viral and highlighted how not to conduct a public meeting.

A year ago, our world changed dramatically as we started shutting down our workplaces and social lives for the first lockdown. At the time, most of us understood the risk to life and acted accordingly. Twelve months on, things are starting to look more positive. If used well and with the right intentions, good communication can build a common purpose leading to swift and meaningful action.

One area where we need the same urgency is climate change. We may be using the word 'emergency', but the message is diluted by contradictory national and local government actions; for example, the recent discussions around the Cumbrian coal mine and a Transport Infrastructure Investment package that 'will target around 11 million nuisance potholes, enough to tarmac a road stretching a third of the way around the Earth' (www.gov.uk news release, 14 May 2020). Climate policies and calls for action are not translating into tangible change.

The majority of current planning applications and construction projects appear to follow business as usual thinking. Despite the will and positive engagement of those involved, existing processes and funding structures create barriers to delivering the change that we need. It is hard to make this transformation overnight, particularly when

it comes to the built environment which is complex and subject to many different and often conflicting objectives. In the immediate future, a radical shift might be unlikely. Therefore, it is essential that we build in flexibility. We need to be mindful that developments designed and built today will endure for a long time and we need to avoid locking in unaffordable, unhealthy and car-dependent lifestyles, while leaving the door open for new approaches and technologies that will allow us to make progress towards climate change goals.

Despite these practical difficulties, there are some projects to learn from, such as York's zero-carbon home revolution, a programme of up to 600 zero-carbon homes delivered by the City of York Council. This and other exemplary projects benefit from a common vision that is supported by appropriate land ownership, funding and leadership. They should help us to think differently and show how new approaches can be brought to life in a practical way. If you are aware of any other projects that can help our members and others to deliver the change we need, please get in touch and help us to share these examples.

Celebrating good projects and collaborative processes is what we wish to highlight in our National Urban Design Awards too. After a two-year break, we will be relaunching the Awards aiming to share ground-breaking and positive examples across our community.

Continuing the theme of communication, three recent UDG activities deserve highlighting here:
● **UDG Coalition Conversations:** at the beginning of the year we launched a new

series of events the UDG Coalition Conversations. These have been set up as an informal forum where built environment professionals, researchers and politicians can come together to share ideas and thoughts on how to tackle the most pressing issues facing towns and cities. Convened and chaired by Chris Martin, we kick-started the series with a reflection of the lessons learned from last year's lockdown (see p3).
● **Urban Design Directory:** the print copy of the 2021/22 Urban Design Directory has now been distributed to members. It includes a series of articles around the UDG's initiatives and a comprehensive directory of participating urban design consultancies.
● **NPPF and National Model Design Code:** even within the urban design community, we currently struggle to find common ground. Since the publication of the *Planning White Paper* and more recently the *National Model Design Code*, many of us will have had conversations about our own personal definitions of what makes a 'design code', 'design guidance' and 'urban frameworks'. What do we mean when using these terms?

In recent weeks we have been hosting a number of conversations in which we have explored members' views about the forthcoming changes. While writing this, the consultation continues and a clear picture has not yet emerged. We will be submitting a response to the consultation, which will available on the UDG website.

GET IN TOUCH, GET INVOLVED
I would like to invite all of our members to share ideas and proposals of how we can make it easier to deliver good places. If you have ideas for an urban design event, research, collaboration opportunities or would like to get more involved in the UDG, please get in touch with us at: administration@udg.co.uk

I hope you enjoy this issue of the journal. ●

Katja Stille, Chair of the Urban Design Group and Director at Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design

1 Duncombe Barracks, York. Image by MikhailRiches/ Darc Studios

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DIARY OF EVENTS

Until further notice it will not be possible to run live events with an audience at The Gallery. There is however an online programme of events.

Please check the UDG website for details
www.udg.org.uk

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Photograph by Pollard Thomas Edwards

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Growing Old Gracefully

Urban Design 156 looked at the Child Friendly City and what urban designers can do to create better places for children. Writing about Kings Crescent in Hackney and Northstowe in Cambridgeshire, Katja Stille highlighted that what works well for children usually serves older people well too. In this issue we look at how populations around the world are ageing, as birth rates drop and people live longer, and what can be done to support people at the heart of this demographic shift.

In a year when the elderly or vulnerable have been separated from the young due to the coronavirus pandemic, this relationship has been hugely disrupted, reducing opportunities for children to learn from their elders, which is a key part of growing up in society. Care homes have been widely discussed in the media, and in UD157 we heard from Paul and Debbie Hewson about how these barriers between different age groups need to be rethought (p14-15).

Caring for older family members was traditionally women's work, and with more women involved in other work, and perhaps more affluence, this care has been outsourced rather than shared amongst family members, in the UK at least. People are now living longer with declining physical or mental health, and so the care that they need has become harder for families to manage themselves. Similarly, expectations of quality of life have increased in the last 100 years: how many of today's older people would be content to sit in an armchair in the corner knitting all day?

It invariably takes a catastrophe, such as an accident, to trigger a change in how people live as they age. Yet how many of us would willingly downsize ahead of time and move from our family or working life homes? Would we be admitting that we are now old? Apart from perceptions about ourselves, moving to accommodation intended for elderly people brings with it concerns about a lack of privacy and personal space (real and perceived), and obligatory communal activities. What is the best environment for older people – purpose-built villages, co-housing schemes, care homes or staying at home? How will today's young people pay for the kind of care available in care homes, without property wealth to cash in? One size clearly won't fit all financially, socially, culturally or medically.

It is therefore timely to look at positive and practical solutions for how to support people as they age, and this issue, curated by Richard Crappsley, explores the role of urban design, planning, transport planning and communities at large in identifying, designing and delivering good ideas. As we learn here, places that work well for older people also work well for children.●

Louise Thomas, independent urban designer and joint editor

UDG Coalition Conversation: Urban Effects of Lockdown

Webinar series, 20 January 2021

Chaired by Christopher Martin of Urban Movement, UDG Chair Katja Stille introduced this webinar series intended to reflect on urban design's contribution to a post-COVID future. Professor Matthew Carmona (UCL) described a national survey of 2,500 households (7,200 people) undertaken by the Place Alliance during lockdown. It focused on the home, neighbourhood and sense of community. Those living in high-density housing areas suffered most and wanted more social life outdoors. The study recommended higher space standards, more private open space and better environmental conditions in homes. High-density neighbourhoods need more green spaces and amenities within walking distance. The question was how to adapt dense city spaces to these aspirations.

Frances Wright and Neil Murphy (TOWN) discussed two case studies on co-housing and co-living under the 'stay-at-home' restrictions. Helpful in dealing with the restrictions were: established relationships and communication channels; a shared vision and values; ownership control over decision-making; and adaptable spaces and funds. Both schemes had a range of shared spaces, guest rooms, utilities and communal gardens, but they also had private balconies and gardens. Car-free streets facilitated children's play, and outside terraces were converted into live-work spaces. Intergenerational mixing benefited from mutual assistance, but the young lacked meeting spaces, so that communal areas like stairs made social distancing difficult for the most vulnerable.

Rachel Aldred (University of Westminster) focused on low-traffic neighbourhoods and their impact on healthier streets. Those least likely to use cars – the elderly, the disabled and children – are most adversely affected by them. As nine out of ten Londoners live in residential streets, local through-traffic should be removed to improve them. Waltham Forest in London was cited as an example of these Dutch-type adjustments.

Karen Wetherall (University of Glasgow) presented a longitudinal analysis of adult mental health and well-being during the three COVID-19 lockdowns, with a focus on suicidal behaviour. A national survey dealt with symptoms of depression, anxiety, loneliness, mental well-being and suicidal thoughts. Anxiety, depression and loneliness declined, while suicidal thoughts increased, with the highest rate among women, those in the lowest socio-economic groups, with pre-existing mental health issues and the young, which was of particular concern. The question was raised as to what extent well-being and mental health depend on daily life (living, working, learning, etc.), and access to

nature being curtailed by restrictions.

Finally, Professor Zongbo Shi (University of Birmingham) discussed the abrupt but smaller than expected changes in surface air quality in cities, attributable to the lockdowns. During the lockdown, traffic dropped initially, but then increased to almost pre-COVID-19 levels. Cycling increased significantly at first, but then dropped back, while bus journeys after an initial steep drop, recovered to half of previous levels. Unfortunately, no data was presented on pedestrian movements, which are regrettably often left out in multimodal traffic analysis. The research queried the improvement of air quality due to these changes, attributing it to fluctuations in the weather. This shows the need for a coordinated effort to reduce all key air pollutants. ●

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

Introduction to the National Model Design Code

Virtual presentation, 4 February 2021

Over 750 participants attended this introduction to the *National Model Design Code* (NMDC) led by Joanna Averley, the MHCLG's Chief Planner, as part of the new National Planning Policy Framework. Nicholas Boys Smith (BBBBC) introduced codes as assisting in restoring our vision of beautiful places and stopping rubbish from being built, by seeking the best in beauty and sustainability, and in the context of regional assessments. Jennifer Thomas, MHCLG's Head of Built Environment, called for beauty to be a strategic concern, emphasising that it was a local matter, and for codes to promote ideas like every new street being tree-lined.

MHCLG's Head of Architecture Andy von Bradsky emphasised the need for training workshops and the involvement of the Department of Food and Rural Affairs. He saw codes as kits of parts defining what goes into plans and seeking public engagement. The codes should be applied at different scales and need to be tested. David Rudlin (URBED) was concerned with process: analysis, vision for an area, and the application of the codes to achieve the vision. Guidance notes would be essential. Testing the NMDC is underway, and ten pilots are planned.

Leo Hammond (UDG) saw the package as 'a toolkit for talking'; there were questions regarding high-rise buildings, why there was a need for more guidance when guidance about codes had been provided before (the new NPPF requires it), and a concern about co-operation between two-tier authorities.

A discussion panel followed: Mandar Puranik (London Borough of Sutton) welcomed the prospect of consistency through national guidance, if used on an area basis as in the new *London Plan*. Laura Alvarez (Nottingham City Council) felt that a mechanistic code could erode character, but that this could be countered with public involvement. Chris Lamb (Design South East) was concerned about the lack of design skills and the need for training and design panels. Collaboration is essential, not just consultation, according to Vidhya Alakeson (Power to Change). Sowmya Parthasarathy (Arup)

raised the importance of the location of developments and the need for strategic vision. Andrew Taylor (Countryside) argued that the codes should be for all, including developers. This was an intense two-hour session and it was a pity that MHCLG did not record it for those who could not attend. ●

Richard Cole, architect and planner

Urban Design Group's Annual General Meeting

The following is a summary of the Trustees' Report presented virtually to the AGM on 14 December 2020.

MEMBERSHIP

The total number of UDG members across the various categories shows very little change from the previous year, from 1,142 to 1,140; an increase in Recognised Practitioners, practices and local authority members was balanced by a decrease in individual members, concessions, libraries and universities. On the other hand, the take-up of the free *Urban Update* email newsletter continues to grow (1,451 contacts compared to 1,380 the previous year).

URBAN DESIGN JOURNAL

Urban Design continues to attract high quality contributions on a variety of subjects, and the main topics this year were Politicians and Urban Design, Southeast Asia, Urban Design Education, and The Future of the High Street. Members are always encouraged to contact the editors to offer contributions or suggest subjects that they would like to see covered in future issues.

NATIONAL URBAN DESIGN AWARDS

A review of the first ten years of the Awards has been undertaken prior to planning future awards.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON URBAN DESIGN 2019

The 2019 conference was held in Birmingham's Millennium Point under the theme *Making People Friendly Places*. The conference was run on a non-profit-making basis and was generously sponsored by GreenBlue Urban, Hardscape, Pegasus Group, DAR, Glenn Howells Architects, Savills, Barton Willmore, Boyer, Urban Movement, Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design.

EVENTS

The UDG has continued to develop and expand its programme of events at Cowcross Street. Led by Paul Reynolds, the 2019-20 programme included presentations, a film night and walks.

URBANNOUS – VIDEO ON DEMAND

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

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2019–20	2019 Totals £	2020 Totals £
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Subscriptions	108,816	113,911
Publications and Awards	46,755	7,225
Conference Fees and Sponsorship	21,026	23,916
London Events	3,010	3,488
Study Tours & Job Ads	46,758	23,557
Donation from Urban Design Services Ltd	0	0
UDSL Contribution to Office Costs		0
Activities to Generate Funds		
Interest Received	85	85
Inland Revenue: Gift Aid	0	0
Miscellaneous Income	5,638	0
Total Incoming Resources	**232,088**	**172,182**
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Charitable Expenditure		
Publications & Awards	63,953	42,425
Conference Expenditure	9,836	15,183
General	104,980	107,472
Study Tours Expenditure	15,300	0
Development Expenditure	0	0
Governance Costs (Accountancy)	1,680	1,740
Total Resources Expended	**195,749**	**166,820**
Net Income/(Expenditure) For The Year	**36,339**	**5,362**
Fund Balances Brought Forward	**205,998**	**242,337**
Fund Balances Carried Forward	**242,337**	**247,699**
Current Assets	**257,188**	**276,382**
Current Liabilities	**14,852**	**28,684**
TOTAL NET ASSETS	**242,337**	**247,699**

UDG REGIONS

A major conference on the *National Design Guidance* was organised by Laura Alvarez in Nottingham on 25 February 2020, attended by around 150 people. Other regional contacts are:
Solent Peter Frankum
East Midlands Laura Alvarez
North East Adrian Clarke and Georgia Giannopoulou
North West Mark Foster & Rebecca Newiss
Scotland Husam Al Waer
Yorkshire Rob Thompson
Wales Noel Isherwood

URBAN DESIGN STUDY TOURS

The 2019-20 study tour was to Nantes, led by Sebastian Loew.

URBAN UPDATE

The UDG's email newsletter *Urban Update* continues to be a valuable resource for urban designers. It is received directly by over 1,400 individuals and provides a concise monitoring service of the government websites, as well as news of research in a wide range of areas that add richness to urban design, including psychology, sociology, public health, technology and economics.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The operation of the Urban Design Group is the responsibility of the Executive Committee appointed by election at the AGM. Its members for the year 2019-20 were:
Leo Hammond (Chair)
Paul Reynolds (Hon Secretary)
Katja Stille (Treasurer)
Colin Pullan (Past Chair)
Alan Stones

Amanda Reynolds
Barry Sellers
Christopher Martin
Colin Munsie
Hannah Smart
Raj Rooprai
Philip Cave
Andrew Dakin
Co-opted:
Graham Smith
Daniela Lucchese
Laura Alvarez
Brian Quinn
Michael Cowdy

For the year 2019-20 the following were elected or co-opted:
Katja Stille (Chair)
Paul Reynolds (Hon Secretary)
Christopher Martin (Treasurer)
Leo Hammond (Past Chair)
Husam Al Waer
Philip Black
Colin Pullan
Amanda Reynolds
Raj Rooprai
Barry Sellers
Kenji Shermer
Alan Stones
Louise Thomas

My Favourite Plan: Simon Ward

Isola Bella, Lake Maggiore, Italy

WHY I LIKE IT...

My favourite plan is of Isola Bella, affectionately known as the Italian Galleon, which lies a few hundred metres off the shores of Lake Maggiore in northern Italy. I discovered it as a student in the early 1980s when reading Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe's *The Landscape of Man* (1975), and it was one of many reasons I wanted to become a landscape architect. In his book Jellicoe described it as 'perhaps the single greatest surviving achievement of the Baroque art of romantic affinity to the environment'.

Until 1632, the island was just a rocky crag occupied by a tiny fishing village, but that year one of the locally influential House of Borromeo began the construction of a *palazzo* dedicated to his wife, Isabella, from whom the island takes its name. The island is just 320m long x 400m wide and was conceived as a floating galleon, a jewel to adorn its beautiful lake setting. The gardens were finally inaugurated in 1671.

One of the main reasons I love this plan is the clarity of vision, but it is also the labour of successive generations, including architects, landscape architects, artists, engineers and designers, effectively a Rococo version of the modern day multi-disciplinary design team.

WHAT TO LEARN FROM IT...

This plan possesses the hallmarks of many artificially created but beautiful places, with a captivating structure which occupies every inch of its rocky skeleton with perfectly proportioned elements. There is a lovely eloquence in the sequence of the spaces created and the balance of weight between open courtyards, built form and the densely planted areas. It is both complex and alluring in plan and just makes you want to drop down into the site to explore its dynamic, exhilarating and flamboyant content. It cannot boast any social value, but it is a cameo of what can be achieved when a place is designed to reflect the culture that created it and a site's dramatic surroundings.

There is great ambition in this plan, which is inspired by creative geometry and in particular the emerging (at the time) cult of the axis. It promotes the importance of variety, intensity, and attention to detail, and was clearly designed to enchant, captivate and inspire its visitors. It is a love story and perhaps a paean to extravagance and self-indulgence, but it also teaches us to be bold, imaginative and to dare to be unfettered by constraints. ●

Current position
Atkins UK, Head of Landscape Architecture and Urban Design, leading a team of around 80 landscape architects and urban designers in seven regional hub offices.

Experience
Worked on numerous projects including nationally significant infrastructure projects, city squares, station redevelopment, public realm, education, leisure, green Infrastructure and climate resilience.
Led design teams to numerous short-listings on national and international landscape and urban design competitions organised by RIBA, Places Matter and Landscape Institute.

Education
BA Hons Landscape Design
Dip LA in Landscape Architecture
Fellow of the Landscape Institute
Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design.

Specialisms
Creating distinctive and engaging places and overseeing their delivery on the ground.

Ambitions
To continue to promote and celebrate our brilliant profession to the widest possible audience and strive to create exceptional places which can transform people's lives.
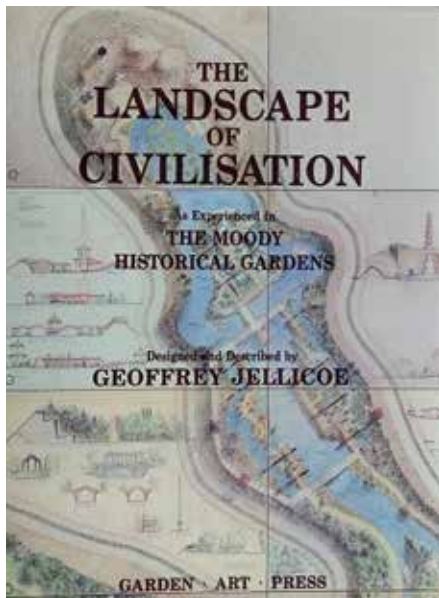
Urban Design Library #37

The Landscape of Civilisation; as experienced in The Moody Historical Gardens, Geoffrey Jellicoe, 1989, Garden Art Press Ltd, Northiam, East Sussex

In this book, the landscape designer, master planner, architect and past president of the British Landscape Institute, Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe reveals much of his professional and spiritual journey, as he illustrates his greatest ever plan: a journey through the history of culture and landscape for a public park in Texas.

Published in 1989, the book is from an earlier time, reflecting the author's working practices, freehand sketching, gentle watercolours, black and white photos, imperial scales, and the designer's 70 years of accumulated knowledge. *The Landscape of Man* (1975), Jellicoe's earlier classic book, is much quoted and underpins the plan for the Moody Gardens, part of a major leisure attraction on the island of Galveston, southwest Texas. The project's benefactors gave Jellicoe free rein funded by philanthropists for the people of Texas, although the project needed to be self-financing. Jellicoe seized the opportunity to realise a lifetime's work within a single grand expression, even if the flat land and salt marsh conditions behind a high sea wall did not make it the most obvious site for a rich botanical experience.

The book is packed with illustrations, sketches, notes and pictures, which while being intriguing to investigate, seem to be there as a manual for others to develop the garden over an anticipated 20-year period. Jellicoe, who died in 1996, was in his late 80s when he designed the Moody Gardens and suspected that he would not live to see

the end result, but said that he had walked every inch of it in his mind.

It took Jellicoe just a single night to conceive the main vision (the scribbled black line drawing is included) and then several years of drafting and redrafting to finalise the details. Many of the elegant handwritten notes in the book require a magnifying glass; the intention was that the drawings would be displayed at a large scale in the reception of the Moody Gardens.

The main part of the book is The Voyage, a sequential journey by boat through the gardens of time, starting from Eden, passing a primeval forest, the burial mounds of ancient civilisations, Egyptian Thebes, Western classical gardens, Capability Brown's English idealised countryside, abandoning boundaries and formalities, and then to the East and the lands of Tao and Buddha. Jellicoe's love of creative design and the range of stories told is evident throughout; there is playfulness as well: the huge moss apple in Eden, the waterfall within the English garden named Tracey Waterfall to immortalise the name of a bank cashier in Jellicoe's local branch.

West and East are divided by a great wall, and the river passes through a Chinese moon bridge as it reaches an environment to reveal 'the grandeur of the subconscious' in the East. A water Buddha and a rock Buddha reflect the balancing elements of Ying and Yang in Tao. Ryoanji's 15 century Zen Garden is described as 'the greatest endeavour by mortal man to bring infinity to this earth'.

Drawing on the writings and studies of others, the book provides an education in the place of gardens in world culture. A magic mountain is included, and the river is the 'thread of truth' bringing it all together. The temple of the dragon represents the great mystery itself; Jellicoe often incorporated serpents in his designs, most famously in the Grade II listed Water Gardens in Hemel Hempstead New Town, for which he also produced the first unadopted masterplan. A traveller in the Moody Gardens could disembark at the Rock Buddha to meditate by the lotus lake, the deepest symbolism of Chinese philosophy.

A second part of the book provides later drawings showing a continual refinements, such as the *Sermon on the Mount* becoming the central concept of the Medieval European garden, including 12 clipped yew trees for the apostles. It is intended to be a positive and spiritual journey that Jellicoe hopes will leave the visitor a better person. For all of its scars, he believed this still to be a 'goodly' planet.

While readers may get lost in their intensity, the gardens' background story of power, wealth and empire is clearly understood by Jellicoe. Seventeenth-century Versailles is the climax of Le Nôtre in beauty, elegance and technique as well as superficiality; Jellicoe says that Versailles ignores the monster below 'that would swallow the monarch whole'. By comparison an actual monster,

the gate to hell of Bornarzo is included in the Italian Renaissance garden. Victorian gardens lack a marked change of style, reflecting the growth of democracy and the middle classes. In the appendix, the author acknowledges the significance of 17th century Holland for providing all with individual private gardens, in the birthplace of liberalism and the first truly democratic society.

Jellicoe's concerns for humanity ran deep. Interested in Jungian ideas of the collective unconscious and the unity of all existence, he wrote that the greatest threat to man's existence may not be commercialism or nuclear war, but the 'blindness that follows sheer lack of appreciation'.

For urban designers this book is not just a welcome and very visual introduction into the different worlds and cultures of landscape design, but it enhances an appreciation of landscape design's capacity to enrich places with stories and purpose. As for architecture, buildings are better appreciated when the intentions of the architect are understood, even if the end result isn't popular. Over time the original purpose of places can be lost due to the more utilitarian and prosaic concerns of property managers. Urban designers should ensure that as places evolve, the essence of a valued landscape design work is retained.

Overall, readers are left with an appreciation of the breadth and energy of Jellicoe's enquiry; he reputedly once said that 'life begins at 80'. He appreciated creative art within and beyond landscape design, and in that sense was in tune with urban design's emphasis on quality of life and bringing professions together in place-making.

Is the present-day Moody Gardens the scholarly trip through garden history and a dramatic experience to make you a better person as he hoped? Whether Jellicoe's vision is best realised and enjoyed within this book or by the experience of what lies in Texas, is for me an intriguing question which I have to leave hanging in the air. ●

Tim Hagyard, formerly local government planner and urban designer. Currently working with CPRE Hertfordshire

READ ON
Michael Spens (1994), *The Complete Landscape Designs and Gardens of Geoffrey Jellicoe,* Thames and Hudson
Geoffrey Jellicoe and Susan Jellicoe (1975), *The Landscape of Man: Shaping the Environment from Prehistory to the Present Day,* Thames and Hudson
Justin Martin (2011), *Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted.* Da Capo Press
Gunther Vogt and Thomas Kissling (ed.) (2020), *Mutation and Morphosis, landscape as aggregate* Lars Mueller
Brian Davis and Thomas Oles (2014), *From Architecture to Landscape, the case for a new landscape science, Places* Journal October 2014

Climate Change Global Digest

This year will see a wealth of research and new ideas emerging, as we head towards the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 1–12 November 2021. In this article, we highlight the latest work of the UK's Climate Change Committee and flag the opportunities to engage with research feeding into COP26.

UK's Sixth Carbon Budget
Building on two years' work by the Climate Change Committee (CCC), and on the back of their *Net Zero* report in 2019, the UK's Sixth Carbon Budget was published in December, and it provides a blueprint for full decarbonisation in the UK. The report sets out multiple scenarios and paths to net zero carbon and emphasises four key steps:
● The take up of low-carbon solutions
● The expansion of low-carbon energy supplies
● The reduction in demand for carbon-intensive activities
● The removal of land and greenhouse gas.
> https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/

A 30-minute video usefully accompanies the report and talks through the recommended path that the CCC is promoting to Government. Within the report there are a series of summaries by sector, including ones for surface transport, buildings, and agriculture and land use which will be of particular interest to urban designers.

Under the buildings heading, it includes four priorities for the coming decade: upgrading all buildings to Energy Performance Certificate 'C' over the next 10-15 years; scaling up the market for heat pumps; expanding the rollout of low-carbon heat networks in heat dense areas like cities; and, preparing for a potential role for hydrogen in providing heat. Under surface transport, the report recommends locking in 'positive behaviours seen during the COVID-19 pandemic and societal and technological changes to reduce demand (e.g. shared mobility and focus on broadband rather than road-building)'. It is assumed that car miles will be reduced by 9 per cent (e.g. through increased home-working) or 'shifted to lower-carbon modes (such as walking, cycling and public transport) by 2035, increasing to 17 per cent by 2050'.

Building towards COP26
At the time of writing, the Met Office is planning a virtual hackathon for March 2021 aimed at building society's resilience to climate change. The purpose is to find new ways to use data to manage the challenges and exploit the opportunities of the changing climate. The most relevant outputs will be showcased at COP26, and its focus is challenges in three key themes: Marine and Coastal; Nature-based Solutions; and Sustainable Development at Home and Abroad.

The Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy launched a tender for its Visions for a Net Zero Future project to build engagement ahead of the COP26 climate summit. The project will develop a series of country and regional-specific visualisations. These will communicate the scientific evidence on different global pathways to a net-zero future, exploring science and innovation solutions and the related benefits and trade-offs. The material will be developed in virtual workshops by regional stakeholders.

Breakthrough projects
The Big Conversation launched by Nottingham City Council as part of the re-imagining Broadmarsh Shopping Centre project in Nottingham, has prompted a host of climate positive proposals. The submission by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust for example is to transform the former Broadmarsh Shopping Centre into 'a space for nature and people, signalling a new greener future' for the city. This emphasis on re-wilding cities, including city centres, will be a growing trend as centres look to reframe themselves post-COVID.
> https://www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org/broadmarsh-reimagined
> https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/21c59c2e9c52410b9278230ea7828acc

Readers in Scotland may already be aware of Adaptation Scotland's *Climate Ready Places* website, but this is a great visual and interactive resource to help explain climate change adaptation measures in different types of urban environment. The tool provides insights for urban, suburban and rural locations. We recommend taking a look.
> https://adaptationscotland.org.uk/climatereadyplaces/ ●

Jane Manning, Director at Allies and Morrison, Urban Practitioners

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Key sources of information and further reading. Simply hold your smartphone over the QR code whilst in camera mode and you will be taken to the relevant web page.

Sixth Carbon Budget

Visions for a Net Zero Future

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

Broadmarsh The Big Conversation

Adaptation Scotland Tool

Tibby's Triangle, Southwold, Suffolk

The former Adnams brewery distribution depot in Southwold has been transformed by Ash Sakula Architects into a convivial, mixed use development traversed by intimate streets and a pocket space

In each issue of *Behind the Image*, one of our contributors visits a contemporary public space from around the world. The photography tries to reveal an alternative perspective on a familiar precedent, famous space or place. These images illustrate how the public space works in practice: exploring its features (designed and unintended), and the way it relates to the surrounding context. ●

Lionel Eid, George Garofalakis, Rosie Garvey and Alice Strang

Respectfully modern: the scheme is within a Conservation Area and maintains a familiar scale and rhythm of domestic housing that offers a varied roofline without dominating the Grade I listed St Edmund's Church. The low-walls comprising panels of traditional flintwork create a soft relationship between the front gardens of the new development and the playground at the heart of the Tibby's Green. Garden gates, doors and windows create an important active frontage.

Harmony: the diversity of construction methods, scale, skyline, materials and façades along the perimeter of the scheme creates a heterogeneous yet overall complementary architectural aesthetic.

Private yet active: the street feels active and overlooked even though many of the ground floor openings are partly shielded for privacy, due to the tight street section. Parking is also cleverly integrated in many different ways so that it does not dominate the street scene.

Material character: The material palette references local precedents and the buff brickwork finished with whitewash or black tar relates to Suffolk's maritime vernacular.

Informal: rear building frontages are neither parallel nor perpendicular to each other. A more idiosyncratic arrangement of backs and fronts provide visual intricacy and a sense of informality along Loftus Lane and Tibby's Way.

Legibility: Abstract patterns and material changes within ground treatment indicate transitions from private to more public areas. The tallest, four storey building has an L-shaped protrusion in plan which helps to demarcate and enclose the central square and allows this focal point to be seen from multiple perspectives.

Social Infrastructure for the 21st Century

Kwame Lowe explores the role of two projects tapping into social capital

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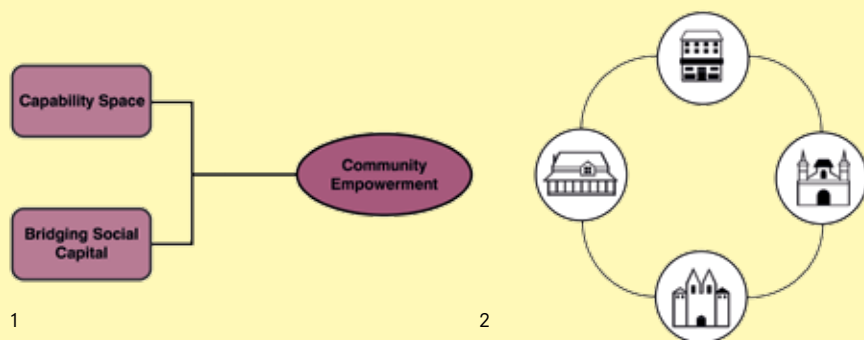
Over the course of the last 30 years, changes in governance trends have led to a growing opportunity for citizen participation in local government decision-making. The 2011 *Localism Act* enshrined this in planning policy. However, the voluntary uptake of participatory planning mechanisms has been mixed at best. Areas with wealthier communities have been more likely to see these opportunities realised than areas with less affluent communities.

RESEARCH AIM AND FRAMEWORK
UK planning policy does not specify the means by which local authorities should engage their communities but social infrastructure is suggested as a possible approach. This research focuses on the potential contribution that social infrastructure can make to empowering communities to play a more active role in the planning system. It is based on an understanding of contemporary society as consisting of networks of people and power. It then employs Ostrom's theory of governance for 'common pool resources' to build an understanding of how social infrastructure can play a role in achieving Harvey's updated perspective on Lefebvre's *Right to the City*. This relies on a definition of social capital like that of Coleman (1988) acknowledging the multi-level possibilities and limitations afforded by different social configurations.

A definition of community empowerment is made by combining the concept of social capital with Sen's capabilities approach. Bridging social capital is identified as important because it binds groups horizontally, reducing competition for limited common pool resources. Using Sen's approach, Frediani proposes the concept of capability space or the design choices that influence individual, local and structural factors, and 'people's choice, ability, and opportunity to transform resources into achieved

functionings' (Frediani 2010). Capability space allows for the potential conversion of bridging social capital to the tangible results of community empowerment.

METHODOLOGY
There has been considerable interest in libraries and participatory culture spaces since the start of this century for their ability to generate social capital and broaden communities' capabilities. My research looks at two examples from East London. The first is Every One Every Day, described as 'a unique experiment which for the first time is developing and testing a systems approach to scaling participation culture', in Barking and Dagenham. The second is the Idea Stores, a chain of modernised libraries, in Tower Hamlets (Participatory City Foundation, 2018).

Every One Every Day is a model case study because it exemplifies a new approach to social infrastructure based on creating a shared culture of participation. The Participatory City Foundation offers a support platform to enable the growth of participatory ecosystems and includes four Every One Every Day shops and a larger warehouse facility, located strategically throughout the borough. It also includes a trained team on hand to assist residents in making use of the facilities and co-designing projects. These projects involve common activities defined as 'capable of appealing to any and all residents in neighbourhoods'. Examples of these are cooking, learning, making and repairing.

The Idea Stores are libraries, a more traditional form of social infrastructure. Kranich (2001) suggested that after 9/11, libraries had 'a unique, if fleeting, opportunity to carve out a new library mission' in community building, emphasising their potential to create social capital. In Tower Hamlets, where the council's library and information service had been ranked as the worst in London, the Idea Stores were

reconceptualised in 1999 as a 21st century library service. After opening four Idea Stores, Tower Hamlets Council reviewed its achievements and found that Idea Stores bring together traditional library services with new services in popular spaces based on retail environments.

The latest annual data collected by the Participatory City Foundation was used to track progress on the indicators relevant to the framework of community empowerment. Similarly, the latest data collected by Tower Hamlets Council for their *Idea Store Strategy 2009* was used. This data was checked and verified through comparison to data collected in *The Barking & Dagenham Post* and *The Docklands and East London Advertiser*. The latter was analysed for reports on the Idea Stores between June 2010 and May 2012 (the first two years of the UK government's austerity programme). *The Barking & Dagenham Post* was analysed for reports on Every One Every Day between November 2017 and October 2019 (the two years after the first two Every One Every Day shops were opened in Barking & Dagenham). The analysis tracked the context of the words 'Idea Store', 'Every One Every Day' and 'Participatory City' in the newspapers; afterwards the instances of these words were coded according to the aspects of community empowerment that they demonstrate. Examples of bonding social capital were coded to build up an understanding of its relationship to bridging social capital. Instances of clearly negative or positive coverage in the newspapers were also coded.

FINDINGS
The two case studies demonstrated that community empowerment could function through the creation of capability space, which could then lead to the formation of bridging social capital (and sometimes simultaneously bonding social capital) as

1 Creating community empowerment
2 The networks of social infrastructure
3 Setting up a new Every One Every Day shop
4 An example of the gardening activities
5 A Saturday parade with residents
6 The Chrisp Street Idea Store
7 One of the libraries in the ideas stores project

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suggested in the framework. While illuminating in themselves, the cases of Every One Every Day and the Idea Stores allude to their place in a wider network of social infrastructure and policy, a network that has been eroded by cuts to publicly-funded social infrastructure in recent decades. The success of the Idea Stores in harnessing community activity that already existed suggests that embedding social infrastructure for community empowerment in this network is important.

The differences between libraries and participatory culture spaces as distinct types of social infrastructure for community empowerment are also explored in this research. The Idea Stores manage to facilitate bridging and bonding social capital, due to their nature as public and flexible spaces, while Every One Every Day seems to enable the facilitation of bridging social capital only, although more intensely. This is not to say that Every One Every Day does not produce many other benefits for realising a sense of community and empowerment. More qualitative research should be done to gain a better understanding of whether libraries can bind users together in the way that participatory cultures can. It is also imperative to assess the longer-term impact of Every One Every Day and other participatory culture spaces. This should include testing Every One Every Day's ability to be embedded into the existing network of social infrastructure once the scheme has existed for a few more years. Regardless, it would seem that participatory culture spaces are complementary to existing types of social infrastructure, including libraries.

Networks of social infrastructure can empower communities to play a more active role in the planning system. More research is needed to better understand how these networks function and what they can and cannot facilitate with the presence of different elements. This evokes Rydin and Holman's contention that 'social capital is not really a tool at all but rather a variety of strategies, each of which needs to be tailored to the specific policy problem at hand and the specific local context' (2004). Having seen that different types of social infrastructure can lead to the facilitation of different types of social capital, a logical next step in Rydin and Holman's reasoning is that different types of social infrastructure should be created in response to specific policy problems and local contexts. Tonkiss defines urban design as 'social practices and processes that shape spatial forms, relationships and outcomes in intentional and less intended ways' (2013). As seen in this research, the consequences of social infrastructure, and urban design more generally for society are both spatial and social. It seems critical that the discipline embraces this with its unprecedented challenges of scale and complexity. ●

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Kwame Lowe
This research was undertaken as part of a MSC in Urban Design & City Planning at the Bartlett School of Planning, UCL

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Affordable Housing in London's Recently Permitted Tall Buildings

Alan Smithies examines what is being proposed and delivered

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Driven by the need to deliver 66,000 new homes in London annually, there has been a surge in new residential tall buildings in the capital over the last 10-15 years. According to New London Architecture, 525 tall buildings over 20 storeys were in the pipeline in 2019, almost 90 per cent of which were for residential development. Advocates claim that this is necessary to cope with housing demand, whilst critics argue that due to high construction costs, they contribute little to the affordable housing crisis. Using data on all planning applications referable to the Mayor between January 2011 and May 2020, this study examines the proportion of affordable housing in London's newly permitted tall buildings and how it compares to lower-rise typologies.

While this study is separate from the Greater London Authority's (GLA) work, given the available data on referable applications and compiled as part of the GLA's Referable Planning Applications Analysis project, a comprehensive assessment of affordable housing in all buildings over 30 metres has been possible. This is the first time a study into affordable housing in all of London's newly permitted tall buildings (referable under the 2008 *Mayor of London Order*) has been feasible. This study examines the relationship between tall residential buildings and their provision of on-site

affordable housing through the following research question:

> *To what extent is there a relationship between the height of buildings and the proportion of affordable housing and are tall buildings less proficient at delivering affordable housing than lower-rise alternatives?*

METHODOLOGY

Available on the London Datastore, data including the highest floor count and number of affordable and market homes for each of the 855 residential planning applications recommended for approval (or directly approved by the Mayor) has been collected. To provide additional insight and nuance, the study categorised each planning application into one of seven building typologies, influenced by those in the *Good Quality Homes for All Londoners SPG* (recently out for consultation). The location, main use, decision date and completion status, using information from the London Development Database (LDD) for each application, was also analysed.

Using these metrics, the floor count of the tallest building and building typology for each planning application was correlated with the number of on-site affordable housing units. Two methods were used to calculate the average affordable housing

contribution of applications. The first analysed the average affordable housing units as a percentage of a grouped set of applications, and the second considered the total number of affordable units within a group of applications. While payment *in lieu* of contributions for off-site affordable housing were recorded where applicable, this study primarily focused on on-site residential units granted planning permission.

HEIGHT, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Analysis of the 855 referable planning applications confirmed there was a negative correlation between building height and on-site affordable housing. This analysis revealed that the average on-site affordable housing contribution was highest for developments between 1-10 storeys at 29.1 per cent, with a slightly lower level of affordable housing contribution found in developments between 11-20 and 21-30 storeys, and a more noticeable drop in average contributions for developments over 30 storeys. These findings support Knight Frank's step-change cost theory, in which the associated construction costs for taller buildings over 30 stories impact on their viability (2012). In addition, results from a linear regression analysis, indicated that both density and the size of application were less deterministic in the provision of affordable housing than height, confirming that height is the strongest determinant of affordable housing of these metrics.

Furthermore, when payment *in lieu* figures were considered, the findings revealed that the average affordable contribution per unit decreases markedly between the 1-10 storey and the 21-30 storey developments. These figures indicate that if on-site and off-site affordable housing contributions are taken together, the gap between the total affordable housing contribution between the lower-rise (1-10 storey) developments and taller developments (11-20 and 21-30 storey) is greater still. Not only does the proportion of on-site affordable housing decrease with height, but so does the payment in lieu for off-site affordable housing for developments between 1-30 storeys. The results also found that tall building developments of over 40 storeys offered a greater proportion of their affordable housing contribution off-site than lower-rise developments, even though this

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1 The building typology classifications
2 A graph showing percentages of on-site affordable housing units, the number of floors, and application types
3 The location of the 855 applications reviewed in the study.

approach is only deemed acceptable 'in exceptional circumstances' (*Affordable Housing and Viability SPG*, Mayor of London 2017).

TOWERS, CLUSTERS AND OTHER TYPOLOGIES

The applications were split into one of seven typology classifications: cluster, terrace, mixed typology without tower, linear block, villa block, mixed typology with tower, and tower. The findings revealed that the tower typology had the lowest level of affordable housing contribution at an average of 20 per cent affordable housing. This was followed by the cluster typology at 25 per cent, and mixed typology with tower at 26 per cent, when measuring the affordable housing average of total units. Notably, these typologies have the highest and lowest residential density averages, suggesting that developments with the highest and lowest densities achieved sub-optimal affordable housing contributions. Conversely, the typologies with the highest proportion of affordable housing were the terrace typology at 33 per cent and 38 per cent, depending on how affordable housing is measured, followed by the linear block, indicating the potential of a density-height 'sweet spot' in relation to affordable housing. The proportion of low-cost units was the lowest in the tower typology.

IMPACT OF RECOMMENDATION DATE

Notably, a key influencing factor in the average affordable housing contribution was the year in which an application was recommended for approval. Findings from this study showed that the average affordable percentage of applications with buildings over 20 storeys increased from an average of 11 per cent affordable housing in 2011 to 32 per cent for the first quarter of 2020, positively indicating the impact of strengthened affordable housing and viability planning policy since 2017.

IMPACT OF LOCATION

In examining applications with buildings of 20 storeys and over, counter to expectations, the average affordable housing in tall buildings did not vary significantly by location. While there was a slight decrease in on-site affordable housing contribution in lower value areas, the average affordable percentage of total units was broadly similar in both Inner and Outer London. Given the

lower residential sales values in the majority of Outer London, these results do not appear to support the notion that affordable housing contributions are considerably lower in lower value areas. Nevertheless, this may have been due to sales values, even in the same postcode, varying considerably as value bands were not originally intended to be used geographically.

MAIN USE CLASS AND TYPE OF APPLICATION

When analysing the affordable housing contribution of different types of application, there were a number of different types of applications that achieved higher affordable housing proportions than others. Most notably, applications subject to a Mayoral call-in, estate regeneration applications, compact-living schemes, and those that received GLA grant funding, all included on average the highest levels of affordable housing in tall buildings, demonstrating the influence of these factors. In addition, non-residential-led tall building applications over 40 storeys were found to provide higher levels of affordable housing than similar applications that were residential-led. This may be due to non-residential uses such as hotels, offices or student accommodation being able to subsidise additional on-site affordable housing.
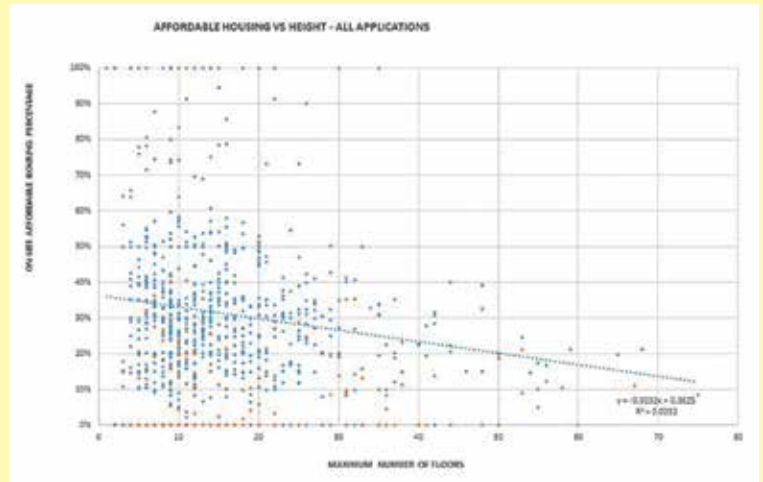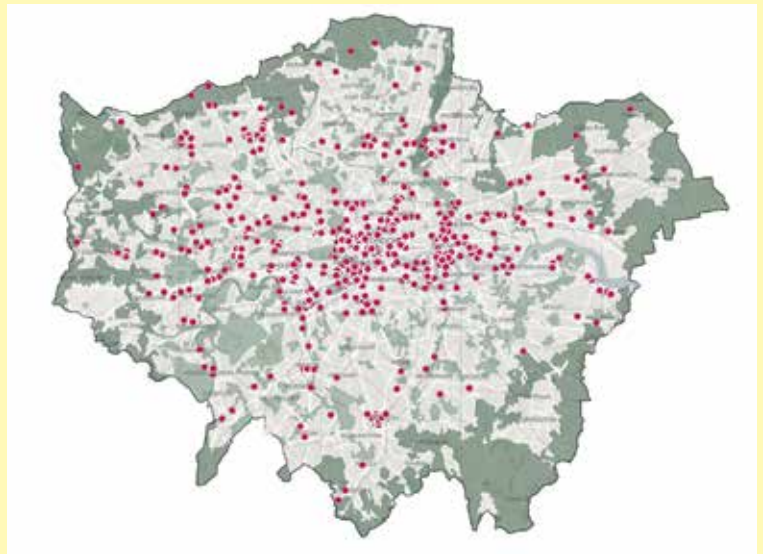
COMPLETION RATES AND HEIGHT

Lastly, using completion data from the LDD, this study found a negative correlation between building height and the completion status of referable applications. While the proportion of completed 1-10 storey applications was found to be 39 per cent, the proportion decreased to 17 per cent for 21-30 stories and 0 per cent for developments over 51 storeys. Furthermore, the proportion of applications lapsed, withdrawn/refused, not started or awaiting a decision increases with height.

This study's findings highlight the correlation between building heights and their affordable housing contribution. While there has been an increase in affordable housing contributions in more recent permissions, these findings validate the challenging viability implications of building higher. Results also indicate that homes in taller buildings are less likely to be delivered. With the need for more affordable housing becoming increasingly apparent, it is critical that policy makers recognise the impact of building heights on affordable housing. ●

Alan Smithies
This research was undertaken as part of a MSC in Urban Design & City Planning at the Bartlett School of Planning, UCL
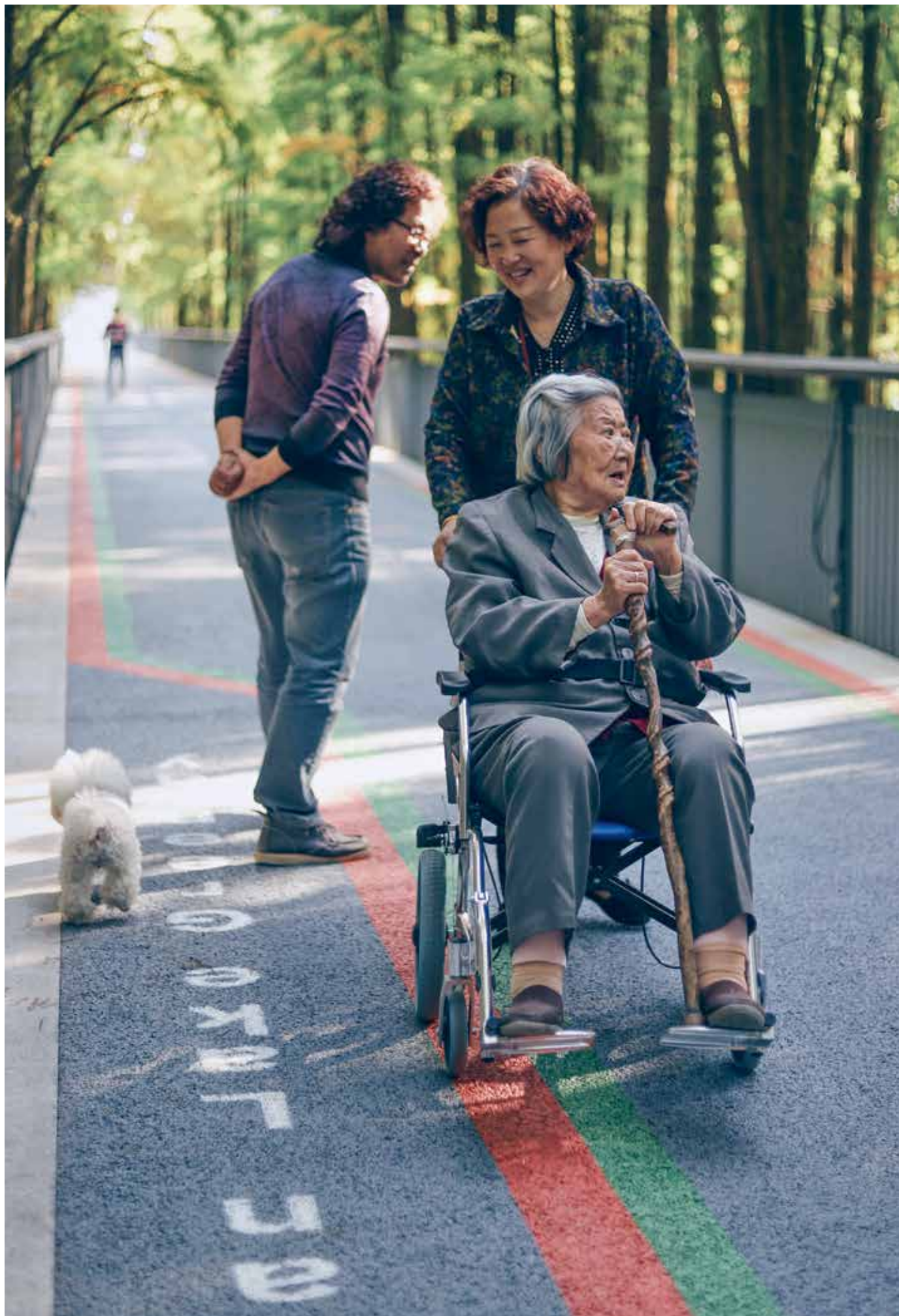
Enjoying a linear park. Photograph by Raychan on Unsplash

Design for an Ageing Population

The ageing of populations, i.e. the increased proportion of older people within society as a whole, is often discussed in terms of the challenge that it presents to society. Statistics show ever-increasing proportions of older age cohorts. For example in 2018 the number of people across the globe over the age of 65 outnumbered those under the age of five for the first time in history; and, in 2036 it is estimated that one in four of the UK's population will be over 65. The numbers are significant, but they are sometimes used to paint a simple picture of ageing, couched in terms of physical and cognitive decline, increased biomedical needs and a costly care-burden on society.

These are undoubtedly important concerns, however the experience of older age is more diverse than this depiction. Thanks to advances in public health and medical science, many of us are living longer, and in much better health, although differences related to geography, ethnicity, gender and wealth do remain. Many older people continue to make positive contributions to their communities, for example by continuing to work, spending time volunteering or supporting their families, or through local social networks. Thus ageing populations are not a burden but an opportunity for towns and cities, with important social and economic benefits.

This issue of *Urban Design* seeks to explore positive design responses to this opportunity. It could not be more timely; 2021 is the start of the United Nations' Decade of Healthy Ageing, which is based on a vision of a world in which all people can live long and healthy lives. The authors of the articles here explore a wide range of opportunities for the planning and design of urban environments, all of which contribute to this vision in some way, ranging in scale from homes to streets, and from neighbourhoods to cities.

These opportunities are in part a result of the notion of being 'old' changing dramatically in modern history. I take this as a starting point in my framing article, discussing the differentiation of old age resulting from socio-demographic changes, and setting the scene by highlighting demographic trends related to ageing, both globally and in the UK.

One of the most important design approaches that has emerged in the 21st century is the WHO's Age-Friendly City and Community movement, which now has over 700 cities in 39 countries. A leading example of its application is the city of Toyama in Japan. Amber Roberts explores how Toyama has successfully applied the WHO's multifaceted age-friendly approach, and what we can learn for application in other towns and cities. Greyson Clark also considers design for ageing in a multifaceted way, via four themes – autonomy and independence; health and well-being; social connectedness; security and resilience. He describes a range of strategies for each that can be embedded within area-wide planning and design strategies for communities.

The theme of communities continues in George Lee's article. Her research shows that across all ages, the majority of people wish to live in intergenerational communities, rather than age-siloed ones. She explains her conceptual model for creating intergenerational communities, as applied through her work on Ebbsfleet Garden City. Older people's relationships with their communities is a theme in Bettina Werner's article. Bettina has undertaken in-depth research into how seniors themselves perceive age-friendliness in the city of Copenhagen. She explores the diversity of the ageing experience that the research uncovered.

The importance of creating opportunities for social connections is a common theme. Nick Tyler examines the history and science behind sociality, and using results from his laboratory research work at UCL, he explains how to embed sociality in urban spaces. The social use of urban spaces relies on access to those spaces, hence accessibility for all is vital, and something that Clemens Beyer and Wolfgang Wasserburger explore. They consider how accessibility should be considered in terms of creating equal conditions for all ages and abilities, and propose a pattern-based approach to design to achieve this. Housing that is a good fit for us as we age is essential, and is an important area of design focus and research for many architects and designers. Rory Olcayto draws out design principles from third age housing projects that his practice has delivered, explaining that a wider application of these principles can help create more resilient communities for all, post-pandemic.

The relationship of the planning system to the delivery of such housing is considered by Tim Spencer. He asks whether the planning system in the UK is inherently ageist and argues that town-centre retirement communities can add vitality, rather than detract from it. Finally, Jon Rallings further explores the planning context for developing retirement communities in the UK. He explains how retirement communities have a bigger part to play in providing housing options for older people and that relatively small changes to planning policy can support their delivery.

Population ageing has profound and diverse implications for society, including many positives. However, older people are often marginalised in urban environments, with many cities imagined and structured with a younger, working age demographic in mind. Moreover, design for ageing populations can sometimes be reduced to biomedical needs related to frailty. The intention here is to provide insights that go beyond this frame of reference, to provide inspiration and embed this in urban design practice.●

Richard Crappsley, guest topic editor and Principal Urban Designer, Steer

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The Evolution of Old Age

Richard Crappsley examines how the notion of old age has changed in modern history

In their song *Older*, the band They Might Be Giants proclaim 'You're older than you've ever been, and now you're even older... and now you're older still'. Of course we are all inexorably ageing, but we don't tend to think about it as something happening right now to all of us. Design for ageing is design for people who are 'older'. Older than what though? The chronological age when old age begins cannot be universally defined because it differs according to the socio-cultural context. The World Health Organisation (WHO) typically refers to 65 years and over as old age, but also says it will vary by country. In the UK ageing-related literature refers to various age cohorts from 50 years and up. There is also a confusing variety of terms used here and around the world: aged, older, elders, elderly, seniors, senior citizens and more.

DIFFERENTIATION

Notwithstanding the difficulty of defining a chronological age when old age begins, there has undoubtedly been a remarkable change in the characterisation of 'old' since the early 20th century. In 1974, the American gerontologist Bernice Neugarten identified young-old as a new stage of life, similar to the historical emergence of life stages like childhood, adolescence and middle age. British social historian Peter Laslett developed Neugarten's ideas into the Third Age theory. Laslett highlighted huge shifts in age composition and life expectancy between the late 1800s to the 1950s in the developed world, facilitated by improved social arrangements, nutrition, living standards, health care and medical technologies. In parallel in many countries, there were increases in incomes along with

1 Nathan Phillips Square, Toronto, Canada. Photograph by Alex Perri on Unsplash

the introduction of state welfare and pensions (e.g. the 1908 Old Age Pensions Act, then the State Pension via the 1946 National Insurance Act in the UK).

This combination of extended personal longevity and improved socio-economic conditions helped to establish retirement as a life event. Deane Simpson (2015) describes how the increasing dominance of retirement as an institution, along with population ageing produced the young-old demographic cohort. This is differentiated from the middle-aged by the event of retirement, and from the old-old by generally being in good health, mobile and independent, and also largely free of education, employment and child-care responsibilities. Moreover the young-old are characterised as active and independent, in contrast to enfeebled and dependent older people of previous generations.

RETIREMENT

Retirement as a life event has become embedded in developed nations since the 1950s, and most of us expect to retire. However, there is no longer a single model of retirement; the notion of a

defined age where your work life comes to a hard stop has gone. Retirement ages are rising in many countries due to changes in state pensions, but people are also behaving differently. In the UK, 25 per cent of people 'unretire' within five years of retiring, i.e. change their minds and resume some form of work. Others undertake partial retirement by reducing working hours and responsibilities. The need for income to maintain lifestyles is a major reason; however it is often also about an ongoing sense of purpose, structure, sustaining social connections, learning, or new experiences.

Historically, the emergence of retirement paralleled a gradual shift in living arrangements for older people, from living in larger multigenerational households to smaller single-genera-tional households. One outcome of this was dedicated retirement communities appearing from the mid-20th century onwards either as bespoke developments marketed for the young-old, or informally arising over time (a.k.a. Naturally Occurring Retire-ment Communities or NORCs).

POPULATION AGEING
Population ageing – the demographic skew towards higher proportions of older people – continues at an increasing pace in the 21st century. Globally there have been increases in life expec-tancy at birth and improvements in survival rates at older ages, coupled with decreases in fertility in most countries. Almost every country in the world is now experiencing growth in both the size and the proportion of older people in its population.

The United Nations (UN, 2019) estimates that globally there are 703 million people aged 65 years and over, and forecasts that this will double to 1.5 billion by 2050. This cohort increased its share of the world population from 6 per cent in 1990, to 9 per cent in 2019, and is expected to rise to 16 per cent by 2050. In Europe, this share is expected to be even higher: 28 per cent of the population by 2050, up from 19 per cent in 2020. The number of people aged 80 and over is projected to triple globally, from 143 million in 2019 to 426 million in 2050.

In Great Britain, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) reports that there were 11.9 million people aged 65 years and over in 2018 and 18 per cent of the total population. This com-pares to 5.3 million or 10.8 per cent in 1950. By 2050 the ONS forecasts that there will be 17.7 million people in this cohort, 24.8 per cent of the population. Those aged 85 years and over are the fastest-growing age group, projected to double from 1.6 million in 2018 to 3.6 million people by 2050 or five per cent of the population.

Analysis by the RIBA and the Centre for Towns (2019) highlights important spatial considerations for these ageing trends, noting that populations within towns are getting older, faster than in the rest of the UK. Over half of the UK's population (35 million people) lives in a town, far more than live in one of the UK's 12 Core Cities. There is an observable trend of younger people moving to cities, being replaced in towns by older residents. This is leading to a challenging situation where small towns and villages are essentially becoming larger scale NORCs, a trend projected to continue over the next 20 years. The old age dependency ratio which measures the number of people aged 65 and over for every person in the 16-64 working age bracket, shows that in villages, old age dependency will have doubled by 2040. The report's authors anticipate huge impacts in such places, including rising demand for public services and the types of jobs which can be supported.

LONGEVITY
Projections similar to these crop up in the news as 'demographic time bombs', often framed with reference to old age needs and dependency and the associated socio-economic impacts. In addition to the number of older people increasing, they are also living longer. Life expectancy has been increasing year on year due to various factors, including medical and public health advances. Global average life expectancy at birth is now 72.3


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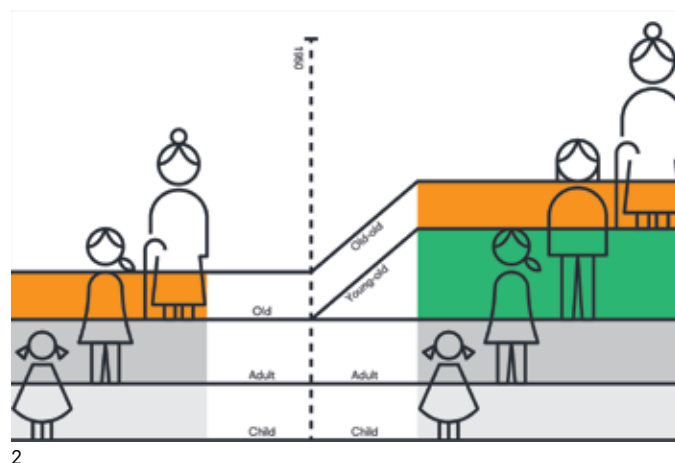
years, with women typically living five years longer than men (74.7 and 69.9 years respectively). A person who reaches 65 years in 2015-2020 can expect to live an average additional 17 years. By 2045-2050, that figure is expected to increase to 19 years.

In fact, the UN now measures prospective age (the number of years that people are expected to live in the future) instead of chronological age (the number of years that people have already lived). Instead of counting the number of years someone has lived (and whether or not they're at least 65), the threshold of being old can be linked to the number of expected years of life left based on demographic trends (typically 15 years). Economists Sanderson and Scherbov (2008) who developed the prospective

2 The changing differentiation of old age. Image by Steer based on Simpson, 2015
3 The change in old age dependency ratios for UK villages, medium-sized towns, and cities. Image by Steer based on RIBA and Centre for Towns, 2019
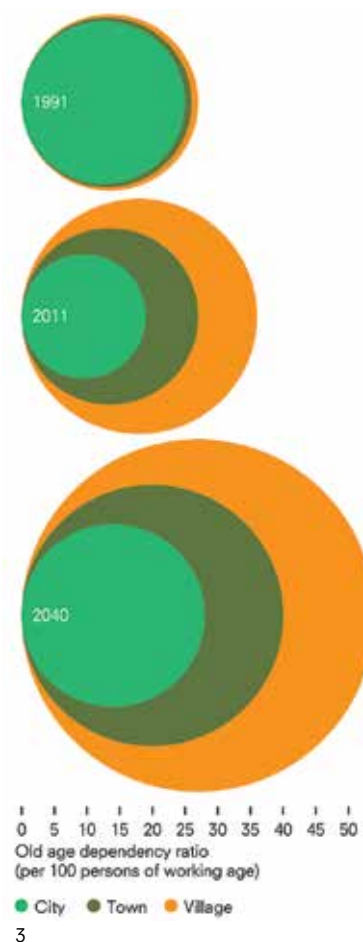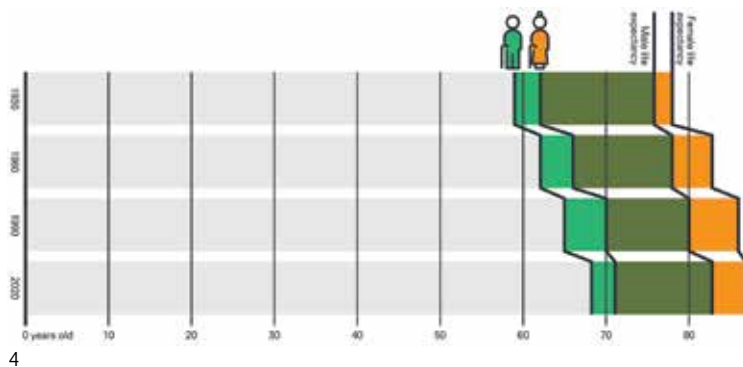
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The aim is to foster healthy ageing and improve the lives of older people and their families and communities

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ageing theory have used it to show that expected increases in life expectancy in the coming years push back the threshold for old age later in many countries. They show that there is little change until much further into the future compared to chronological ageing.

But if you're no longer statistically defined as old, do you still have the health needs of someone who is old? Importantly, in addition to living longer, it appears that people are generally healthier at later ages than in previous generations (although there are still inequalities based on wealth, ethnicity and geography). For example, ONS analysis (2019) shows that in Great Britain, men aged 70 in 2017 have similar levels of poor general health as men aged 65 in 1997. Even more strikingly, women aged 70 in 2017 have similar levels of limiting long-standing illness as those aged 60 in 1981. So at these ages, people will be less needy and dependent on care than previous generations. This suggests that while undoubtedly significant, the ageing of populations is perhaps not quite the time bomb that is sometimes referred to.

URBAN DESIGN AND AGEING

At the end of reading this article you are older than you've ever been. However you're also likely to live longer and be healthy for longer than ever before. Those who are young-old are less likely

to be (fully) retired, and more likely to be active, independent and in good health.

The nature of old is differentiated; ageing is a continuum, and not an event. Urban designers should be more engaged with ageing in this sense. Design for ageing has largely been focused on the contained settings of homes and age-segregated institutions, often on micro-scale physical measures in buildings and streets that apply a bio-medical frame of reference and treat ageing as problem to be solved (Handler, 2014). These aspects are important but we need to give more consideration to wider urban settings and infrastructure: the physical, social, and cultural. The WHO's *Global Age-Friendly Cities* guide (2007), and the Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities are valuable resources which broaden the scope of ageing considerations. The WHO approach is not perfect – Buffel, Handler, and Phillipson (2019) argue for more explicit consideration of inequalities and giving older people more agency in design – nevertheless it goes beyond what many of us currently consider.

In December 2020, the UN announced 2021 to 2030 as the Decade of Healthy Ageing. The aim is to foster healthy ageing and improve the lives of older people and their families and communities by addressing various areas for action, including: changing how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing; and, ensuring that communities foster the abilities of older people. As urban designers let's make a robust contribution to this goal. ●

Richard Crappsley, guest topic editor, and Principal Urban Designer, Steer
Images drawn by Emily Whiteside, Senior Graphic Designer, Steer.

4 How the threshold for being old changes due to increased life expectancy. Image by Steer based on chart by FlowingData
5 WHO's eight domains of an age-friendly city. Image by Steer based on WHO guide

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Creating Age-friendly Cities

Greyson Clark describes strategies to design for older people's needs

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Cities around the world face two interconnected demographic trends. Not only must they contend with a larger population due to urbanisation, but older people are becoming an increasingly large proportion of the population. The built environment must adapt to meet the changing needs of ageing residents; yet in too many places, this change is not happening fast enough.

As designers, builders, policy-makers and other shapers of the built environment, we have a key role to play, and we must prepare. This article is a call to built environment professionals to plan, design, build and operate cities in a way that enhances and supports the lives of older people. Building on a report I co-authored, *Cities Alive: Designing for ageing communities* (2019), it lays out a framework to conceptualise the needs of older people and provides strategies to help built environment professionals to meet these needs.

OLDER PEOPLE'S NEEDS

By thinking about the needs of older people, we can evaluate and improve design, programmes and policies. While there are many ways to think about the needs of older people (and studying different approaches can only make for a more nuanced understanding), we can organise the needs of older people into four categories: autonomy and independence; health and well-being; social connectedness; and security and resilience.

1 Public transport accessible places are a key need for older people
All images copyright of Arup, used with permission.

At first glance, these four sets of needs seem as if they could apply to everyone, and this is intentional. It underscores the fact that people often have similar needs regardless of age, and it encourages designers to practice empathetic, human-centred design. But they take on additional meaning and nuance when considered in the context of an older person. Older people are often more vulnerable, and designers need to understand these additional challenges.

● **Autonomy and independence** focuses on the desire of older people to control and lead their day-to-day lives according to their own desires. Many older people face challenges in maintaining this control, ranging from travel and mobility to the design of homes and public spaces. For example, if an older person lives in a car-dependent community but is unable to drive, their freedom to move about, access neighbourhood destinations and stay connected to their communities, can be significantly curtailed.

● **Health and well-being** encompasses a complex set of needs related to physical and mental health, and an overall sense of satisfaction with one's quality of life. Older people need good health and a positive sense of well-being, but certain aspects of ageing can make this more difficult to achieve. For example, if older people do not live near a green space or health centre, it is it more difficult for them to regularly visit these places and share their positive societal benefits.

● **Social connectedness** is about being part of a network of family, friends, acquaintances and civic life. Without it, people can feel lonely, ignored, forgotten or excluded. Older people have unique needs which must be considered when designing, building and running the built environment. For example, displacement can be especially catastrophic for older people who are severed from the communities where they have spent their entire lives, losing access to social connections and support networks just when they may come to rely more on them to stay safe, happy and healthy.

● **Security and resilience** concerns the physical safety of older people, many of whom will be more vulnerable as a consequence of ageing. They are more susceptible to the dangers posed by climate change which exacerbates heat

autonomy and independence

Create walkable environments

Ensure access to transport

Enable ageing-in-place

Provide wayfinding and city information

health and wellbeing

Ensure access to health services

Provide space for exercise and recreation

Make connections to nature

social connectedness

Fight loneliness and isolation

Promote inclusion and civic participation

Create intergenerational spaces

Provide options for older people to stay in their communities

security and resilience

Prepare for extreme climates

Design safe streets and public spaces

Promote dementia safety

2

Having time and spaces to experience the natural world – plants, animals, water, wind – has intricate and profound benefits on health and well-being

waves, severe weather and other environmental threats. Older people with reduced mobility or dementia can also find that the built environment no longer meets their needs. A commonplace example is that older people have difficulty crossing the street within the time provided by the pedestrian traffic light signal.

WHAT PROFESSIONALS CAN DO
Our report lays out 14 strategies that can be used, and given the substantial overlap between the needs of older people and wider society, implementing these will bring benefits for everyone.

Supporting autonomy and independence
● **Enable ageing-in-place:** if an older person's physical abilities change, they can find themselves facing a tough decision: carry on living in the home which has fond memories and emotional value (perhaps requiring expensive accessibility modifications), or move to a home that can better accommodate them. This hard decision need not be the case; designers and builders can understand and incorporate the full range of physical abilities for the places and homes that they create. In the UK, the Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust has an innovative housing typology called the two-bedroom bungalow. They are designed to be totally liveable even if residents can no longer use stairs to access the upper floor. This upper floor has a bedroom and bathroom and can be converted into a space for a live-in carer or visitors.
● **Provide wayfinding and city information:** sharing information before and during a journey can make the experience safe and pleasant. It helps people to plan ahead and can also serve

2 The 14 strategies to support autonomy and independence

as aids once the journey has begun. Traditional wayfinding such as road signs and neighbourhood maps with popular destinations shown, have become increasingly common. However, the palette is larger than this and includes digital tools, public art, landmarks, lighting and other design elements. A team at the University of Washington in Seattle, USA, has developed Accessmap.io which provides an online navigation service, similar to Google or Apple Maps, but so that users can create and save a profile and look for routes with the gentlest hills and avoiding raised kerbs.

Supporting health and well-being
● **Ensure access to health services:** like all of us, older people need access to healthcare for regular check-ups and emergency services. But an older person's access to these services can be compromised if they are not within walking distance or if there are no transport options to these destinations. We can circumvent many of these accessibility problems by co-locating health services alongside the places where older people live. Kampung Admiralty in Singapore is a good example of this type of thoughtful design. Opened in 2018, the large, mixed use building includes general housing, flats designed specifically for seniors, healthcare facilities, a grocery store, a bank, outdoor gardens, and an active ageing hub, which maintains a schedule of social and recreational activities.
● **Make connections to nature:** having time and spaces to experience the natural world – plants, animals, water, wind – has intricate and profound benefits on health and well-being. Cities can support existing and create new green and blue spaces – parks, gardens, tree-lined streets, waterways – and incorporate natural elements such as green walls and rooftop habitats into the design of new buildings. This is especially important for older people and anyone with mental or physical health challenges. In Portland, USA, the Portland Memory Garden is designed especially for older people with mental health challenges such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease. The garden's design is specifically suited for their needs and includes paths without dead ends, small landmarks for orientation, and an entrance higher than the rest of the garden to allow visitors to get acquainted with the space before entering it.

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Supporting social connectedness

● **Create intergenerational spaces:** when people of different ages come together, it can help to create a sense of mutual understanding and shared experiences. For older people, it offers another opportunity to combat loneliness and to feel valued. Humanitas is a care home with 160 residents in the Netherlands which provides free on-site housing to six university students in exchange for a small contribution of time to look after the well-being of the residents (Prasad 2019). The arrangements are mutually beneficial, and in addition to the financial motivations, many of the students reported significant personal benefits from the relationships formed with residents (Yates 2017).

● **Provide options for older people to stay in their communities:** many older people wish to remain in their current home or at the very least within their community, thus allowing them to retain the social connections and support that they provide. There are many ways to achieve this, ranging from financial support which offsets rising housing costs, to building a wide variety of housing types to meet different lifestyles, needs and financial means. Amongst other initiatives, Vancouver City Council in Canada supports the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), which are smaller homes located on the same site as a larger primary home. These create substantial flexibility for different living arrangements. An older person can downsize and live in an ADU, or an older homeowner can supplement their income by letting the ADU on their property. ADUs also provide a place for carers or family members to stay when visiting. The city has overhauled the planning approval process for this type of housing, and has incorporated it as a key element in its city-wide housing strategy.

Supporting security and resilience

● **Design safe streets and public spaces:** older people need to be able to move about safely and free from risk of injury or death as a result of unsafe roadways. Cities can implement street and intersection redesigns to improve dangerous places and install supportive pedestrian infrastructure such as level pavements and kerbs. The New York City Department of Transportation implemented a programme called Safe Streets for Seniors in 2008. Although senior citizens make up only about 13 per cent of the city's population, they account for almost 40 per cent of traffic fatalities. The city used public engagement and data analysis to identify the most dangerous places and then redesigned them to be safer. With 182 project areas, the city has measured a 15 per cent decline in pedestrian injuries, and some projects have seen decreases of as much as 68 per cent.

● **Promote dementia safety:** people with dementia have an additional and overlapping set of needs which is more complex than the scope of this article. Nevertheless, built environment professionals have a role to play in creating places that can help them to lead safe and satisfying lives. The Hogeweyk dementia village in the Netherlands serves around 150 adults with

Examples of supporting strategies:
3 Outdoor spaces
4 Ageing-in place
5 Dementia village

dementia, who live in 23 homes designed and built to create a village-like setting complete with shops and cafes. Residents have the assistance they need and are able to live with a certain degree of autonomy. They can visit shops, go out to eat with friends, have a drink at a pub and generally continue to live a fulfilling life.

Concluding with what I see as the key point for all of us working in fields connected to the built environment, I would re-emphasise the importance of empathetic human-centred design. This applies to designing, building, operating, crafting policy, and every aspect of our urban systems. We all have a role to play, and I hope that these strategies can serve as a starting point for anyone to adopt the lens of ageing in their practice. I also stress that the needs of older people have substantial overlaps with the needs of all users of the built environment; older people may also have some unique needs or a different facet to a need. Together, we can create better places where all of us can achieve happy and fulfilling lives. ●

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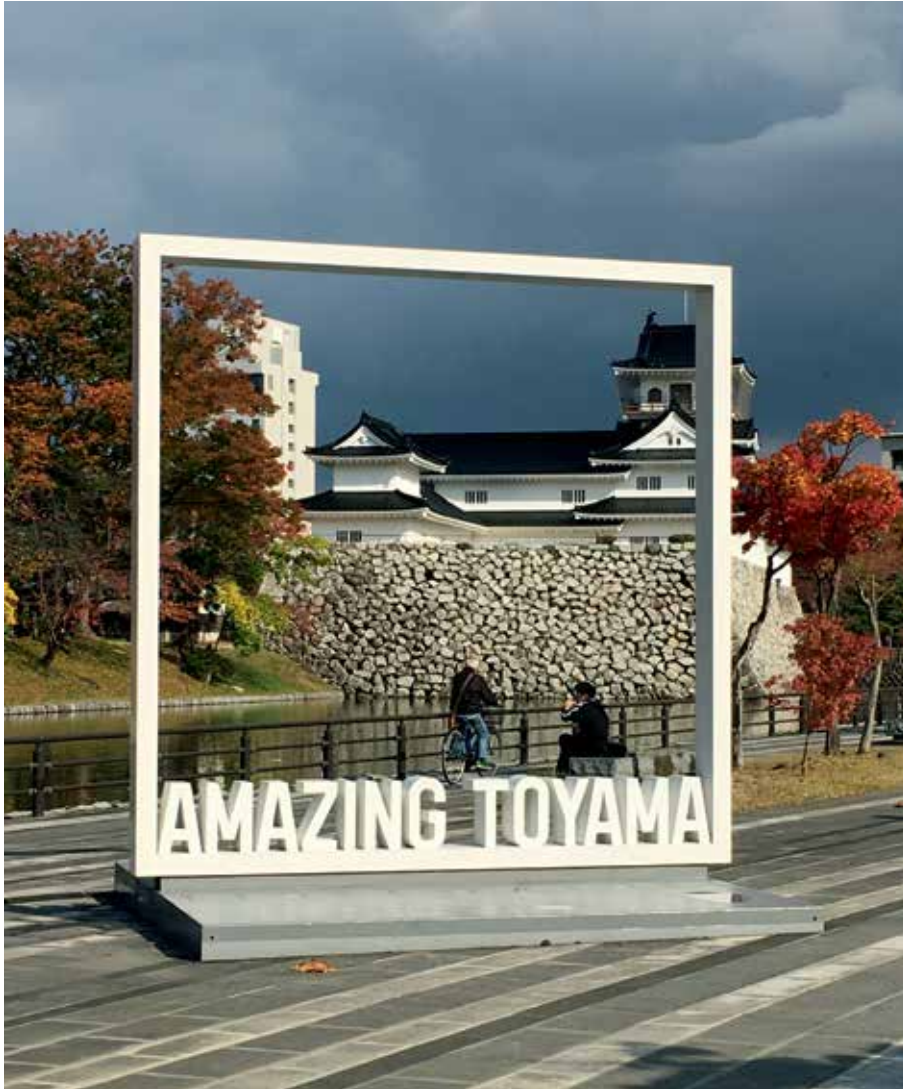
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Age-Friendly Urban Policy and Design in a Japanese City

Amber Roberts reports on the city of Toyama's multi-faceted approach

Toyama's age-friendly city initiative exemplifies the role that city planning and urban design can have in supporting socio-economic policy directed at healthy ageing. In 2007 the city was faced with a demographic crisis arising from a rapidly declining and ageing population, which outpaced Japan's national average – the fastest ageing society in the world. Toyama faced significant challenges in catering for its ageing society, from environmental challenges posed by mobility issues, visual impairment and hearing loss, to addressing societal and economic issues, such as increased pressure on healthcare facilities, employment market gaps, and reduced tax revenues leading to reduced public service funding. The city's leaders decided to take a pro-active and multi-layered approach to 'create a safe, healthy and comfortable environment' for older generations within an economically sustainable urban policy. As a result of the strategy, Toyama has cultivated a variety of unique social-economic benefits to healthy ageing, and created

1 City branding in Toyama, Japan

the basis for further ambitious plans to become climate-resilient.

CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

Toyama lies on the west coast of Japan with a current population of 418,000 and a forecast of 20 per cent population decrease by 2045. The city's population began to decline sharply following a peak in 2010; in addition, the average age of its inhabitants was increasing significantly, with 30 per cent of the population expected to be of retirement age by 2030. These factors and the reduction in working-age population led to a contraction of the economy and a corresponding reduction in tax revenues. Furthermore, the dwindling municipal income has led to a lack of investment in public facilities and public transport, while the increasing demographic age has raised health and social care costs, creating a perfect storm. Increased demands were placed on the municipality while they suffered a reduced capacity to respond.

Facing a stark urban crisis, the municipality of Toyama took drastic action to alleviate the accelerating problems and transform the challenge into an opportunity for sustainable development. The strategy was wide-ranging and cross-sectoral, addressing specific environmental, social and economic issues by adapting the built environment to better serve the specific needs of the demographic, while also supporting public and private health and social care initiatives, and underpinning the city's economic response. The strategy was implemented in 2013 and has since become a global exemplar of age-friendly design and policy-making.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

In 2007 the layout of the city was impeding healthy lifestyles amongst the older population, and intensifying subsequent health and social care issues. An in-depth analysis of the complexities of the relationship between the built form and the demographic issues found that the low population density of the city centre and the dispersed population across the wider urban sprawl were linked to rising administrative costs in sustaining infrastructure for roads, water, sewage and wider public services. Uneven public transport provision led to a high private car dependency, and consequently lower rates of pedestrian travel, a fundamental form of exercise in maintaining health in older age. Combined with the knock-on effects of low density and decentralised services, this was estimated to have caused a 15 per cent increase in CO_2 emissions between 1990 and 2005. To combat these effects the urban strategy was based on the 'compact city' concept, and implemented through targeted urban changes

that specifically addressed low density development in Toyama. The compact city approach aimed to quell the scattered population and resulting isolation of older individuals, to consolidate resources into the centre and to reduce dependence on private transport. A three-stage process was defined as:

● Rationalise and interconnect public transport services
● Build and relocate cultural facilities and services along public transport lines
● Revitalise the city centre.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Toyama's planners analysed the existing transport networks of the city and the distribution of both elderly residents and specifically clusters of single elderly residents, who were deemed to be at highest risk of isolation, and those in need of care and support. From this they determined key pathways for a new Light Rail Transit (LRT) system to connect users with services in the city centre. The LRT also connected to local bus routes and the national *Shinkansen* network of trains.

The design of stations and tramlines included flat surface access where the platform and vehicle entrance are completely level, to make access for those with mobility issues easier. Subsidies were introduced to further encourage regular use of the LRT with day tickets for seniors costing less than £1, making the routes accessible and affordable for the majority of people. Between LRT stops the local authority redesigned the streets to create a 'safe, secure and comfortable walking space to encourage outings on foot' (Mori 2018) facilitating regular exercise through a system of pedestrian routes. This included a system of linear and pockets parks, providing accessible toilets and spacious and level pathways, encouraging the use of walking trolleys and adapted bikes or trikes, and increasing visual interest along routes with sculptures and art works from local collections.

The parks are located approximately every 250m, and are of various sizes across the urban area. Each of the parks has seating, drinking water, shelter and accessible toilets, and suggested walking/running trails of varied lengths. The physical infrastructure of the city encourages the use of public transport, walking and socialising, creating an environment in which it is easier to maintain physical health and to reduce isolation. As the preventative measures used in Toyama concern public space and are freely accessible, the interventions also help to reduce the vast health inequities that face older generations.

The second aspect of Toyama's compact city strategy was to relocate cultural and welfare facilities along the new transport routes and revitalise the city centre. A new museum and city library was constructed at an intersection of the LRT, providing state-of-the-art facilities for the city's residents. These included medical facilities such as the Kadokawa Preventative Care Centre and the Ikedaya Yasubei Shoten, a herbal medicine pharmacy with cafeteria that promotes healthy eating for the elderly.

PREVENTATIVE HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

The Kadokawa Preventative Care Centre and Machinaka General Care Centres (a multi-generational and multi-functional care facility) focus on increasing the resilience of older people to maintain physical activity and their health and well-being. The centres offer a wide range of care and advice to increase the independence of seniors and help to prevent declining health, which results in moving to full-time care facilities. Both housed in defunct primary schools, these medical facilities create alternative uses for places dedicated to schooling and childcare required during the baby-boom period. The centres provide health and social care services not offered by standard medical systems, such as access to nutritionists, community cafes, vocational adult learning facilities, and general health advice. The aim of the preventative care centres is to increase health and mobility into older age, build social capital, reduce dependency on emergency services, and control administrative costs.

The Ikedaya Yasubei Shouten is located in the city centre


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2 Toyama: wide flat streets allow a range of mobility types away from the traffic, creating a safer environment to exercise
3 A statue, places to sit and accessible toilets are situated along a linear parkway in the city centre

close to the LRT system, and is a herbal medicine pharmacy that doubles up as a community centre. Customers are greeted and counselled in a friendly manner in order to prescribe the right medicine. The shop floor also sells organic and locally grown food, while the upper floor serves affordable meals based on medicinal plants. This strategy helps to make organic and nourishing food easily available to older people and to raise awareness of the importance of healthy eating in maintaining their physical resilience. While the pharmacy is based on the Japanese tradition of herbal medicine, this approach could be used elsewhere to create spaces where people are able to buy good quality affordable cooked food, eat with others, and learn about nutrition and the importance of eating well in later life, within a comforting and welcoming atmosphere. The pharmacy is one of
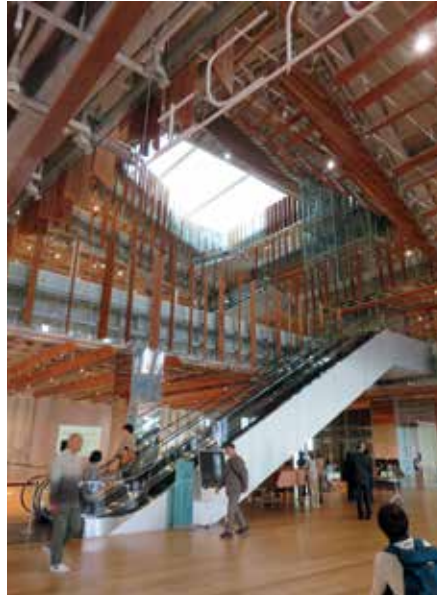
many that encourages preventative healthcare and promotes good nutrition, while linking local agricultural products and building environmental and economic sustainability into healthy ageing.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Toyama took huge steps to turn its ageing population into an opportunity, and improving the environment was the key way in which this was achieved. Building on the programme created in the city centre, the city government looked to the wider region of Toyama to find further opportunities. The landscape surrounding the city had traditionally been an agricultural belt, which was also experiencing decline due to the reduction of the working-age population. The authorities analysed the climate and soil conditions of abandoned farmland to help identify a suitable crop; the superfood egoma or *perilla frutescens* (a leafy plant containing omega-2 fatty acids) was chosen as best suiting local conditions. They sought to utilise the skills and knowledge of the retirees in the city by offering employment to senior citizens in the laboratories and factories essential in processing the superfood. The focus on superfoods also reinforced the healthy and sustainable image of Toyama. Around eighty companies, including local producers and distributors now specialise in egoma as a regional speciality, kick-starting a now thriving industry of medicinal plant production. The city has also gone further to develop a low-carbon farming model, using renewable energies including solar, geothermal heat pumps and small hydroelectric power for agricultural machinery. To further boost the social benefits, the city created a 'slow life field', where residents can rent garden space and allotments, rent any gardening equipment needed, and exchange classes providing people with gardening skills and knowledge.

RESILIENT TOYAMA

The implementation of Toyama's plan led the municipality to redefine their approach towards a more sustainable future. In 2018, ageing specialist Professor Phillipson stated that 'an age-friendly city needs to go far beyond work, housing and infrastructure to take in global factors such as climate change and pollution, to which older people are particularly vulnerable'. Following the success of Toyama's original plan in 2007, the local authority has gone on to develop an even more ambitious and wider-ranging strategy for resilience, bringing together the resources, skills and networks forged in their effort to create healthy ageing environments. The new strategy marked out a plan for climate, social and energy resilience and signed the city up to the 100 Resilient Cities International Network. By summer 2018 Toyama had already begun to construct a system of rain gardens and rain-water storage facilities in line with the 2017 plan. The 2017 plan expands the remit of design for ageing beyond individual facilities and services to the need for a safe and sustainable environment.

EFFECTS AND RESULTS

'If the environment is hostile to people on low incomes, that impacts disproportionally on older residents. Cities must not think about housing and town planning policies in isolation. Age-friendliness needs to be part of the debate about urban development' (Phillipson 2018). Through a multi-partner public-private collaborative approach the local authority implemented key urban design changes that have had positive impacts on health and wellness for ageing communities in Toyama. One study found that the introduction of the LRT was linked to an increase of 2,150 steps per person per day, which the municipality estimates will reduce annual medical costs by £500,000 (75 million JPY). By 2011 the use by elderly women of the LRT system had increased by 45 per cent, and car use was down by 10 per cent. This trend continues as the network has developed a reputation as a safe and reliable transport system. The consequent reduction in car traffic had resulted in a 16 per cent decline of CO_2 emissions by 2016, compared to the baseline in 2005. Furthermore since 2008, the number of inbound relocations to the city centre exceeded outbound relocations every year, helping to reverse population dispersal.

Since its implementation, Toyama has been recognised internationally for its efforts to support its ageing population, designated a Future City by the government in Japan, identified as one of the 100 Resilient Cities network supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, and highlighted as a SDG FutureCity in collaboration with the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies in 2018 for its work on sustainable development goals. ●

Amber Roberts, Research Fellow, Queen's University, Belfast.

In 2018 she was awarded the Mark Turnbull Travel Award by the Landscape Institute Scotland to travel to Sweden and Japan to learn more about urban design for ageing.

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1 Ebbsfleet, design ideas by Sarah Wigglesworth Architects
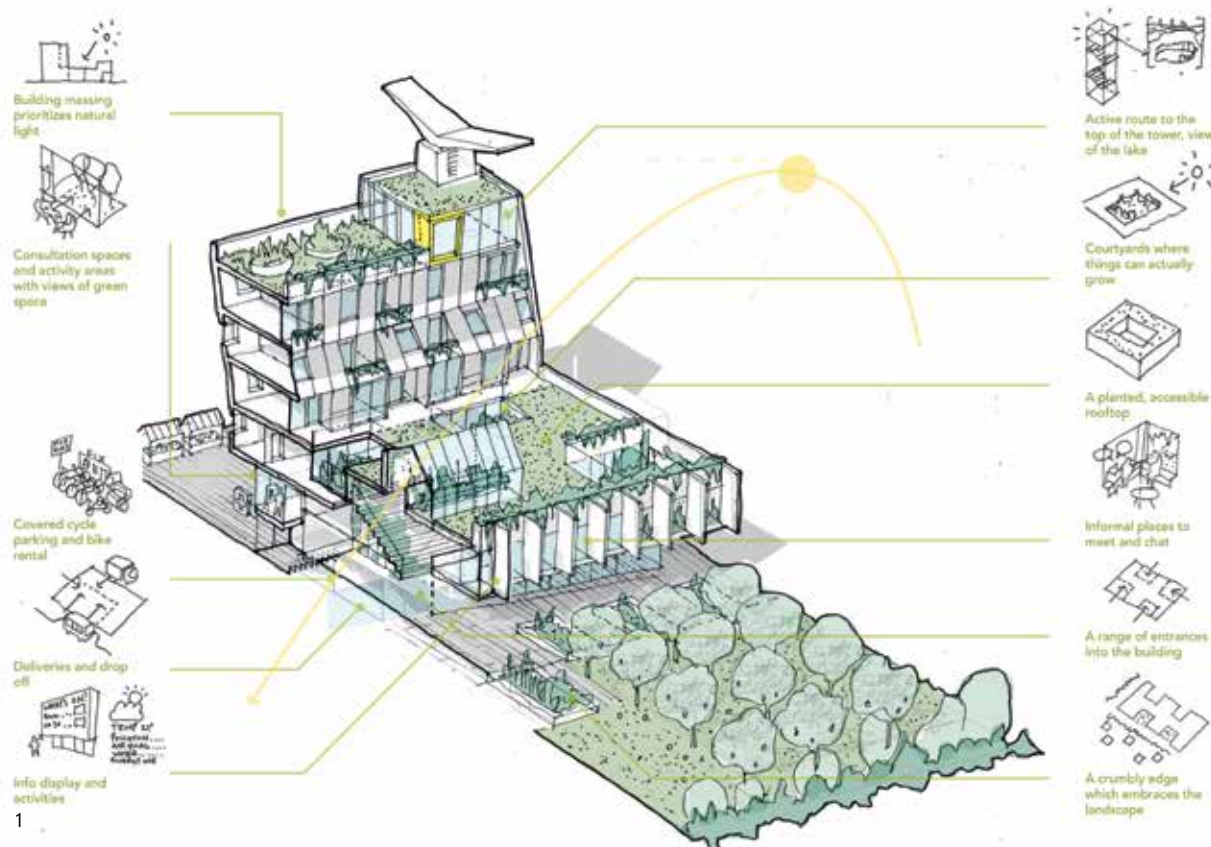
Community Design: The Key to Long, Healthy and Happy Lives

George Lee argues for more intergenerational community building

I am often asked about the link between housing and healthy ageing. Here I can talk about the importance of designing and building houses for a lifetime of transitions, designing adaptable housing with a focus on delight and not just function, rightsizing not downsizing, and the importance of much more housing choice as we age. But the real magic ingredient in keeping us living longer and healthier is not bricks and mortar, but community, not just any community, but an intergenerational community. By intergenerational community, I mean a place where people of all ages live side-by-side naturally, not a place where people are segregated into age-segregated homes, in close proximity but not blended.
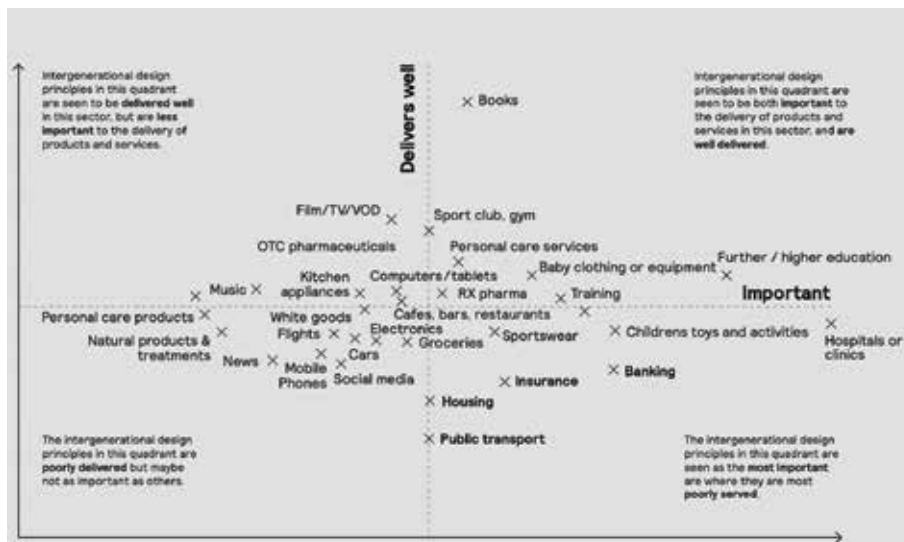
COMMUNITY

Why community? Most people are aware that diet, exercise and overall health are good predictors of how long we will live, but fewer people are aware that an active social life actually extends your life significantly. There are vast piles of academic research linking social connectedness with healthy ageing. Here are just a few examples: a large US study shows that people live 50 per cent longer if they have strong social relationships. A 10-year Australian study shows that older people with a large circle of friends were 22 per cent less likely to die during its study period, than those with fewer friends. Research by Cambridge University shows that the short interactions that we have with passing neighbours, shopkeepers and other people that we come into contact with throughout our day are one of the strongest predictors of how long we will live. Pretty compelling stuff.

Real life examples are not yet as abundant as academic research, but are more persuasive in highlighting the benefits of embedding community in the heart of urban design. One example is the Compassionate Frome project, where an army of social connectors worked closely with individuals identified by local GPs. These were often people who weren't necessarily ill, but often had no one to talk to about the life challenges that they were facing. Left unchecked, these issues would often lead to illness. The results were truly amazing: while across the whole of Somerset over the three years of the project, emergency hospital admissions increased by 29 per cent, in Frome they fell by 17 per cent.

An example of a larger city-wide initiative is Albert Lea, Minnesota in the US. The city had a big ambition to help people live longer and healthier. They were clear that they had to help residents

Intergenerational design principles in this quadrant are seen to be **delivered well** in this sector, but are **less important** to the delivery of products and services.

Intergenerational design principles in this quadrant are seen to be both **important** to the delivery of products and services in this sector, and are **well delivered**.

Delivers well

× Books

Film/TW/VOD ×
Sport club, gym
×
OTC pharmaceuticals ×
Personal care services
×
Computers/tablets ×
Baby clothing or equipment
×
Further / higher education
×
Music × ×
Kitchen appliances ×
× RX pharma
× Training **Important**
Personal care products ×
White goods ×
Electronics ×
Cafes, bars, restaurants ×
Natural products & treatments ×
Flights × ×
× Groceries
× Sportswear
× Childrens toys and activities
Hospitals or clinics
News × ×
Mobile Phones ×
× Cars
Social media
× Insurance
× Banking
× Housing
× Public transport

The intergenerational design principles in this quadrant are poorly delivered but maybe not as important as others.

The intergenerational design principles in this quadrant are seen as the most important and are where they are most poorly served.

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who worked and lived there to move around the city more easily and more naturally, to eat better, connect more, and have a more positive outlook for their local culture. Introducing city-wide initiatives, co-created with all the key stakeholders — businesses, transport, leisure, health, technology, and crucially engaging the whole community of all ages — the big vision showed amazing results in a short period of time, adding 2.9 projected years to participants' lifespans within a year of taking part in the scheme.

CHALLENGING INDUSTRY MODELS
In recent years developers and operators in the UK have started to follow the US, New Zealand and Australian models in the trend to build retirement communities. Seduced by the fact that 6.1 per cent of older people in the US live in retirement communities compared to only 0.6 per cent in the UK, developers think that they can take advantage of this seemingly untapped market. But what if we challenge this? What if the 0.6 per cent in retirement communities in the UK is not something to celebrate? Indeed, if we look a little deeper at retirement communities, we can see that they are not the attractive option that they promise to be in their glossy brochures. Although targeted at people 55+, the average resident enters the new home at age 79, more often than not with no other choice and often after a crisis like a fall or losing a partner. In our own research, The Common Land found that 84 per cent of people want to live and work with people of different ages. We prefer intergenerational communities to age-segregated retirement communities, which are clearly not the community of choice for the majority of us.

EXAMPLES AND INITIATIVES
More inspiring and innovative solutions to age-segregation can be found around the world, such as Judson Manor, a retirement community in Cleveland, Ohio in the US, which provides free housing for music students in exchange for performing concerts for the older residents. Fair House Care connects older people with a spare room and needing extra help around their house with young professionals who want to cut down the cost of living. One housing project in the Netherlands brings young mothers who cannot live with their families, to live with older residents. The older residents help the young women with small daily tasks such as babysitting and provide relationship support, while the young mums help out with shopping and cooking. These initiatives are about togetherness and community support. In every case, deep intergenerational friendships have developed to keep people connected, and live longer, healthier and happier.

We can also look to naturally occurring intergenerational communities for inspiration. There are naturally occurring retirement communities in the US (NORCS) where the combination of 50:50 proportion of older people and people of any age

2 The relationship between the importance of intergenerational design principles and how well they are delivered. Image by The Common Land

means that the community as a whole can apply for services and care to be brought to them. This means that residents can remain in their loved and connected community throughout their lives. Similarly while London's Barbican Centre was not purpose-built for ageing, it has proved to be a worthy community-orientated development. With a choice of over 141 different flat layouts for its 1,000 residents, it brings together all ages of people around the centre's shared activities.

BUILDING A NEW COMMUNITY
Over the last three years I have been working with a rich and diverse group of architects, developers, age specialists, community designers, health practitioners and technologists to look closely at how we can build in and design in community. Combined with a year-long intergenerational community engagement project of over 2,000 people within Ebbsfleet Garden City, The Common Land has been able to develop a new model for community building. It is designed to be used by architects, developers and urban designers to help to build more connected intergenerational communities, which will ultimately enable people to live longer and healthier. The Health and Longevity Community model (HALO) consists of four levels.

LEVEL 1 — MY LIFE
A community can only work if it is relevant and meaningfully connects with the individuals (residents and stakeholders) who make up that community. This is why HALO starts with individuals and puts them at the heart of the model. The primary focus is to find out more about each individual and stakeholder through a Welcome process. This is a bespoke and localised questionnaire (digital and face-to-face) designed to identify and unlock, the best opportunities to get individual members to connect in ways to meet their own social, physical, mental and cognitive goals or needs. From this we are able to identify what kind of places or services are missing or need to be expanded, e.g. better community transport, more community centres, green space, clubs, active spaces, better signage, better communications and so on.

LEVEL 2 — MY COMMUNITY IDENTITY
At this level, we look at both the past and future of the community in question. A strong sense of identity is at the core of building a successful community. Strong communities have a very clear sense of who they are, their history, where they have come from, why they exist and what they stand for. But these aspects of a community are often difficult to pin down, and as a result get overlooked, and are the reason why communities fail.

Once the brand of the community has been established, it underpins every decision that is made which affects the community, transport, housing and planning, civic infrastructure, health, education, leisure, etc. The questions 'Does this support the community vision or not?' and 'Does it help to facilitate an intergenerational connectedness?' become much easier to answer.

Using a range of qualitative and quantitative research and workshops designed by and with members of the community, we are able to define the following:
● Purpose: Why does the community exist here?
● Member identity: Who is the community for?
● Values: What is important to the residents and stakeholders as a community?
● Community Success Definition: What does good look like?
● Brand and communication: How will the community express itself and its values, in words, images and future communication approaches, and
● Develop the community story.

LEVEL 3 — COMMUNITY PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT: SHARED SERVICES

Once we have a rich body of insights and information on the needs of residents and stakeholders and what they collectively stand for and believe in, we can start connecting people. In every community there are many ways for people to connect with others, but this is very rarely done in a linked and community-wide approach. Using online and offline touch points (such as a community-wide digital platform called The Marketplace, local newspapers, community and local radio, posters, physical and digital notice boards, tools for local groups), we can start to connect individuals with the people and places which will enhance their connectedness, health and longevity.

LEVEL 4 — COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

At this level we start to focus on infrastructure. By working through levels 1 to 3, we now have a clear understanding of what the community values and stands for, and a deep knowledge of what individual residents and stakeholders want and need. We can look at the infrastructure required to deliver more healthy years of living. Armed with this deep knowledge, we start to look at the housing, transport, green spaces, retail, health and welfare, culture, and leisure needs of the community.

HALO IN EBBSFLEET

Over the course of a year, more than 2,000 people from Ebbsfleet in Kent and the surrounding areas were involved in providing input on the future of Ebbsfleet Garden City. Rather than expecting people to come to us, we went where people were, visiting residential areas, faith centres, shopping centres, cafés, parks, schools and community centres. Using a wide range of engagement tools including one-to-one interviews, visiting existing community hubs, small group sessions, surveys, community events, observations, interactive design-led workshops and walking talking tours, we were able to meet and collaborate with a wide range of people to feed into the values which were most important to the residents and stakeholders in Ebbsfleet. These were:
● **Belonging** — Belonging and connectedness, alongside independence and diversity
● **Happy & Healthy** — Well-being, happiness and supported healthy-living at heart
● **Connected History** — Creating a sense of place by connecting to the past and making history visible
● **Integrated Nature** — Building in and connecting to nature throughout the community
● **Food & Togetherness** — Building on the area's food connections and creating points of encounter
● **Relevant Physicality** — Create spaces for a diversity of physical activity, relevant to individuals
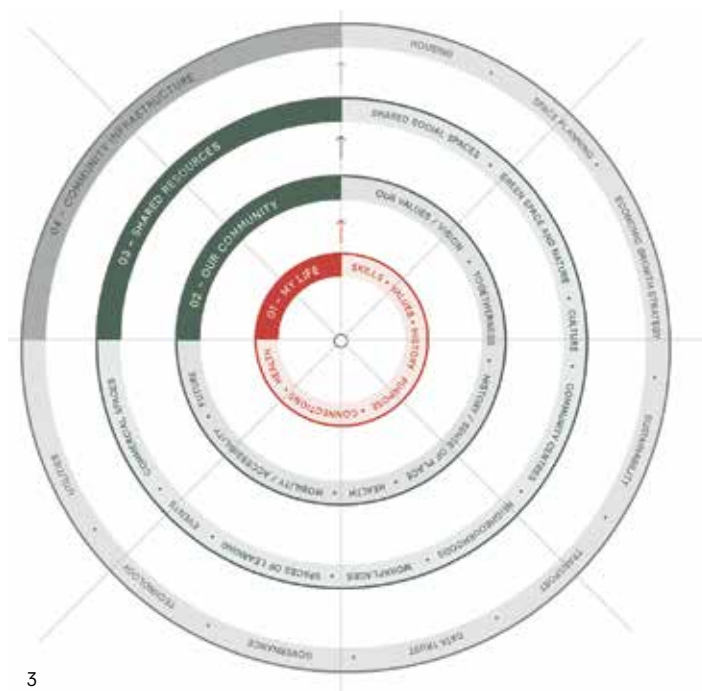
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Given a choice, most people will choose a place to live which has been designed to help them live longer, healthier and happier

● **Community Forum** — A rich programme of events, with forums at the heart of the community.
The data that we gathered was rich and invaluable in helping to steer the future design of homes, transport links, green spaces, community hubs and the other supporting infrastructure that the community at Ebbsfleet valued and felt was most important to them.

The work at Ebbsfleet goes on, but how can urban design as a discipline help people to live longer and healthier lives? While COVID-19 has ravaged so many parts of our daily life, it has shone a bright light on our desire to connect with people on a local level and across all ages. Now is the time for real action, to build on this desire for intergenerational community with the knowledge that not only do many people want it, but it will help us to live longer and healthier. By offering people of all ages more places to come together over shared experiences or to bump into each other, to find a purpose, and to learn from one another, we will be healthier and happier throughout our lives, urban designers will be creating places where we will want and choose to live and work. Given a choice, most people will choose a place to live which has been designed to help them live longer, healthier and happier. ●

3 The Health and Longevity Community model (HALO). Image and process copyright of The Common Land 2020

George Lee, Founder Director, The Common Land

Encouraging a more Senior-friendly Copenhagen

Bettina Werner reports on a study to understand how it feels to age in the city

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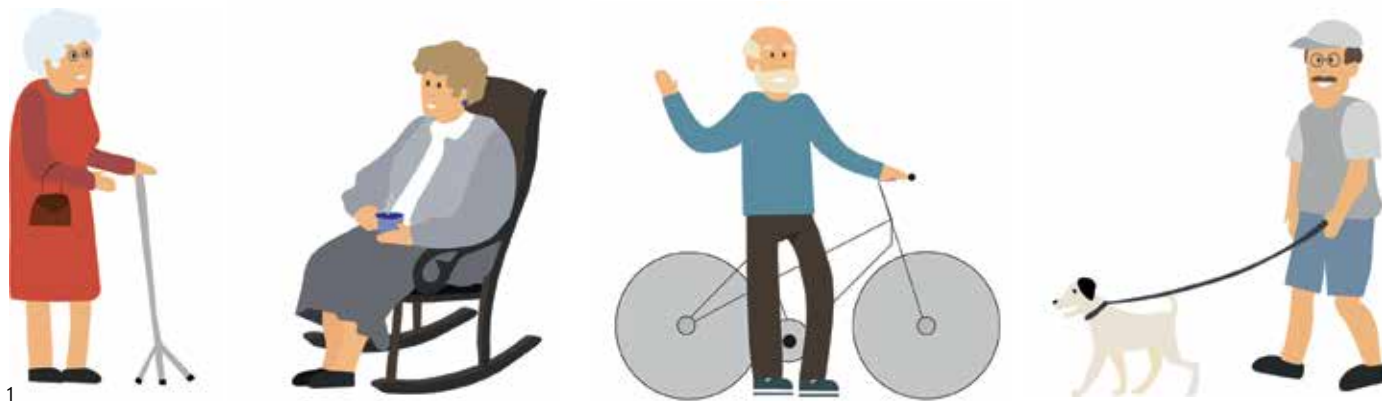
Similar to other European countries, in Denmark the percentage of senior citizens (65 years old and above) is expected to increase by almost 50 per cent before 2050. This increase calls for a coordinated effort to ensure that older residents can stay healthier for longer. This means that our cities must support the public health sector with neighbourhoods that promote health.

Since August 2019, COurban, a design collective, has worked on the project *A city for all* with the City of Copenhagen's Public Health Department, in order to understand the current status of age-friendliness, the differences between neighbourhoods, and what it means to age in Copenhagen today. Throughout this qualitative study, we have interviewed, walked, and talked with approximately 150 seniors between the ages of 60 and 96, with varying physical disabilities. In addition, the qualitative study is supported by a literature review focusing on topics related to age-friendliness, such as mobility, accessibility, perception of safety, green space, as well as existing cases and examples of age-friendly design.

Designing spaces for seniors is as much about social and mental accessibility to spaces as the physical. This calls for a multidisciplinary perspective when designing for age-friendliness, and arguably for qualitative and quantitative information about the population or group we are designing for, in order to understand the social and mental implications of our design choices. Seniors are an extremely diverse demographic group, and our study shows that an individual's level of mobility and access to social capital is more related to their lifestyle, than their age. It is therefore necessary to understand how seniors themselves perceive age-friendliness, and how they can influence decision-making in areas that concern their demographic group. Looking to the future, questions arise about what an age-friendly space is, who it is for, and who will be perceived as senior in 30 years' time.

Here, we present four different personas as a reflection of the senior population in Copenhagen. They provide some perspectives on age, age-friendly design, and the challenges and opportunities that they see in the city. You will discover what the main

1 Jane, Kirsten, Thomas and Lars – the project's four personas reflecting Copenhagen's senior population's views

challenges are with movement around the city, how they have encountered ageism, and how urban spaces and urban transformations can have an impact on seniors' mental, social and physical health.

This work was partially conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore its subsequent impact on the senior population has not been taken into account in developing the four personas below.

JANE

Jane lives just outside of the centre of Copenhagen. She has lived in the same neighbourhood for 74 years and she loves the 'small town in the city' vibe that the area has. She is very active in the local activity centre where she goes to the fitness centre, hosts a film club and eats lunch with friends a few times a week. She makes sure to stay active, and she volunteers at the local cinema twice a week. Right now, she's taking an online course in Spanish, and on Thursdays she plays bridge with her husband and a couple of friends. Jane thinks the activities available for seniors are fantastic and she takes great advantage of them. She has always been a very social person who enjoys a high pace in her everyday life, seeking out opportunities to meet other people and engage in activities.

In the past year, Jane has been more limited in her physical activities since she experienced problems with her hip. She walks with a cane and her walks are now much shorter than they were. However,

she still takes great advantage of the park nearby, where she knows that there are a few benches to sit and rest for a while. She always chooses one of the classic Copenhagen benches, made of cast iron with a dark green wooden seat and back. They're the perfect height with a good armrest and back support. Not only are they aesthetically nice benches, they are a piece of urban furniture that you can rely on, which she greatly values. The park is also where she often takes her grandchildren when they are in the neighbourhood, or when she has picked them up from kindergarten. There she can sit by the picnic tables in the big playground and keep an eye on them while they play.

THOMAS

Thomas has recently retired and moved into the city centre in order to get closer to his children and grandchildren. He is enjoying his new-found free time and he takes full advantage of it by discovering and rediscovering the city. He's lived further out of the city for a number of years and after coming back into the city, he really appreciates how accessible it has become. He doesn't need his car anymore, but can bike or take the metro wherever he wants to go. Some days, he goes to one of the new metro stations where he hasn't been before, and walks home from there, while at the same time discovering a new area.

Even if he sometimes feels like a tourist in his own city, the difference compared to twenty years ago is noticeable. The medieval city where he lives has become extremely crowded. Sometimes there are busloads of tourists flocking to take pictures on the street where he lives in a courtyard. Of course it is great for the city that tourists want to come, but he wishes they would spread more to the other boroughs.

Thomas is not using any of the clubs for seniors at this point, he really doesn't feel like he belongs there. Instead, he plays badminton with a group of friends every Tuesday and has looked into whether there is a cycling club he could join. He appreciates a great mix of people and ages in such a club. To him, it is important that there is a shared interest amongst members as he believes that it is more crucial to form a social connection, than have age as a common denominator. He's also signed up for an online course in global climate change and mitigation, which he is looking forward to. Perhaps he'll join a senior club at some point, but for now he'll just go online to see what's around when he feels that he has more time for activities.

KIRSTEN

Kirsten lives near the lakes in the same apartment that she and her husband moved to about ten years ago. It was around the time they both started to struggle with mobility and their previous house outside the city was too much work for them. They had access to a public housing unit for seniors, with elevator access. Since then, her husband has developed dementia and he now resides in a nearby nursing home which she visits every day. She is waiting for an evaluation to get an electric wheelchair, as it is getting harder and harder for her to move around even short distances. At the moment, she uses a walker, but she has to rest several times even on short walks. She has always enjoyed the beauty of the historical city and the older boroughs of Copenhagen, but she is very challenged by the cobblestone plazas and the traditional sidewalks, where the paving stones are separated by cobblestones and are not wide enough for her walker to roll on easily.

Near the nursing home where Kirsten's husband lives is a small park with an animal playground and kindergarten. As long as it is not raining, they sit outside and observe the children playing, and feeding goats and chickens. Even though the park is very small, it's one of her favourite places. Its location, greenery and separation from nearby traffic makes it pleasant and quiet. Except for this daily visit, she doesn't see many other people, but she spends a lot of her day reading or doing errands nearby. It's not that she wouldn't like to join some form of activity one day, perhaps a crafts club.

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2-4 Interviewing, walking and talking with some of the study's participants on the age-friendliness of the city

Kirsten attempted to join one of the senior activity centres to see what was on offer, but she felt that it was very institutionalised and it didn't have the kind of social environment that she was hoping for. These types of clubs should be warm and welcoming, and yet to her it felt more like a nursing home common room, than a neighbourhood living room. She follows the local paper to see if anything comes up, but other than that, she doesn't know how to find information about what's out there. She never had a job where she was introduced to IT and computers, and so she simply can't figure it out. It's all online these days and nothing arrives by post any more. She has a great neighbour on the floor above from whom she often asks for help. There is also a sense of safety knowing people in the building, and when

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The neighbourhood where Lars lives has gentrified rapidly in the last ten years and you can both feel and see the difference. The young people don't say hello anymore, and he senses a lack of respect for him and his generation

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the weather gets better she will try and put a note up by the entrance, inviting the neighbours to meet for an informal coffee outside. She wants to get to know more of her neighbours, as these relationships can form more-or-less unspoken agreements to look after each other.

LARS

Lars is slowly settling into a retirement lifestyle. He misses his work a lot. Not so much the job itself, but the social aspects, the daily chats and coffees with his former colleagues. Most of his social life was connected to his workplace, and now he finds that his social network has shrunk. He keeps in touch with a few people, but it is hard to organise meet-ups with them other than on occasional weekends, as most of his friends are still working. He still has his partner to talk to, of course, but it's a different daily routine.

Lars has looked into some of the activities offered to seniors online, but when he told his children about it, they thought it was silly of him to look into that as he's not 'that old'. He's not very interested in sports and exercise activities, which makes the selection a bit narrow. Luckily, he has a dog which makes it easier making contact with others. A daily chat and smile from a fellow dog owner is a great social energy booster, regardless of the content of the brief conversation. However, not everyone wants to chat. The neighbourhood where he lives has gentrified rapidly in the last ten years and you can both feel and see the difference.

The young people don't say hello anymore, and Lars senses a lack of respect for him and his generation. The recent market shift towards short-term rentals for tourists and exchange students means that the responsibility of taking care of the building and the communal areas is placed on a few of the 'oldies'. While the courtyard area is fantastic, especially in summer, he doesn't know as many of his neighbours as he used to.

There is a café on his street where he goes every day for a cup of coffee. He nods to a couple of the other regulars, but other than that he doesn't interact much. It's a good place for people-watching, and you can almost witness the neighbourhood changing as you sit there.
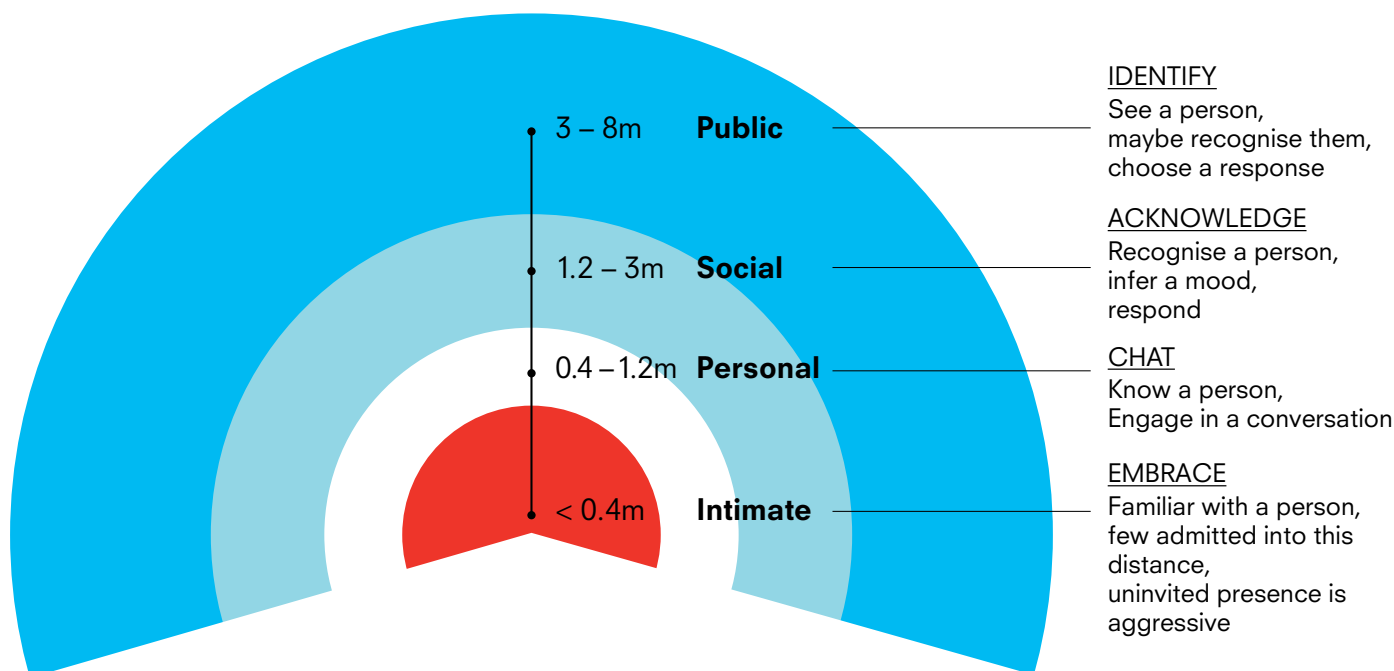
There are more young men and women with their babies in prams and take-away coffees than ever before. Back in the day, this street had several *bodegas* where cigarette smoke would pour thickly from every window and at all times of the day. Not everything was good then either, of course, but there was a different sense of community and trust. You could send the kids out on the street to play knowing that neighbours would look after them. Not much of that is left. It's replaced by fancy craft boutiques or expensive wine and coffee bars, attracting more visitors than locals.

CONCLUSION

While the senior population is very diverse as reflected in these personas, some factors of age-friendliness are addressed as especially important. These are accessibility, access to green areas, high perceptions of safety and a sense of belonging or community. Interestingly, when we design for these factors we can work with all scales of urban design, from the individual's housing block, to streetscapes, to the neighbourhood scale and the city at large. The key, according to our work, is continuous participation and co-creation with the senior population. This process itself can be highly rewarding for the senior citizen as well as urbanists, designers and other city-makers. ●

Bettina Werner, Co-founder and ethnographer, COurban design collective, Copenhagen, Denmark

5-6 Some of the mobility and accessibility issues encountered on the walks

IDENTIFY
See a person,
maybe recognise them,
choose a response

ACKNOWLEDGE
Recognise a person,
infer a mood,
respond

CHAT
Know a person,
Engage in a conversation

EMBRACE
Familiar with a person,
few admitted into this
distance,
uninvited presence is
aggressive

3 – 8m **Public**

1.2 – 3m **Social**

0.4 – 1.2m **Personal**

< 0.4m **Intimate**

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The Importance of Sociality

Nick Tyler reports on a scientific approach to designing the public realm for communicating and interacting

Ageing does not suddenly start at the age of 60; rather it starts at conception and continues until death. Urban design in the context of ageing therefore has to take all ages into account. As all ages exist concurrently, it is incumbent on urban design to be openly intergenerational. Society is the coming-together of a wide range of people to create a coherent and cohesive whole, where doing so provides benefits in terms of safety, security, health and wellbeing. *Homo sapiens* ceased to be nomadic some 10,000 years ago, and brought the first cities into existence around 6,000 years ago. The modern city, despite its evolution in terms of size and technology, has at its heart the same societal needs, and it is important that the design of streets and spaces (or the public realm) meets these needs.

SPACE

Homo sapiens is the last hominid survivor from the previous climate crisis about 12,000 years ago. One of the reasons for its survival was that this species was able to collaborate to capture enough food to keep itself alive; the large brain required a lot of energy, and after the last ice age, food became both more sporadic and larger, thus needing collaboration in order to capture it. Collaboration required the ability to communicate, and communication remains one of the hallmarks of human society today. The ability and willingness to communicate – what I call sociality – is one of the important markers for wellbeing, and so for cities to support society, public realm design must enable sociality; it must create a place where a person can greet and receive a response from someone they do not know without fear or difficulty.

1 Distance categorisations from Hall (1996)

Proxemics is a theory developed by Edward Hall (Hall 1966) following observations of people in public space in New York City, and establishing a set of spaces in which certain activities occurred. The diagram shows four distances. These are shown from the perspective of one person seeing someone else at various distances, ranging from:
● 'public', where the response to a person could be identified, to
● 'social', where the person is now close enough to be able to infer their mood and acknowledge the potential for an interaction, to
● 'personal' where the person can be engaged in a conversation, to
● 'intimate' where the person is only admitted if they are familiar, otherwise entry into that space is an act of aggression.

What Hall did not establish is why these distances were so particular. Work in our laboratory has started to indicate potential reasons. It is driven by the way in which sensory and neurological systems work: the voice and hearing systems of both the listener and speaker work best at distances of around 1.2m. At this distance, it is possible to speak and be heard without having to strain either the voice or the ability to hear; it is also a distance at which it is possible to see the facial micro-gestures that indicate mood, meaning, emphasis on the part of the speaker, and on the part of the listener, comprehension, disagreement, and so on, which are a major part of communication. So conversations happen at this distance. This seems to be multicultural: the idea that different cultures might wish to chat at more or less than this range seems to be a confusion between the

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Conversation is food to *homo sapiens*, as much as physical food is needed to enable the physical body to survive

initial greeting or taking leave rituals (shaking hands, bowing or hugging) and the actual conversation between these. Why is this important?

SOCIALITY

Conversation is food to *homo sapiens,* as much as physical food is needed to enable the physical body to survive. As a species we need this social interaction and failure to have it results in poor health outcomes, including mental as well as physical illness. Loneliness is a distinct marker for social isolation, and although it is often realised as a particular concern for older people, it is something that arises across all ages; indeed there is a case for strengthening intergenerational conversations as a means of crossing the age divide. Urban designers therefore have a responsibility to enable conversation as a key driver for a stable and progressive society.

Enabling conversation means ensuring that the public realm has places where:
● the acoustics are favourable to the human voice
● the light, whether artificial or natural, is sufficient to enable those micro-gestures to be seen
● the space is such that a group of people can engage in conversation without having to strain to be heard, and
● people are not compressed into too small a space.

It is also necessary for the other spaces identified by Hall to work, to identify that an oncoming person is or is not a threat, so sight lines need to be appropriate. But how big should a space be?

We find that the optimum number of people to enable a group to engage in a mutual conversation (i.e. where every member of the group participates) is four. This is because at the distance at which conversation can happen and where the micro-gestures can be observed, the useful field of view permits sight of three people. If a fifth person joins the group, it quickly breaks into a group of three and another of two (the membership of these groups can change dynamically but mutual conversation within the group overall ceases at this point). One example is shown in the photograph taken in Havana. This is actually the result of an urban design intervention, the pedestrianisation of Havana's historic city centre, with bollards to exclude vehicular traffic. Eighteenth century British bronze naval cannons were used as bollards, which present a convenient leaning height. As a result they form a natural point for creating a social space – the person leaning on this bollard is in a group of three, there are groups of two and four but none more than that.

The creation of spaces that people can own and in which they can have a conversation (or not) is key. The sense of ownership of such a space is one of the things that enables someone

2 Havana, Cuba: social spacing with street conversations in groups of two, three and four people
3 Chatting on a bench and trying to see and hear the details. Photograph by Huub Zeeman on Flickr
4 Nicosia, Cyprus: Chatting on a curved bench, where it is easier to talk

to use it, but it also confers a sense of responsibility on the person for using it well. The latter is more likely if the space works, and this is dependent on the whole range of circumstances coming together – acoustics, sightlines, spacing and so on. Another example is the photograph showing four women engaging in a conversation whilst sitting on a bench. The two ladies at the end of the bench struggle to engage in the conversation because they need to see the other people (those micro-gestures again) and to hear them. The natural response to this bench space is to move forwards on the bench and turn so that communication can continue.

A further example is the photograph showing people sitting on a bench in Nicosia, Cyprus. In this case, we can see a number of behaviours: some are reading or looking at their mobile phones, whereas others are engaging in a conversation. All of these behaviours are possible in the same space because the benches are curved. In this case they are an S shape, which offers the inside of the curve, where the problem noted earlier is resolved. Conversation is more easily sustained without having to sit forward and turn and on the outside of the curve, it is easier to carry on more private activities. The degree of curvature is important in order to achieve this – it depends on the angle of view from one end of a four-person length of bench to the other – and if it is too sharp, it will not work.

TIME

The conversations shown above are between people who seem to know each other, so it could be argued that the detail is not necessary, the ladies certainly seem to be enjoying themselves even though their bench is not ideal. The key to this question lies in sociality and brings the other dimension that is often forgotten in urban design: time.

The time taken to greet someone is quite definable. If two people are walking towards each other, the time it takes from first seeing and identifying the other person in Hall's range of spaces to being near enough to chat to them is around four seconds. In that time, the process of identifying and acknowledging each other, deciding that they do not pose a

threat and being ready to greet them, needs to be completed. That is a lot of processing to do whilst walking along the footway, and most of it is done pre-consciously, neither person will be aware that they are doing this. Sociality is therefore a time issue. Designing an urban space in which people wish to linger, where they can enact those needs for sociality, is therefore kicked off by first initiating this four-second period necessary to start the conversation process. Then, it is a case of designing the space for having that longer conversation – perhaps a few seconds, or minutes – in which the other characteristics of the space come into play.

RESEARCHING THESE ISSUES

Exploring these interactions between people and the environment has proved challenging because if done through observations of activity as Hall did, although it is possible to see and infer actions taken by a large number of people in different situations, it is much more difficult to study why these interactions happen as they do. The environment is in constant flux, no conditions can be held constant, and the experiment is likely to be affected by sudden events, which the observers might or might not see. Thus it is impossible to determine why people do what they do. On the other hand, controlled experiments in a traditional psychology laboratory are very abstract or far from reality, because they are trying to control anything other than the phenomenon of interest in the experiment. Therefore, although these might be very informative about the phenomenon of interest, they barely represent the reality that people experience in streets. To overcome these problems, we built a laboratory in which we could create, at life size, the environments of interest, bringing people into them to study their interactions in more detail, knowing that we can control the environmental features, such as lighting, noise and appearance.

From these experiments we have learned how older people compare with younger people in terms of their responses to different step heights in the footway surface (Cheng T-J 2014), how people with dementia see the environment, how lighting conditions change perceptions of the footway surface (Wang 2017) and much more. This laboratory is now being replaced by a larger one in which we will be able to control more features in the environment and work with larger spaces, including streets and town squares, railway stations and airport environments. Called the Person-Environment-Activity Research Laboratory (PEARL), this will include:
● more comprehensive lighting (e.g. to simulate lighting at any time of day at any location in the world)
● a sophisticated spatial audio system
● variable visibility, and
● the ability to introduce scents into the environment.

It will be able to have a full-sized street up to 100m long, a railway station platform with train carriages, or access onto and off an aircraft. In terms of observation of the participants, PEARL will have sensors ranging from video cameras and posture/gait recording systems to cover physical motion; physiological sensors, such as eye trackers, electro-dermal activity, heart rate, oxygen consumption; and, to study neurological activity, we have electroencephalograms (EEG) and functional Near InfraRed Spectroscopy to monitor brain function as people engage in activities in the laboratory. PEARL also has a 500-seat pop-up theatre to enable us to demonstrate the results to interested parties. The research findings can thus be disseminated to stakeholders in a way that allows them to experience the situations themselves. In these ways, it will be useful for urban planners and designers to try out ideas and stress-test projects, before critical stages in their development. PEARL is due to start operations in May 2021.

We are now designing an addition to PEARL called CAVE (Clean Active Ventilation Environment), which will open in late 2021 to help us study similar aspects of indoor environments,

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5 Barcelona, Spain: Looking for a familiar face in a crowd. Photograph by PWNN on Flickr

including the investigation of pathogen transmission through different ventilation regimes, to study physical distancing needs and behaviour and the effects of different room designs.

CONCLUSIONS

Conversation is the sustenance of society and the way to counter social isolation and loneliness at any age, but perhaps especially for older people; intergenerational conversation is how society coheres. Urban design can foster this important activity, and it is important that we do not allow design to kill it. However, it is difficult to know precisely how this chain from perception of the environment, including other people, actually interacts with a person. Our work is exploring this by creating environments in which we can control all sensory factors, and then studying the neurological, physiological, psychological, sensorial and physical responses, as we change those environmental conditions.●

Nick Tyler, Director, Centre for Transport Studies, University College London
www.pearl.place

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A City for All

Clemens Beyer and Wolfgang Wasserburger explain an innovative approach to solving problems of accessibility that benefits everyone

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I n many countries, especially in the heavily industrialised ones, the number of people with disabilities is increasing. The main reason for this is the demographic change in society: decreasing birth rates and increasing life expectancy causing a steady increase in the proportion of older people in the total population. In the Centrope region for example (i.e. Eastern Austria and the neighbouring countries of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary with a total population of about 8 million), 24.9 per cent of the population is currently over 60 years old, and the trend is rising. Since impairments and disabilities increase with age, many older people in particular are dependent on accessible products.

Accessibility in its broader sense is a collective term for all solutions that make things, services, processes, etc. more easily accessible, not only for people with disabilities, because people without disabilities also benefit from them in everyday life. The following types of disabilities can be identified: limited mobility, visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental disability, and intellectual disability (a learning disability). In old age, combinations of milder forms of several of these disabilities usually occur. As they usually do not start suddenly but develop slowly and intensify, old people are often not aware of the actual extent of the disabilities affecting them.

Accordingly at least two of the three senses of hearing, sight and touch are important when looking at accessibility. Receiving information via two senses makes it possible for a large number of people to use structural facilities, equipment and products. This can be implemented quite well technically in buildings, vehicles, etc., in other words at a small scale or at the micro level, and there is a broad range of products which can be purchased as required. However, these many different approaches make

1 A signpost in Praterstern railway station, Vienna. In a clear system, accessibility tools can be implemented compactly and efficiently

it difficult to use them in foreign places. This is easily recognisable, for example, in the different arrangement of guiding lines for the blind in different cities, which demands additional familiarisation in each place for them to be effective.

ACCESSIBILITY AT THE MACRO LEVEL

At the macro level – the area in which these buildings or vehicles are used – the city itself, the approach is much more complex. The individual elements of micro-level solutions must be spatially connected to each other so that those in the target group can orient themselves accordingly and move around as independently as possible.

But let's not think primarily of people with really severe disabilities. They are accustomed to facing a multitude of challenges every day, and very often have a great and useful collection of aids to enable and facilitate them to cope with everyday life. What is at stake here is the large percentage of the population with mild disabilities. According to Statistics Austria (microcensus 2015), 19.3 per cent of respondents in Austria reported having impairments. We also need to include all those people who feel unimpaired,

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perhaps some of them have impairments that they do not notice because they have long since become a normal part of daily life, or people have worked out appropriate ways around them, so that the impairments have gradually become second nature. They too can benefit from measures to make the city even clearer, more structured, easier to perceive.

THE SIGNPOST

Let's imagine motorway signs from our own city, our own country, and from a foreign country. All of the images we now have in our minds will speak a very similar language. Not only do we immediately recognise a signpost as such, but we can also interpret and follow the information on it correctly without any doubt. The same applies, of course, to traffic signs, but most of them are internationally standardised, whereas signposts are at most national guidelines, which nevertheless lead to very similar or identical appearances in terms of the factual conformity of the basic requirements. For people who do not drive, however, there is no similar standardisation of any kind, neither by law, nor through any independent harmonisation of the appearance. Why is this so?

Motorway signs all look more or less similar, because the motorways on which they are placed are also all built more or less the same. You are only allowed to travel on them with certain vehicles; this in turn implies a certain fundamental freedom from interference, and you have to keep to certain speeds. The choice of directions is not free either, but predetermined by the network structure. When moving around in the city, completely different and much more complex requirements apply.

So how could a common language for directional elements in urban space be designed? First of all, one has to reject the classic idea of a signpost consisting of a labelled board placed somewhere. This works very well in a visually highly-simplified system like a motorway or in a spatially limited complex like a railway station or a shopping centre, and outdoors (e. g. hiking trails), but it is difficult to implement in urban space, which has a multitude of very different visual stimuli. However, urban space offers a great variety of objects and items that can be used for wayfinding, for example:

● Different road surfaces (materials, colours, textures), so that the road user can intuitively grasp where to move and where not to. In the dark, this effect can be enhanced for sighted people with street lighting, while visually impaired people can easily perceive the structure, even in poor visibility.
● Elements with a high recognition value (e.g. prominent public transport stop signs, street furniture) facilitate orientation.
● Visual relationships and axes enhance the clarity or simplify complex physical structures. Since a visual axis usually describes

2 The underground station at Karlsplatz, Vienna. Urban spaces require a broader way of thinking to meet accessibility criteria

a straight and direct path, it is even helpful for people with impaired vision.

If we assume that these appropriate elements have helped our targets to get to a desired public transport stop on foot, we can now look at this stop further.

THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT STOP

These days the basic requirements of barrier-free access to transport can be considered as largely implemented, so that this point should be excluded from further consideration. The primary task of the public transport stop is to give the passenger a safe and protected place to wait until the departure of his or her means of transport. So it is important to provide information for several of the senses. In many places, the infrastructure for this is already in place. Unfortunately, it is often not used in a form that corresponds to accessibility:

● The departure time is only displayed visually.
● Information on irregular services is only reproduced acoustically
● The text of the visual display cannot be played via the existing loudspeaker system.
● In the event of a service disruption, there is no element that enables an intuitive recognition of this disruption.
● Any paper timetable is not illuminated, not weather-protected and printed so small that it can only be read from very close up, even by people with normal vision.
● The content of the paper timetable is far too complex. These are usually automatically generated extracts from a timetable database that follow machine patterns, but not the patterns of human perception.
● The map of the surroundings, which is also attached, is an excerpt from an automatically created conglomerate of various electronically generated map layers. Missing elements of cartographic design make it difficult to read. References to easily-recognisable landmarks in the immediate vicinity are missing. Plans are only helpful to people who are basically well-oriented.

A POTENTIAL SOLUTION: DESIGN PATTERNS

The approach of design patterns originally comes from architecture and describes solution templates for recurring design problems, as in Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language* (1977). Each pattern is therefore a template that can be used in many different situations. This idea has not become widespread in architecture, but has subsequently been taken up by software developers and in the field of man-machine interaction. Nevertheless, such considerations in urban design are a starting point for the

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The design patterns approach can make it easier to answer these questions because they examine the problems more fundamentally, look at them in detail and so create a better overview of the situation

implementation of accessibility, because both the demands of people (in terms of their disabilities) and the demands on the elements of the city (in terms of their composition and design) are always of a very similar nature.

Put simply, design patterns are collections of best practices whose common elements are worked out, and are thus established as reusable elements. Some of these have existed for a long time, for example legal regulations for the construction of barrier-free buildings. Their application is even mandatory, so they could be described as a basic part of an overall pattern, for example the maximum gradient of a ramp for wheelchair accessibility. When considered in a broader sense, this flat gradient, also benefits people who are not dependent on a wheelchair.

However, in most cases the overall consideration is missing. In the case of such a ramp for example the following basic concerns are:
● Is there a way to achieve the required goal without the construction of a ramp being necessary at all? In other words, is it possible to avoid a barrier from the outset that has to be designed to be as barrier-free as possible, taking into account a wide variety of requirements?
● Is there a way to design a barrier that cannot be avoided and in such a way that it is passed on to those city users who have no problems coping with this barrier (for example motorised road users)?
● Is there a way to achieve the desired use in a way that does not require overcoming any barriers in the first place?

Applied to the ramp example in connection with a public transport stop, these questions could be set as follows:
● Does the location of the stop allow access from a flatter side without a height difference?
● Can the height difference be levelled in such a way that the

passenger remains at the same level and the roadway height is changed instead?
● Is it possible to change the location of the entire stop so that it is in a location that can be accessed without a difference in level?

Care must also be taken to ensure that different approaches for different disabilities are compatible with each other:
● Does a barrier-free solution create barriers for other groups?

The design patterns approach can make it easier to answer these questions because they examine the problems more fundamentally, look at them in detail and so create a better overview of the situation. It is also important to involve those directly affected or representative organisations. Unfortunately, practical solutions in many cities fail because of the complex, historic allocation of administrative responsibilities. What are implemented are often only partial solutions which adopt the underlying idea, but are not finished due to limited skills and understanding.

Time is pressing. In the medium term, there must therefore be initiatives to agree on certain basic international standards on accessibility, for example as an EU directive or as a recommendation of the World Health Organisation (WHO), so that as many people as possible can take their lives into their own hands. ●

Clemens Beyer, Competence Center of Urban and Regional Planning (CORP), Vienna and Wolfgang W Wasserburger, AccessibleMap Association, Vienna

3 A public transport stop with signage, a display and loudspeaker. Accessibility elements are present, but not used because there is no overall strategy
4 Benches on Schreygasse, Vienna. Unfortunately, poor design skills and budget constraints mean that the seating is inappropriate, water fountains and waste bins are missing, and cycle parking is on the opposite pavement

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Planning for Ageing Populations

Tim Spencer argues for more proactive planning
for age-appropriate housing

The UK faces an unprecedented challenge in meeting the housing needs of older generations and addressing the legacy of dormitory-style institutional accommodation for the elderly. Older people have an inalienable right to live with dignity in their golden years and deserve to live in environments which don't just support but also improve their health and well-being. The planning system has an important role to play in this area.

The planning system originated in the mid-19th century from a need to provide housing which improved health and well-being through better living conditions, following philanthropic industrialists who developed places such as Bourneville and Saltaire. Planning, as it largely remains today, developed through codifying into statute the principles of the garden city movement in the early to mid-20th century. It is now going through a new period of change; however, the latest changes are about delivering more and more homes, rather than seeking to improve living standards, health and well-being as previous fundamental reforms achieved.

PLANNING REFORMS

Initiated in the 2020 *Planning White Paper*, the current planning reforms state that community engagement with the planning system disproportionately encourages engagement from people within a narrow set of demographic groups, typically older, better-off and white people. In my experience this

is generally true. The older generation is extremely well-represented in the planning system; one only has to attend a public consultation event, a planning committee, a local or neighbourhood plan examination, or note the age profile of objectors to a planning application to confirm this.

Sadly and rather paradoxically, the *Planning White Paper* is silent on the issue of planning and designing appropriately for the older generation, which is a startling omission considering the rate that the older generation is growing, both numerically and proportionally.

Might it then be considered that the planning system is systemically ageist? In the various planning applications for third age communities that I have been involved in, there is an all too frequently recurring reaction among planners, communities and planning committees, that there are too many old people in towns and villages, and that there are too many developments coming forward to house older generations. The pervading

1 Nightingale Place, a retirement development overlooking Clapham Common, London. Photographs by Audley Villages

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An understanding of how the ageing population affects housing needs is something to be considered from the early stages of plan-making through to decision-taking

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narrative of the housing crisis is that it revolves around a lack of affordable homes, and particularly homes for younger people and first-time buyers.

In fact the opposite is probably the case. There is a chronic undersupply of appropriate accommodation, which traps the older generation in housing that is often too large or under-occupied, often poorly located and difficult to manage and maintain.

There is a larger proportion of older people in the UK than at any time in history, due to improvements in living and working conditions and improvements in medical technology. According to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ageing and Older People, an estimated 1.4 million people in the UK have unmet care needs, and for these people, simple, everyday tasks are made unnecessarily more difficult by inappropriate housing conditions. Accommodation with steep narrow stairs, poor lighting, poorly designed kitchens and bathrooms, and uneven floor levels result in higher incidences of falls, which are the most common, as well as costly reasons for non-elective hospital admissions among older people.

2 Nightingale Place, London: plan showing public facilities at the front and private apartments to the rear. Image by Quad Projects.
3 Nightingale Place has 94 one to three bedroom apartments, with facilities open to the public

The changing age structure of the UK indicates two highly significant facts: firstly, the growth of the older population and secondly, the ageing of the population. The population is living longer and there will be an increasing number of older people relative to the younger population.

APPROPRIATE AND ATTRACTIVE HOMES
The delivery of appropriate and attractive homes for older people has a massive role to play in freeing up family accommodation, making under-occupied homes available to others on the housing ladder, thereby making a significant contribution to the housing crisis. The 2013 Demos report *The Top of the Ladder* examined the issue of freeing up under-occupied family-sized homes. The key findings raised were that 'Retirement properties make up just 2 per cent of the UK housing stock, or 533,000 homes, with just over 100,000 to buy. One in four (25 per cent) over 60s would be interested in buying a retirement property – equating to 3.5 million people nationally'. Comparisons with international markets show that around 6 per cent of the 65+ population in New Zealand or Australia live in retirement properties.

With the older UK population set to grow dramatically over the coming years, the increasing divide between supply and demand is considered a significant element of the housing crisis. In addressing this issue, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government issued an updated *Planning Policy Guidance* in June 2019, to support councils preparing planning policies on housing for older and disabled people. The guidance states that 'The need to provide housing for older people is critical... Offering older people a better choice of accommodation

to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems. Therefore, an understanding of how the ageing population affects housing needs is something to be considered from the early stages of plan-making through to decision-taking'.

However, the land market is extremely challenging for developers of retirement accommodation as the additional costs arising from the provision of specialist facilities, communal spaces, and staff and other operational needs, means that the playing field with traditional homebuilders is uneven. The result is that retirement communities are all too often shunted to less expensive sites in poorly located areas, in the countryside or on the edges of town, or onto the otherwise constrained sites less attractive to the homebuilders.

There is also an economic and social cost resulting from people trapped in unsuitable accommodation, and locational constraints imposing restrictions on accessing services and facilities, due to poor public transport or a reliance on private car use. The Institute for Longevity Studies estimates that by tackling the barriers to accessing spending by people aged 75 and over, 2 per cent could be added to GDP a year by 2040.

TACKLING DEMENTIA

A highly significant effect of people living alone in unsuitable retirement accommodation is often an increase in loneliness and inactivity. It has been shown that reducing loneliness and inactivity has a profound positive effect on delaying the onset of frailty and dementia. Loneliness is a particularly prevalent problem in older people, with Age UK reporting that over half a million older people do not see or speak to anyone for more than six days a week, and television and pets are their only company.

Across the UK, dementia affects a significant 1.4 per cent of the total population or one in three people aged 65+ years. This figure is projected to increase to 1.6 million people by 2040. The total costs of dementia in the UK in 2019 amounts to £34.7 billion at 2015 prices. Creating retirement communities which encourage active living and socialising has great potential to reduce the incidence and delay the onset of dementia.

In 2015, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges described regular exercise as a 'miracle cure' for many serious medical conditions. The Academy advised that regular exercise can prevent dementia, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, depression, heart disease and other common serious conditions, reducing the risk of each by between 30 per cent and 80 per cent. This is better than many traditional medical treatments. There is thus a critical role for retirement communities to meet both the housing and wellness needs of a growing older population. The societal and economic benefits derived from such developments in combatting loneliness, isolation and inactivity are considerable and particularly meaningful for the health, happiness and well-being of residents and their families.

Retirement communities which are well located in urban environments, with good access to a range of services and facilities, public transport and open space are particularly successful in delivering health and well-being benefits to residents. One such development is Nightingale Place in Clapham, London, recently completed by Audley Villages. It overlooks Clapham Common and is adjacent to Clapham South tube station, within walking distance of shops, supermarkets, cafés and restaurants and local facilities.

Creating environments in which different generations can meet and interact is an essential aspect of Audley Villages' approach to combatting loneliness and isolation. Audley Villages has taken a progressive approach at Nightingale Place to open facilities, usually private, to the wider community. The scheme's restaurant is open to the public and the swimming pool has been made available to local school children. The scheme has been designed to be outward facing, with the restaurant

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opening onto the street frontage and providing outdoor seating to encourage engagement with the public realm.

These developments can also have a positive effect on urban areas and in particular town centres. At a time when these are struggling with reduced footfall, third age communities can play a significant role in revitalising them. Older people are more likely to spend locally and more often than younger people. The older generation can bring activity and spending into town centres at times when the young are at work or at places of learning.

It is important to facilitate access and reduce barriers to town centres and high streets for all members of the community, young, old, and those in-between. The RTPI advises that the location of housing for older people be carefully considered: 'such accommodation if located within a 5–10 minute walk of local shops and services will enable people to live well and remain independent for longer'. Frequently the older generation is disproportionately disadvantaged from accessing urban centres and facilities through unsustainably located development, reduced mobility and poor access to transport.

The need for retirement communities is critical and rising, as they have the capacity to both make a meaningful contribution to the housing crisis, and respond to the demographic pressures of an ageing population. Third age communities have an essential role to play in revitalising town centres and high streets. These developments, when well located and appropriately designed in an open, welcoming and outwardly focussed manner can achieve profound benefits for their residents, and deliver significant benefits to the health of our urban environments. ●

Tim Spencer, Associate Director, Nexus Planning

4 Nightingale Place: the shared spaces on the ground floor

REFERENCE
RTPI (2020), *Practice Advice for Dementia and Town Planning*

Planning for Retirement

Jon Rallings explains how small changes to planning policy can yield big results

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In the last four years and as the topic of social care reform has gone from a fringe policy subject to a fully-blown issue in the public consciousness, we have seen on numerous occasions, comparisons made between how England and countries overseas care for their elderly.

A less-discussed solution when talking about how to reform the adult social care system is that of retirement communities, and we should look at how other countries have made these types of development an integral part of how they care for people in old age.

RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

Retirement communities are developments that contain purpose-built flats for older people, with communal facilities and on-site care support. These developments of housing with extra care invert the old residential-nursing home model by promoting the independence of individuals for as long as possible, whilst giving them the option to receive regular care and support on-site as and when they need it.

Crucially, this helps to limit the risks too often seen in a binary model, where people stay put in accommodation that becomes increasingly unsuitable, and potentially isolating, the more infirm they become. In too many cases this can lead to a cliff edge where a person's health declines to a point where a very sudden move into hospital, often followed by a care home becomes necessary, which is both traumatic and costly.

Retirement communities however can support people better in planning for their move into a home which they can own, knowing support, company and services are inbuilt for the future. This gives the assurance of being able to grow old in a much more gradual way than may be possible in a large family home, which is also being kept off the housing market for young families. This is a win-win for both individuals and the state, and

1 Bishopstoke Park Village, Hampshire run by Anchor Hanover. Photographs by Associated Retirement Community Operators (ARCO)

could play an important role in mitigating the massive challenge of delivering social care to a rapidly ageing population in England.

Yet the concept has yet to fully get off the ground and indeed the number of people living in such communities is broadly the same today as it was in the 1980s, despite the well-publicised demographic shifts of an increasing population living longer, suggesting that the opposite would have happened.

Just 0.6 per cent of over 65s in England live in a retirement community at present. By contrast, the number in New Zealand and Australia is closer to 6 per cent: retirement communities are a clear and visible part of the conversation on how they care for their elderly. There is much to learn from these examples.

The local government sector is hopeful that the government's long-awaited proposals to reform adult social care will be published this year, in the highly anticipated Green Paper. The delay in publication owing to COVID-19 is understandable, and it is fully recognised that there are no easy answers to what is a hugely complex and political issue.

PREVENTION

It is clear to the County Councils Network (CCN) that proposals on system reform

Living Options for Older People

ARCO | Setting Standards for Retirement Communities

Retirement Housing Also known as sheltered housing or retirement flats	Retirement Communities Also known as extra care, retirement villages, housing-with-care, assisted living or independent living	Care Homes Also known as Nursing Homes, Residential Homes, Old People's Home
Self-contained homes for sale, shared-ownership or rent	Self-contained homes for sale, shared-ownership or rent	Communal residential living with residents occupying individual rooms, often with an en suite bathroom
Part-time warden and emergency call systems	24-hour onsite staff with optional care and domestic services available	24-hour care and support (including meals)
Usually have a lounge, laundry facilities, gardens and a guest room	Range of facilities including a restaurant or café usually alongside leisure and wellness facilities such as gyms, hairdressers, activity rooms, residents' lounges and gardens	Range of facilities and activities, including gardens, lounges and dining rooms
Typically 40 - 60 units	Typically 60 - 250 units	Sizes vary considerably

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must have prevention at its core. By prevention, we mean aiming to reduce the unnecessary (and very expensive) admissions of elderly people to care institutions, and facilitate their early release from hospitals into safe and suitable accommodation. The government must seek to build a preventative ecosystem that allows people to live as independently as possible, whilst strengthening the links between adult social care and other council functions such as housing, public health and children's care.

To help with this preventative culture shift, the CCN and Associated Retirement Community Operators (ARCO) set out in the joint report *Planning for Retirement: How Retirement Communities can help meet the needs of our ageing population* (2020) that retirement communities could, and should in the future, play a prominent preventative role in a re-shaped adult social care system. With that in mind, how can we begin to incentivise these types of development to raise awareness of them amongst policymakers, and most importantly, prospective residents?

POLICY CHANGES

The CCN and ARCO can see that small changes to the planning system could yield big results in this area. The issue is not necessarily about land supply, as is the case for other types of development, nor is it about a lack of enthusiasm from providers. Instead, the problems are rooted in the interplay between differing councils, balancing up local areas' needs, and confusion as to what constitutes a retirement community. This leads to a lack of clear and concise frameworks as how these developments fit into councils' housing and care plans for the future.

In two-tier counties, the inherent complexity of council structures (with the county council responsible for care and the district council responsible for planning) does not easily lend itself to seamless joint working. In areas where the county council and district council are working well in tandem, there are clear fruits of their labour. Hughenden Garden Village in Buckinghamshire, for example, is a redevelopment project on the site of an old factory that contains 260 mixed tenure apartments, with 18 communal facilities including a gym, games room, bistro and greenhouse. Up to a third of its residents receive help for their care, via packages from Buckinghamshire Council. The homes range from directly sold at market rates, to shared ownership and affordable homes, and the site is managed by the ExtraCare Charitable Trust. According to research for the charity conducted by Lancaster University on their sites, unplanned hospital stays from residents have reduced from 8-14 days on average to 1-2 days, and 75 per cent of residents are more physically active than the wider over 65s community in the area. This shows the clear preventative benefits of such a development.

But in other areas, the links between planning and housing authorities are not as strong as we would like, whilst planning authorities understandably must balance up the trade-offs of prioritising these kinds of care-focused development over more commercial housing. A council could take a significant hit in funding payable by commercial developers for local infrastructure if it prioritised a retirement community, and therefore may be reticent to do so, especially in a climate of financial pressure on local authorities.

A FRAMEWORK

Therefore, we propose a framework to encourage more and closer collaboration and working between the different

2 The options available to older people as defined by ARCO

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A bona-fide planning classification for retirement communities would make it crystal clear to planning officers and councillors what the provision should incorporate

tiers of councils, and a specialist funding pot created by the government that is accessible to local authorities, so that they are able to approve retirement communities without losing financial benefits.

But this will not resolve the issue of what constitutes a retirement community and how these developments fit into the wider planning system. By their very nature (between retirement housing and care homes), retirement communities create confusion for councils and communities. The planning system encourages us to view such developments in binary terms, either C2 residential institutions or C3 dwelling houses.

This leads to confusion for planning officers, a more laborious and unclear pathway for the providers of retirement communities, and makes it more difficult to factor in and plan for these types of developments in councils' local plans. CCN and ARCO have suggested that a new planning classification C2R should be introduced, which would outline strict criteria on what (and what does not) constitute a retirement community.

This would allow councils to factor these developments into their local plans, outlining the future needs for older people's care, and importantly how and where they will be delivered. It would also ensure quality: prospective C2R developers would need to demonstrate that they are able to meet clear conditions and requirements as to what should be provided in such facilities. Whilst the majority of providers build excellent provision, some councils have seen less reputable developers try to play the system by appearing to offer extra care, to avoid paying developer contributions which would benefit the residents of the development and community alike.

A bona-fide planning classification for retirement communities would make it crystal clear to planning officers and councillors what the provision should incorporate. It would also have the benefit of making retirement communities more identifiable to the public, as well as ensuring high standards.

This is a small tweak that could yield big results and as such, many county leaders were disappointed that the Government's *Planning for the Future* White Paper did not include

such a recommendation, nor said much on the topic of individual types of housing overall.

This is understandable however, as a large number of young people are being locked out of home ownership, and increasing the number of homes per year built in England, has been on the Conservatives' main domestic agenda for several years now.

That said, it is a shame that the other end of the spectrum, housing options for over 65s, was not considered more in the White Paper. Indeed, if we can get housing options right for older people, it would help to free up housing for younger generations. ARCO estimates that should 250,000 people live in retirement communities by 2030, it could free over 560,000 bedrooms on the market.

CONCLUSIONS

In CCN's consultation response to the White Paper, the network has argued strongly on the merits of proposing this new planning classification and we hope that the Government understands its merits. Arguably, it will be the social care Green Paper that will be the most important in introducing these types of reforms and incentives, bearing in mind the link between preventative social care and retirement communities.

As we come out of the pandemic, there is much food for thought on the adult social care system in totality, and a more buoyant retirement communities sector in England could have perhaps shielded more people from the harrowing scenes witnessed in care homes during the 2020 spring. It is perhaps no coincidence that the countries with the highest prevalence of retirement communities saw much lower mortality rates in the population of over 65.

Moving into a new decade, we hope to see retirement communities become an integral requirement of housing need assessments in local areas, and a closer alignment between housing and adult social care departments. If that happens, these types of developments will be more in the public consciousness, and more places will be able to offer them as an option, rather than the standard life pathway of home owner to care home resident – with no extra care in-between, as is too often the case in England. It will not take an earthquake to create this step-change; let's hope that with some easily implementable policy changes, retirement communities will no longer be an anomaly in older people's consciousness by 2030. ●

Jon Rallings, Senior Policy Officer, County Councils Network

3 Pannel Croft Village, Newtown, Birmingham, run by ExtraCare Charitable Trust

A New Structure of Feeling

Rory Olcayto describes how the third age sector is shaping visions for architecture and urbanism

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As the COVID-19 pandemic upends our lives – where we work, how we travel, how and where we socialise – our towns and cities feel forever changed. To quell the spread of the virus we have spent the past year keeping our distance from one another, hollowing out the built environment and causing architects, planners and urban designers to wonder: what are cities for? Who are they for? Are the buildings we design even the kind we need?

The virus is just the most obvious herald of a transformation underway for more than 30 years, led by the space-time collapsing power of the internet and the awesome nature of global heating. In that time, fresh thinking on the shape of communities and how to design places that feel inclusive, has arisen. The pandemic has woken us up to this change with an overdue corrective jolt.

This is the context for our work at Pollard Thomas Edwards (PTE) as we consider the future of architectural and urban design. Interestingly, many of the ideas that we had begun to adopt across all of our projects, even before COVID-19 struck, and which will have increased in relevance as the 2020s progress, have grown from our third age projects. From progressive privacy to flexible community buildings and walkable places, what we first thought of as best for older people is now best for everyone. This focus, tragically, is timely: older people have suffered the greatest proportion of COVID fatalities, raising many new questions about how we best serve our senior citizens.

Another perspective to shape our outlook is asking how much cities really change? A news story in December 2020, for example, on the discovery of an intact snack shop uncovered in ancient Pompeii, showed it had frescoes on a customer counter depicting the menu, much like a contemporary London takeaway. Could change be less than we think?

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1 Colby Lodge, Walthamstow, London – a third age building of 20 flats with other social shared facilities on the ground floor. Photographs by Pollard Thomas Edwards (PTE)
2 The ground floor plan shows the social spaces in purple, designed by PTE

REPEATING PATTERNS THROUGH TIME

Our own projects suggest that fundamental architectural ideas – traditions, defined by sociality – stubbornly recur. We can see these ideas of repeating townscape patterns and the interactions among the people who inhabit them at Colby Lodge, a third age building in Walthamstow that we designed. It is arranged in a similar way to its nearby forebear, George Monoux's almshouses, completed nearly 500 years ago.

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This shift towards genuine inclusion can be framed in terms of Welsh academic Raymond Williams' theory that every historical period has its own 'structure of feeling'

Developed by Walthamstow and Chingford Almshouses in 2018 in partnership with Waltham Forest Council, Colby Lodge includes 20 flats for local people over the age of 55 and, in the almshouse tradition, as well as bestowing shelter and security for its residents, it provides facilities for use by the wider community. Located on the ground floor, these include a large garden room with kitchen and hearth; dining and adaptable spaces for meetings or dances; a therapy room; a laundry, and gardens. It doesn't compromise the privacy of residents whose homes, which also benefit from open-air decks shared with their neighbours, are safely secured from the communal spaces.

George Monoux's almshouses date from the first half of the 16th century and were designed by and built for Sir George Monoux, a member of the Drapers Company (and Lord Mayor) who retired to Walthamstow in the 1520s. Although largely rebuilt in the 1730s and 1950s, some of Monoux's original building remain. His housing complex provided homes for poor and aged company men, 13 rooms in all, each with two windows and two doors, a fireplace sharing a chimney with an adjoining room, as well as a backyard. It included a schoolmaster's house for an adjacent school, and two long first floor galleries hosting a classroom and a church house. This upper floor was also used for parish dinners and wedding feasts for poor people, creating the community-friendly template, and with the backyards the progressive privacy model, revisited by PTE in Colby Lodge.

A STRUCTURE OF FEELING
Yet despite the similarities, this is very much a case of the same but different ideas. In essence, an almshouse in the 16th century had a different meaning to its equivalent today. It may have a similar programme, but in the society in which it functioned, it was effectively another country where things rolled differently. Where Monoux's era was one of patronage, Patrick Devlin, who leads PTE's third age projects, explains that today we are more focused upon invitation and how architecture can be used to embody this quality: 'We want our last home to be our best home, and to invite our friends, family and neighbours to enjoy it with us, while offering residents privacy and security too. It means asking how the architecture we create can promote this as well as anticipate other new patterns of use that future, more diverse generations, will bring.'

If housing for older people is located near amenities, it allows interaction with the neighbourhood to develop; a walk to the shops keeps us healthy, a sense of belonging emerges, as does the confidence to invite friends home. It means making friendlier, more welcoming entrances and better wayfinding for stairs, lifts

3 George Monoux's almshouses in Walthamstow, built in the 16th century, also included social facilities

and social spaces, throughout the development. Daylight, comfort, ease of use and space that allows for privacy as well as sociality, are typical of the best designs.

This shift towards genuine inclusion can be framed in terms of Welsh academic Raymond Williams' theory that every historical period has its own 'structure of feeling'. He argued that each period, whether the chivalry of the Middle Ages or the industrial pomp of the Victorians, had a distinct way of organising basic human emotions into an overarching cultural system that gave form to each era's specific way of experiencing being alive.

Take the concept of maternal impression, which held sway over everyday life in Western Europe right up to the dawn of the 20th Century. As Professor Julie Anderson of the University of Kent explains on *Disability: A new history* (BBC Sounds), maternal impression was a widely-held belief, and supported by 'evidence' in scientific journals, that disability was contagious especially for women. The mere sight of a disabled person, or the witnessing of distressing scenes, was enough to infect the viewer. John Merrick believed that his Elephant Man condition was due to his pregnant mother being frightened by a fairground elephant. In 2021, we can see maternal impression for what it was: a mechanism to limit freedom of movement, an expression of an older societal structure in which female voices were silenced, and physical difference maligned. It was also profoundly anti-urban, requiring much of the population – women, the poor, the disabled – to keep their distance, to isolate, to stay indoors, wherever possible.

This structure of feeling has been bequeathed to today's cities, which are still designed primarily for men, the lack of female public toilets being the most obvious example. As the *Financial Times* reported in October 2020, findings by the World Bank have shown that women occupy only 10 per cent of senior jobs at the world's leading architecture firms (among the directors at Pollard Thomas Edwards, it is 57 per cent). 'Cities work better for men than they do for women,' it concluded. As Fran Tonkiss, specialist in urban and economic sociology at the London School of Economics, added, 'because women know what it is like to be excluded by cities' designs, they approach urban planning with this wholesale, more inclusive approach. It is about creating a physical environment that is not designed around the fully grown, able-bodied male subject'.

DIVERSE URBAN DESIGN
New Ground, another of our third age projects, is a co-housing scheme for women aged 55 and older, and goes some way towards addressing Tonkiss' point. It answered a simple question: where do we

want to live when we get older? All of the residents participated fully in its design; beauty and character, ease of use, spaciousness, good storage and levels of daylight, good visual connections, and access to the seasons of the natural world were among the attributes that the residents called for, and all are principles captured in the first HAPPI report published more than ten years ago. The homes are centrally located in High Barnet, and like Colby Lodge, a few steps away from ample local amenities.

New Ground came about because the client group was persistent – it took about 20 years to complete from the first conversation – but given that it attracted around 4,000 emails after a 30-second slot on BBC News, mostly from people wanting to move in, there evidently aren't enough similar schemes out there.

Perhaps our role as architects is to be alive to emerging structures of feeling, and design accordingly. New Ground shows this foresight in action. COVID-19 has brought this properly into view: the first 2020 lockdown, which saw road transport dwindle and carbon emissions fall, highlighted the reality of global warming. It also revealed the volume of unpaid work by women, who took on far more domestic care work of children and elderly relatives, than men. A new feeling of the importance of the local emerged; community bonds were strengthened; and, when the lockdown ended, Black Lives Matter protests and the toppling of antiquated statues showed the urban cultural landscape to be far from inclusive.

In our own work, this new structure of feeling – tempered by diversity, equality and sustainability – is helping us to foster new approaches to habitation and togetherness, such as collaborating with specialists to consider what works best for the LGBT+ retirement community. More than simply using architecture as a tool to combat the negative effects of isolation for older citizens however, we have begun to consider how places can be more inclusive regardless of age, ability or background.

This can be seen in Muswell Hill's Woodside Square, a neighbourhood primarily for older people that is peppered with family homes and as well as creating a new public route, features a common room for public use. In Pemberley Place on the fringes of Bath, a new development of more than 70 extra care homes faces a public square and is set alongside a primary school. The scheme is notable for the generous communal spaces that it provides for residents, as well as a public café, a 'third place', in a courtyard garden that we hope the wider community will enthusiastically embrace.

We have been exploring the potential for third place buildings in masterplan proposals for several sites from Woodstock to Cambridge. This typology, neither home nor workplace, is community-focused, founded on sociality, where people flock to be together. It embodies an architecture of anticipation, flexible rather than prescriptive, brimming with potential, and proudly non-exclusive. Such buildings are the foundation for 15-minute cities in which work, shops, entertainment, education and healthcare are on your doorstep, no more than 15 minutes' walk away.

A COTOWN ON THE RIVERSIDE
We took the 15-minute city a step further with our design (co-created with numerous partners including CF Moller and AKTII) for the 2020 Thamesmead Waterfront competition. We called our proposal Thamesmead Cotown: 'a UK first: a new place to live, to work and enjoy, designed with the people who put down roots here. A neighbourhood distinguished by co-housing, a balanced and caring economy with equitable industries and everyday necessities within walking distance. One that blends with the local blue-green ecology and connects to the wider community and world-at-large'.

In a cotown, working from home is easy because the houses are designed for it, but we also stipulated third place venues and nearby making spaces. From the outset residents and businesses are invited to make their environment and are rewarded for the

4

5

time, effort and care that they invest in their cotown.

As well as deploying smart technology to create a digitally-managed environment flexible and responsive to changing uses, we called for a genuinely diverse neighbourhood where age, heritage, qualifications and bank balances do not matter. A willingness to put down roots is what counts. We also proposed that everyone who lives and works in the cotown shares in its future growth and social value through place bonds, equity acquired through work, care, environmental maintenance, as well as with cash.

The Thamesmead Cotown project allowed us to explore a new relevant architecture and urbanism. In many ways it is the logical application of our work in the third age sector, work that addresses the new structure of feeling, shaped by invitation, diversity and an ever-growing third age demographic, so clearly foregrounded by COVID-19. ●

Rory Olcayto, writer and critic at Pollard Thomas Edwards, and former chief executive of Open City and editor of *The Architect's Journal*

4 New Ground, High Barnet, London a co-housing third age project for Older Women's Co-Housing (OWCH) and Hanover Housing Association, designed by PTE
5 New Ground residents' design workshop

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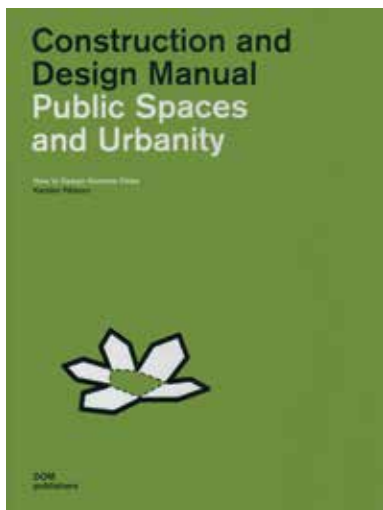
Public Spaces and Urbanity

Karsten Pålsson, 2017,
Dom Publishers, £57.00,
ISBN 978 3869226132

Published as part of a series entitled *Construction and Design Manual*, this book somewhat resembles a university course book, but is much more than a manual. Through examples from several European cities, it advocates regeneration based on traditional values and shows how to modernise cities whilst making them more humane.

In the book's first chapter, Historical Outline, Pålsson describes the evolution of European cities from the Renaissance onwards with an emphasis on urban design and covering some of the same headings as Spiro Kostof's seminal book *The City Shaped*. He stresses the contrasting approaches that have been recurrent through history, between the city of enclosed spaces and that of freestanding buildings, and how these came to a head in the past century, pitching Modernism against tradition. The author outlines various issues that endanger the quality of life in urban areas such as sprawl and segregation, often the consequence of developers' greed, but observes that some cities are addressing them, as he intends to show.

The second chapter, The Humane City, follows with suggestions on how to return to 'urban planning with more focus on classic city space qualities' and these will be familiar to urban designers: the dense city (though not necessarily the high-rise one); the perimeter block; the user-friendly public realm; the relationships between buildings and spaces, and more. This chapter ends with a list of ten urban transformation themes, each of which is then the subject of a separate chapter: Renewing dense urban areas, Culling dense urban areas, Constructing infill buildings, Transforming urban areas, Transforming buildings, Reconstructing urban areas, Establishing linear city space, Renewing local centres, Developing new dense urban areas, and Densification of modernist urban areas.
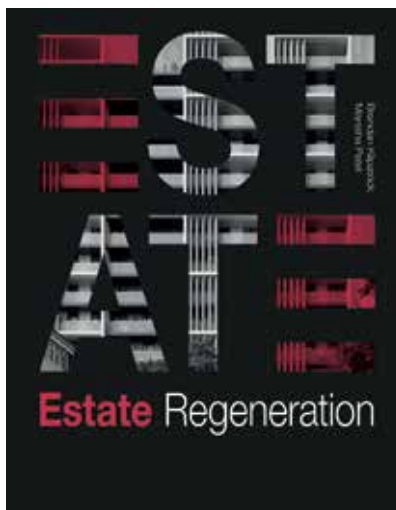
In turn each of these chapters starts with a brief essay that includes a list of Focus Points and follows with well illustrated examples. These are placed in context and briefly explained, and are not just public spaces; they include buildings and in one case, the bicycle routes of Copenhagen. Through them, the author aims to show how humane cities can be designed.

The examples provide a very useful source of information for professionals dealing with similar issues elsewhere. The text is well informed but accessible, including the occasional anecdote and avoiding jargon. Not all examples include plans and these lack scale bars; in some cases, plans are replaced by aerial photographs. Overall, images abound although not all seem relevant.

One important criticism of the book, addressed to the publishers in particular, is the lack of an index. Most readers will not read the book from cover to cover but will want to easily find specific parts of it, which in this case will be complicated. Using an indexing package would hardly have added to the already high cost of producing the book, but would have enhanced its user friendliness. ●

Sebastian Loew, architect and planner

Estate Regeneration

Brendan Kilpatrick and Manisha Patel, 2020, Routledge, £29.99, ISBN 978 0367271282

On first opening this book, I had doubts as it seemed to be an effort by designers PRP to advertise their work. On reading it however, I realised it is much more than that: the practice reflects on many years of experience in estate regeneration, explains their methodology, clarifies their concerns and draws lessons from their experience. It therefore offers much of value to other practitioners.

Twenty-four estate regeneration schemes, mostly by PRP and in the London area are described and analysed in detail, starting with a description of the estates as they found them. The involvement of the local community is painstaking and takes time, but it is at the core of PRP's work, as is their involvement with the various stakeholders (including the clients) that need to be on board. The sequence of events is similar for most of the schemes and always includes community engagement and 'the vision'.

Readers of this journal may be surprised (because of past experience) but also encouraged by the fact that in all schemes, urban design was pivotal in improving the estates. In scheme after scheme, poor urban design was the basis of the existing problems. Yes, there were issues with the dwellings, the density, the entrances and lifts, but what most residents seemed to complain about was the poor layout, the lack of permeability, the poorly designed and managed open spaces, etc. The book's introduction by Brendan Kilpatrick makes the point: 'We focus on the urban design and masterplanning journey of each example to determine best practice, for we strongly believe that this is a key ingredient for success'.

The book is divided into five sections with what appear to be somewhat arbitrary headings: Pioneering, Utopian, Visionary, Pragmatic and Evolutionary. Each of these starts with a reflective essay, which, although not very obviously related to its title, deals interestingly with various aspects of regeneration. Each essay is written by a different professional and all contribute to the debate while not shying away from criticising the system within which they are operating. For example in Manisha Patel's essay The Future, which opens the Visionary section, she laments the loss of social housing; suggests new approaches to strategic and local planning, land use and social mix, procurement, quality, community engagement; and, even reflects on the effects of the pandemic.

The book is beautifully produced and lavishly illustrated with diagrams and photographs, including useful before and after statistics for each case. It is a shame that the lack of street and place names on the maps makes it difficult to cross-reference with
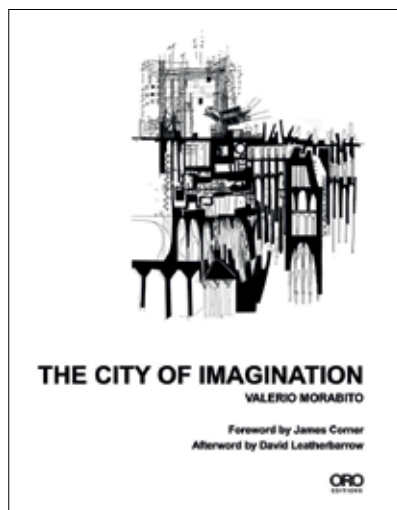
the text. This seems to be a frequent problem with architects who assume everyone is familiar with the place, but editors should know better. Despite this, the book makes a valuable contribution to housing policies in the UK. ●

Sebastian Loew

The City of Imagination

Valerio Morabito, 2020, ORO Editions, £22.95, ISBN 978 195154117

This is an intriguing book but is it relevant to urban design? Certainly, it has 'city' in its title but so did Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. Like Calvino, Morabito relies on the perception of his reader but he makes reference in his text to Kevin Lynch (unfortunately Lynch is referred to as Kenneth in the text and Kevin in the footnote), Louis Kahn and to existing cities, including London and New York.

The text occupies only a small proportion of the book, and this is confined to a foreword by James Corner, and the first 25 pages in which Morabito explains his approach and his view that imperfection is a driving force behind creativity. He contrasts this with the urban designer and others, who he claims seek to avoid or correct. The book ends with a two-page Afterword by David Leatherbarrow. Further short sections of text introduce each drawing. It is these 150 drawings that form the bulk of the book and they are divided into eleven themes. Each theme is described by a single word Ground, Bridges, Water or Time. It is difficult at times to see exactly why a particular drawing should be placed in one theme. There are stylistic similarities and graphic symbols that reoccur. Morabito himself admits that his thematic classification is not rigid and drawings might equally be placed in several categories.

The drawings contain recognisable images but do not represent the places of their origin. They are rather an impression of the spirit of a location and, like words in Calvino, the images create a place in the reader or
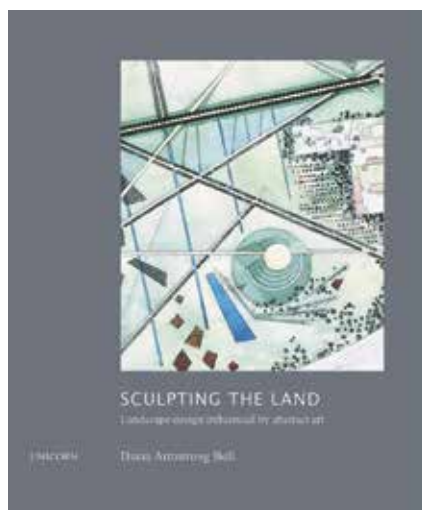
viewer's imagination. Morabito aims to look below the surface of the place before him and record this with lines, so that it can be recorded in the viewer's memory. Tantalisingly, he describes all of the drawings as having been 'manipulated, finished, or created using an iPad'. He describes them as digital hand drawings. It would have made the book even more interesting if it had included an appendix on exactly what technique the author used. Without that explanation, a cynic might claim the whole book is a self-indulgent collection of doodles. This is clearly not so; Morabito thinks deeply about what he is drawing, and why. This is a book to stir the imagination and inspire the draughtsman or woman to look afresh at urban scenes. ●

Richard Cole, architect and planner

Sculpting the Land

Diana Armstrong Bell, 2019, Unicorn Publishing, £25, ISBN 978 1912690466

Creativity has been described as part inspiration and part perspiration; this book majors on inspiration, the sensual side of design, the delight of working with brush, paint and paper. At first glance this well-illustrated book is just another vanity publication that practitioners delight in producing. At the risk of sounding like the publisher's blurb, on looking a little closer it reveals itself to be more than a self-congratulatory glossy. Eleven schemes are presented. Sadly, only five of them were fully implemented. The prime source of inspiration behind the book is the abstract art of the Russian Suprematist Kaszimir Malevich. In my view the book does not prove this link, but it is interesting to see examples of Malevich's work.

Apart from the urban design quality of the schemes illustrated, it is the quality of the watercolour realisations that attracted my eye. These are skilfully done and show just how valuable a hand-created vision can be in describing a scheme. It is troubling

to consider just how soon it will be before a well programmed machine working with artificial intelligence will be able to create images that appear to have flowed from a human-controlled brush. There are some apparent ambiguities in the book: the author is shown paint brush in hand before what is apparently a large watercolour fresh from her hand, but the image in front of her does look surprisingly like one of the illustrations that she acknowledges were produced by Richard Carmen.

As is so often found in this type of publication, competition entries are shown with all the solemnity of an implemented scheme. Two fascinating schemes can be highlighted: one for Lac de Senart is sadly only a winning competition entry, and that for Duke of York Square, also not a realised scheme. Happily that is not true of the schemes for the National Gallery gap in London and the Parco Franco in Milan. The Milanese example is certainly impressive and so is the correlation between the visualisations of the park and the photographs of the same park. Unfortunately the visualisations, presumably by Richard Carmen, are not always dated or signed; so here perhaps a second ambiguity arises: were these renditions created before or after implementation?

Is this a must-have for the practitioner's shelf? Well, it is certainly worth borrowing. ●

Richard Cole
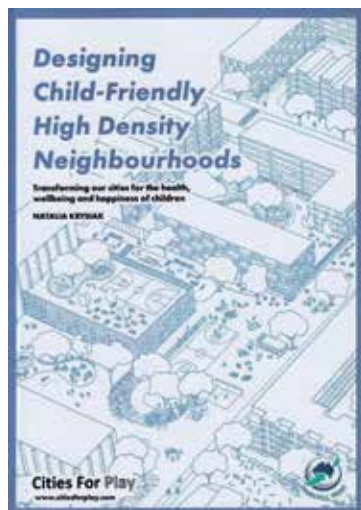
Designing Child-Friendly High Density Neighbourhoods

Natalia Krysiak, 2020, Cities for Play, free to download, ISBN 978 0646820095

It is a truism that we don't design towns and cities for children. (You might argue that we don't sufficiently design them for human beings in general, but that's a bigger issue). We expect children to adapt to the built environment that we adults design for ourselves. The child-centred city is more written about than actually built, but the idea is growing. Being old now, I sometimes quote a professor of gerontology who was once a client, whose motto was 'Design for the young and you exclude the old: design for the old and you include everyone'. There is a child-centred equivalent which is ascribed to the mayor of Bogota, 'If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for everyone'.

This book is written by an Australian architect whose award from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust enabled her to visit seven other countries to research how city authorities design neighbourhoods with children's play in mind. The relevance of 'high density' in the title is that it is about neighbourhoods which do not comprise detached houses with back gardens where children can play. It is about neighbourhoods of 60 dwellings per hectare or more, where children's play is necessarily in shared public space of one kind or another.

There is no continuous narrative: this is not a text book, but a series of case studies from the author's research, most taking up only a double page each. It is very much a 'how to do it' approach. The format reminds me of Nick Wates' handbook on participatory planning. The case studies are grouped into three types: physical design interventions, social and organisational programmes, and planning policies. The first two types are plentifully illustrated by photographs and attractive perspective line drawings, uncredited, so perhaps by the author.

It is a modest book, but a useful contribution to the growing literature on the child in the city, and I hope that it is read by the people, mostly not designers, who make the important decisions on what gets built and who can use it. My only minor reservation is that Krysiak creates a structure in which each of her 23 case studies is granted characteristics that distinguish it from the others. So we have Playable Streets, Urban Play Yard, Playful Courtyards, Child-friendly Travel Routes and so on. But actually they all join up, connected by the intention to give children an equitable status in public space, and for that space to be designed so as to fulfil their juvenile needs. ●

Joe Holyoak, architect and urban designer

Uneven Innovation

Jennifer Clark, 2020, Columbia University Press, £25, ISBN 978 0231184977

Overnight, the COVID-19 crisis has uprooted us from the office or classroom to the kitchen, bedroom or garden shed. Whether through Zoom calls, movie streaming or the explosion in online retailing, urban society seems to have been shaken to its core.

Much has been written in recent years about the notion of smart cities: a vision of plugged in, connected places, where communications are by fibre-optics and big data is king. Concepts of autonomous vehicles, 5G video-conferencing and the Internet of Things were once the province of science fiction. They are becoming part of everyday life and promise great things for our future jobs, transport, health and well-being. For some of us.

This timely book (published in February 2020, so pre-pandemic) argues that many of the purported benefits of greater connectivity and other attributes of smart cities are limited in their reach and, far from levelling out social and economic disadvantages, are predisposed to worsen them. The downside of a reliance on big tech – the democratic deficit – is all too apparent, with a few global players wielding disproportionate influence over public institutions, fiscal systems and governance. Companies like Uber are blurring the lines between employers and consumers, creating flexible but precarious work.

Jennifer Clark is Head of Planning at the Knowlton School of Architecture at Ohio State University. Her background is in regional economics, and her book draws on her experience of studying de-industrialisation and the resulting policy implications. Clark brings a refreshing scepticism to the more extravagant claims for smart cities, arguing that more emphasis has been put on the marketing of the concept than on looking at what happens to the urban environment. The result is 'uneven' innovation, in other words inequality, which sits alongside deep-rooted problems of sex, race and class discrimination.

The book is densely written, and the narrative is always easy to follow. Perhaps it will appeal to an academic readership rather than city planners or policy makers. It does not provide much by way of evidence on the ground and the urban examples – mostly from the US – are sketchily referenced. The images are few, and not very illuminating.

It is however worth persevering with, as Jennifer Clark sounds alarm bells about a huge subject and the need to reconcile commercial gain with public interest. The author concludes that communities (as represented by city governments) need to take charge of the technological challenge and develop local solutions, using local legislation or policy to capture the benefits for all. ●

Geoff Noble, urban designer and heritage consultant
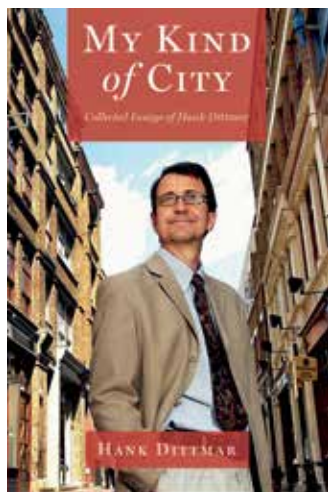
My Kind of City – Collected Essays of Hank Dittmar

2019, Island Press, £35,
ISBN 978 1642830361

British urban designers will remember the American planner Hank Dittmar as the former Director of the Prince's Foundation for Building Community, which he led between 2005 and 2013. Before settling in London, Dittmar had a remarkably wide-ranging career, working at various times as an airport director, transportation planner, policy adviser, and an outreach worker with Chicago street gangs. In the 1990s he became a leading light in the New Urbanism movement.

Dittmar compiled this collection of essays and journalism not long before his death in 2018. It was published posthumously, with tributes from his friends and colleagues including Andres Duany and Lynn Richards.

The bulk of the book is a series of lively, if often short, opinion pieces. These are mostly culled from the pages of the weekly *Building Design* magazine and thus have a topical British perspective. The author speaks up for the work of contemporary classicists, but generally he has little patience for arguments about architectural style, which he sees as an arid debate ('Cavaliers vs the Roundheads') that can be traced back to Ruskin. Dittmar does however confront what he sees as the cardinal weakness of Modernism, specifically, the legacy of Le Corbusier, of putting the object before the place, and a wilful failure to learn from the past. By contrast Jane Jacobs, Stewart Brand and especially Christopher Alexander are Dittmar's key influences, with their work referenced repeatedly in these pages. The emphasis is on the practical considerations of sustainable construction, ease of movement and the art of making lasting, adaptable places.

It is clear that Dittmar adored London, warts and all. Covent Garden's Seven Dials is his choice for a piece called 'My Favourite Street' and the cover portrait poses him against a backdrop of the Foundation's Shoreditch base. The author's international experience gives him a valuable view of British urbanism, and there are useful insights on other cities including Auckland and New Orleans.

The book is highly readable and nicely presented as a sturdy little hardback. With more than 50 essays across 200 pages, the reader can be left rather breathless at the flood of commentary; they are best sampled at leisure, and the longer, more discursive pieces are the most rewarding. The book suffers from the absence of any illustrations, so be prepared to search online for the necessary visual enlightenment. A companion volume by Dittmar *DIY City: the Collective Power of Small Actions* (2020) has been issued by the same publishers. ●

Geoff Noble

Designing Sustainable Cities

Sigrid Burstmayr and Karl Stocker (eds.), 2020, Birkhauser Basel, £36.50, ISBN 978 3035621983

Aimed at a global readership, this book brings together experiments from five UNESCO Design Cities. The editors based at the Institute of Design and Communication of the University of Applied Sciences in Graz, Austria, justify their selection because they consider these cities to be models of design for the future and for the circular economy.

Inspired by Josef Beuys' *7,000 Oaks City Forestation Instead of City Administration* project in Kassel in 1982, the Breathe Earth Collective in Graz is exploring whether cities of the future can function like forests and become urban oases. In the USA, Paul Draus, a Detroit Design Core partner, is contributing to an inclusive design strategy for Detroit, still suffering from post-industrialisation, by consciously building its wholesale reinvention on the layers of the segregated city's traumas and conflicts. Similarly, Pauline Cornejo Moreno Valle resorts to collective approaches to fix the conurbation of Mexico City, which she considers a broken city, in the hope of producing new solutions for water, waste, public space, mobility and housing by moving away from top-down private interest-driven development, towards greening the city, multimodal transport and social housing. In both cases the authors recognise that their comprehensive strategic objectives are hard to achieve, and advocate small improvements mobilised by local communities.

The main focus of the book is Istanbul, another fast-growing urban agglomeration, which joined the UNESCO City of Design Network in 2017. The broad range of design issues presented in the three chapters on the city encompass interior design, alternative architecture for an ecologically-driven, socially-engaged Istanbul, as well as more conventional urban design guides for urban planning and design, urban spaces and their components, related to policy and participation.

In conclusion Sylwia Ulicka, who teaches an innovative course on urban design in Puebla in Mexico, revisits our materialist culture in designing for sustainability. She moves from the eco-efficiency paradigm (a sustainable materialist culture and the 3Rs: reduce, reuse and recycle) with the aim of squaring the circle between finite planetary capacity and unlimited economic growth, to 'quadruple bottom line sustainability' which appropriates meaning to the materialistic culture. Following Fuad-Luke's refined model of economic viability of design and its contribution to social equity and the ecological stability of production systems, she presents examples of 'uncomfortable objects' developed by her students.

This book is full of design inspirations, but its design could do with revisiting. Its large format lends itself well to illustrations but the monochrome, bleached-out photos in turquoise and pale blue are hardly readable, especially when spread across pages, and the tiny font of the captions and references also in pale colours, are not helpful. ●

Judith Ryser

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1

Mending wall, removing wall

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.

Lines from *Mending Wall* by Robert Frost

2

3

The poet believes that walls are not always necessary to mark boundaries, contrary to his neighbour on the other side of this particular New Hampshire stone wall, which they are repairing together. The neighbour asserts 'Good fences make good neighbours', but Frost resists the homily: 'My apple trees will never get across / And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.'

Environmental determinism – the idea that our physical surroundings determine our behaviour – is a complex subject in which causality is typically difficult to prove. Although, as urban designers, we subscribe to the idea every time we add a line to a drawing of public space, imagining what we are enabling people to do in that space. But a wall is an unequivocal demonstration of determinism: it can physically prevent people moving from A to B.

There is an extraordinary example of this, closer to us than Berlin – the two walls built in Oxford in 1934 known as the Cutteslowe walls. A housing developer named Clive Saxton built a new development in north Oxford next to a council housing estate. Fearing that having council tenants as neighbours would discourage people from buying his houses, he separated the two estates by building 2m high walls across Wentworth Road and Carlton Road. They survived until 1959 when they were eventually demolished. Interestingly, a map shows that the two developments, large perimeter blocks of suburban houses with big gardens, are morphologically not that different from each other. Today, a blue plaque on 34 Aldrich Road commemorates the southern one of the two walls.

As I write this in November, another contentious urban wall is in the news. Built in 2002, and designed by the celebrated Japanese architect Tadao Ando, it is in Manchester's Piccadilly Gardens. This curving wall encloses the square on its southern edge, separating it from Parker Street. It is in two parts: a 130m length sheltering on its concave side a pavilion – occupied by Café Nero – facing the square, and a freestanding 6m length. The demolition of the smaller part has just begun on the orders of the City Council. The pavilion is privately owned, but there are proposals to remove that too. In Manchester, something is there that doesn't love a wall, that wants it down. Ando's wall has been a focus of controversy for years. It is alleged that it blocks movement and prevents visibility in the square, even though the 130m part has a big opening at its centre, providing a formal entrance into the square. It is accused of causing all sorts of anti-social behaviour, drug-taking, public urination and sexual indecency.

Can a wall encourage people to behave badly? I imagine that if you asked a police officer you might get the answer yes. Conventional wisdom seems to be that any public space that is not open to 360° surveillance will lead people into delinquency. Manchester City Council identifies blocked sightlines in Piccadilly Gardens as a contributory factor in the anti-social behaviour there, which has given the square a negative reputation. I am not so sure. I can think of other secluded urban spaces where one is not likely to be confronted by people furtively shooting up, pissing or fornicating. Ando is a master of in situ concrete, and that is what his wall in Manchester is made from (although, it has to be admitted, not quite to the immaculate standard of craftsmanship achieved elsewhere). I suspect that a dislike of shuttered concrete is a large component of the perceived problem, part of the reaction against Brutalism; if the wall had been built in rusticated masonry with Ionic pilasters supporting urns, it would not now be undergoing demolition. I merely speculate. ●

Joe Holyoak, architect and urban designer

1 One of the Cutteslowe walls in Oxford
2 The walls were taken down in 1959
3 Tadao Ando's smaller wall in Manchester's Piccadilly Gardens

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