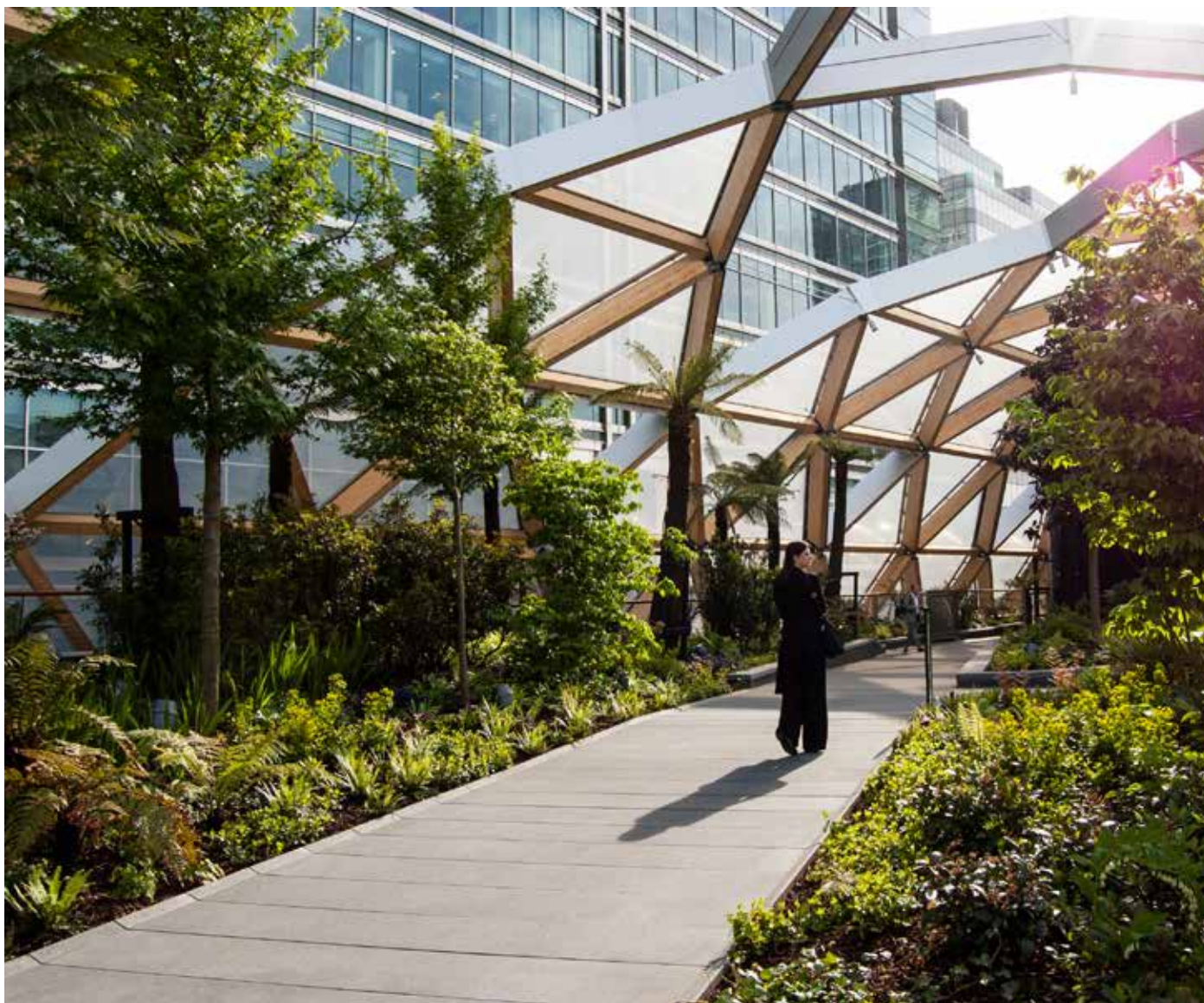


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NEW LONDON

QUARTERLY

PROPERTY | ARCHITECTURE | PLANNING | CONSTRUCTION



Interview: Sherin Aminossehe
New Londoner of the Year: Zaha Hadid
Building review: Crossrail at Canary Wharf
Top of their game: Bennetts Associates
Plus: New London Development Directory

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Crossrail Station roof garden, Canary Wharf.

Photo: © Gillespies

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It is all very well for George Osborne et al to preach about the need to tighten one's national belt, quite another for government to demonstrate how it is itself doing so. But far beyond the media headlines of recent years over MPs' salaries, expenses and duck houses, the institution is now having to look to its own estate to see how many savings can be had and how any assets can be 'sweated'. Is its very base – the Houses of Parliament – fit for purpose (or indeed sinking)? Does government have to have quite so much property in Whitehall? And is it being used as efficiently as possible anyway? The woman leading this charge is a former HOK architect – Sherin Aminossehe – and is profiled this issue. Another interviewee, Bob Sheil, is fronting a different crusade – this time towards ensuring that the architects The Bartlett puts out into the world are 'oven ready' and that the institution engages more with wider London and how it works.

Engagement is not a thing that Bennetts Associates shies away from.

The practice, the subject of our Top of Their Game feature, prides itself on the enduring relationships it forms both with its clients and its staff, being rewarded by plentiful commissions across almost all disciplines, and a happy team with few egos in sight forming a barrier to progression.

And there is plenty more besides – an interview with the New Londoner of the Year, Zaha Hadid; a piece on built environment companies moving to create new offices in new locations; opinion pieces on the City in the East, skinny towers and a workplace crisis facing the capital. And then there are all the usual features including capital ideas, a bespoke Savile Row project preview, an extensive look at Crossrail Place in Canary Wharf in our building study, and a full briefing notes section covering issues such as west London, superdensity, BIDs and, of course, Public London. Consider these assets fully sweated.

Enjoy the issue.

David Taylor, Editor

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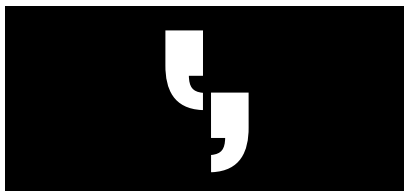
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Photo: Brigitte Lacombe

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Garden Bridge designer Thomas Heatherwick celebrates 'the human scale' at NLA's inaugural annual lecture



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Our guide to the companies and properties in London, complete with agents' views on specific areas



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NLA Awards 2015

Headlined by New Londoner of the Year winner Zaha Hadid, NLA handed out its annual awards at a lunch ceremony during the summer at the Guildhall.

The overall winner went to the Black Cultural Archives in Brixton, which saved the historic Raleigh Hall from demolition and created a new home

for BCA's extensive archives dedicated to black heritage in the UK. The inaugural Mayor's Prize, meanwhile, honoured by Boris Johnson, went to the masterplan for Blackhorse Lane in Waltham Forest by We Made That.

The full list is below and illustrated opposite. **NL**

OVERALL WINNER

1. **Black Cultural Archives**
Client: Black Cultural Archives
Architect: Pringle Richards Sharratt

MAYOR'S PRIZE WINNER

2. **Blackhorse Lane**
Client: LB Waltham Forest and Greater London Authority
Architect: We Made That

CONSERVATION & RETROFIT

Built Winner

3. **Black Cultural Archives**
Client: Black Cultural Archives
Architect: Pringle Richards Sharratt

Unbuilt Winner

4. **Commonwealth House**
Client: TH Real Estate
Architect: Orms

EDUCATION

Built Winner

5. **Burntwood School**
Client: Burntwood School, LB Wandsworth and Lendlease
Stakeholder: Burntwood School and Wandsworth Children's Services
Architect: AHMM

Built Winner

6. **William Perkin Church of England High School**
Client: Twyford Church of England Academies Trust
Lead Architect: Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

Unbuilt Winner

7. **Alexandra College**
Client: LB Camden
Architect: Haverstock

HEALTH & CARE

Built Winner

8. **The Bloom**
Client: Fulcrum Infrastructure Management / Notting Hill Housing
Architect: Penoyre & Prasad

Unbuilt Winner

9. **University College London Hospitals, Phase 5**
Client: University College London Hospitals
Architect: Steffian Bradley Architects with Pilbrow and Partners

HOMES

Built Winner

10. **Courtyard House**
Architect: Dallas Pierce Quintero

Unbuilt Winner

11. **St John's Grove**
Client: Peabody
Architect: Studio 54 Architecture

HOTELS & HOSPITALITY

Winner

12. **Ham Yard Hotel**
Client: Firmdale Hotels
Architect: Woods Bagot

HOUSING

Built Winner

13. **Lime Wharf**
Client: Family Mosaic
Architect: Stephen Davy Peter Smith Architects

Unbuilt Winner

14. **Mapleton Crescent**
Client: Pocket Living
Architect: Metropolitan Workshop

MASTERPLANS & AREA STRATEGIES

Winner

15. **Old Town Croydon Masterplan**
Client: LB Croydon and Greater London Authority
Architect / Masterplanner / Heritage Advisor / Stakeholder Engagement: Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners
Contributing Architect: Studio Weave

MIXED-USE

Built Winner

16. **St. Mary of Eton**
Client: St. Mary of Eton PCC (with London Diocesan Fund for Vicarage)
Architect: Matthew Lloyd Architects LLP

Unbuilt Winner

17. **Camley Street Incubator and Gateway Sites Regeneration**
Client: Shaw Corporation Limited
Architect: AHMM, Glenn Howells Architects and KSR

OFFICE BUILDINGS

Built Winner

18. **10 New Burlington Street**
Client: The Crown Estate
Architect: AHMM

Unbuilt Winner

19. **Four Pancras Square**
Client: King's Cross Central Limited Partnership
Architect: Eric Parry Architects

OFFICE INTERIORS

Winner

20. **UBM**
Client: UBM
Architect: Gensler

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Built Winner and Commissioning Excellence

21. **National Theatre - NT Future**
Client: The National Theatre
Architect: Haworth Tompkins

Unbuilt Winner

22. **Alexandra Palace**
Client: Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust
Architect: Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

PUBLIC SPACES

Winner

23. **Clapham Old Town**
Client / Project Manager: LB Lambeth
Concept Design: Urban Movement, Marks Barfield, Project Centre

RETAIL

Winner

24. **Foyles**
Client: Foyles
Architect: Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands

THE TEMPORARY

Winner

25. **The Green Room**
Client: Coin Street Community Builders
Designer: Benjamin Marks

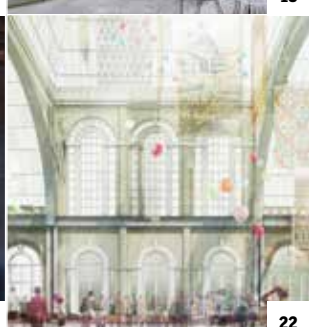
TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Built Winner

26. **London Public Cycle Repair Infrastructure**
Client: LB Lambeth
Architect: Cyclehoop Ltd

Unbuilt Winner

27. **Garden Bridge**
Client: Garden Bridge Trust
Design: Heatherwick Studio
Architect: Patch



The quarter

A quick compendium of the more important stories affecting London development over the last few months

Buildings

Tower Hamlets rejected British Land's **Norton Folgate** proposals – aka Blossom Street – after receiving more than 500 objection letters to the scheme and objectors staged a 'human chain' demonstration. The scheme, designed by AHMM, Duggan Morris and Stanton Williams, was rejected for the negative impact it would have on the Elder Street Conservation Area and its lack of affordable housing. Eco World Ballymore unveiled plans for a 35m-high suspended Sky Pool link at **Embassy Gardens** in Nine Elms. It will link two residential buildings at the 10th storey, allowing residents to swim from one building to the next. Historic England listed the **British Library** at Grade I. Designed by Sir Colin St John Wilson, it joins other nearby Grade I buildings the St Pancras Hotel and Station and King's Cross Station. **Mitsubishi Estate London** won planning permission for a 40-storey office tower in the



Making a splash – Sky Pool at Nine Elms



Fully booked – British Library gets a Grade I listing

City by Wilkinson Eyre, featuring a public viewing gallery at its peak. The scheme, an office-led, mixed-use tower with retail use at ground and mezzanine floor levels, comprises a series of stacked blocks, and involved the redevelopment of **6-8 Bishopsgate and 150 Leadenhall Street**. Network Rail is to revamp **Paddington Station** in a £20m scheme to provide better waiting facilities, more seating areas and food outlets. The company also hired bankers to conduct a review of its £1bn commercial property portfolio. Plans are being reportedly drawn up by Eric Parry for Aroland Holdings to build the City's tallest skyscraper. The site, known as **Number One, Undershaft**, involves demolition of the Aviva Tower, and the scheme is thought to be 304m tall, just short of the 309m tall Shard. John Robertson Architects completed the refurbishment of **1 Snowden Street** at Broadgate Quarter. The work involved repositioning the 11-year-old building for owner Hines, with a new reception featuring a large-scale interactive video



Norton Folgate – rejected



Towering promise – Wilkinson Eyre's 40-storey mixed office building for Mitsubishi Estates



Fit for a Lord – 1 Snowden Street

artwork by the artist Gabby Shawcross. **The Gherkin** is the building nickname of the century, according to a YouGov survey for Skanska – followed by **The Cheese grater** and the **Walkie Talkie**.

Competitions

NLA have revealed the 100 shortlisted ideas for their international competition **New Ideas for Housing**, supported by the Mayor of London. The 10 winners will be announced on 14 October. The RIBA will announce its **Stirling Prize** winner on 15 October from a shortlist

of six buildings: Burntwood School by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris; Darbshire Place by Niall McLaughlin Architects; Maggie's Lanarkshire by Reiach and Hall Architects; Neo Bankside by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners; University of Greenwich Stockwell Street Building by heneghan peng architects and The Whitworth, University of Manchester by MUMA. **The Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation** called for a design competition to be staged for the new HS2 station at the site.

Planning

Camden Council rejected Almacantar's proposed restaurant under the **Centre Point** building, citing loss of public realm, anti-social behaviour and overprovision of A3 use. Almacantar did however announce it had bought a part of the **Shell Centre** development for a reported £550m. An IPSOS Mori poll conducted on the 60th anniversary of **Green Belt** policy found that 64 per cent believed existing green belt land in England should be retained and not built on, while just 17 per cent disagreed. The Mayor announced three new **Housing Zones** for the capital in Brent, Westminster and Sutton, taking

the total up to 18. Hub and Bridges Ventures won planning permission for a 183-home scheme by Newground Architects at the **Old Vinyl Factory** in Hayes. Planning permission was granted to create a tunnel slide down the **Orbit Tower**.

People

Zaha Hadid was named as NLA's New Londoner of the Year. The architect behind the London Aquatic Centre and Serpentine Sackler Gallery collected the award for her contributions to the London design industry through her work, both in the UK and abroad, and her role as a champion of design to both the government and the general public alike. Prime Minister **David Cameron** said he would vow to crack down on 'dirty money' used by UK properties, after figures revealed that 36,342 London properties are held by offshore companies. **Helen Fisher** was appointed as Tottenham programme director at Haringey Council, leaving her post as director at the Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership. Westminster City Council's **Ben Denton** has been appointed to the board of Keepmoat as group strategy and business development director. Argent managing partner **David Partridge** replaced outgoing Colette O'Shea as the new president of the British Council for Offices. Hermes Real Estate chief executive **Chris Taylor** will succeed Legal and General's Bill Hughes as president of the British Property Federation.

Companies

Brompton Bicycles announced it is to open a new manufacturing and distribution hub at SEGRO's Greenford Park, Park Royal. Engineering firm **Morgan Tucker** has been appointed to the Kingston University Framework which will support the University's estates investment strategy.

Viewpoint

In the new political landscape, what are the biggest challenges facing education provision in London?

By Damian Arnold



Burntwood School by AHMM with graphics by Morag Myerscough © Timothy Soar

Tony Travers
Director,
LSE London



London is a young city and the number of school-age children is increasing. Boroughs with the fastest-growing numbers have found themselves having to use temporary classrooms and other short-term solutions. Gascoigne Primary School in Barking & Dagenham has almost 1,500 pupils. A third of national demand is in the capital.

The delivery of new schools requires the Department for Education (DfE) to support the funding of institutions which, today, are less directly part of local government than in the past. But boroughs still have duties in regard to the planning of places and in providing oversight of institutions which have not become academies.

'A third of national demand is in the capital'

There will be a need for new schools, in the short and medium term. Further education will have an important role in raising skill levels for those who need to re-train to sustain the city's rapidly changing economy. Universities in London are, as it happens, in the middle of a building boom: UCL is developing its Bloomsbury site and expanding into Stratford. King's College is moving into the redeveloped Bush House buildings at Aldwych, while its neighbour LSE is starting a massive redevelopment.

Pressure for expansion provides opportunities, but also brings the challenge of fund-raising at a time of flat or declining public resources.

Ann Griffin

Associate director,
Maccreeanor
Lavington



The key challenge is the funding picture, which is going to get worse.

Politically, the only funding for building new schools is targeted at free schools and academies, but they are not going to provide the places that communities need. I think we really need to see funding coming back to community schools.

For community schools, there is only the possibility of extensions, which lead to new classrooms and toilets but not to other facilities such as art, music and sports facilities and assembly halls. There is a lot of pressure on community schools to go that way.

'We really need to see funding coming back to community schools'

We are working with boroughs which are being more entrepreneurial to bridge the funding gap. For example, we are working with Camden, which is looking at cross-funding schools with a mixed-use development programme bringing in funding from the Community Investment Programme (CIP). At Kingsdale Primary School, they didn't have space so had to expand on a different site.

We are working with Southwark to expand community schools, which are typically Victorian schools. We are creating community hubs, with facilities such as public libraries, which extend use at weekends.

As architects we are participating in a peer review process to share knowledge on how to design schools on lean budgets.

Jude Harris

Director,
Jestico + Whiles



As London's population grows, there will only be increased pressure on primary schools to increase facilities and that will increase demand for secondary school places too.

For a new school, finding a site is extremely difficult because the space requirements are considerable and it is very difficult for public bodies to buy a site at current development values. We have been looking at converting old office buildings and former university buildings.

'We are looking at building student houses over schools and using the development profit to fund the school'

For example, for the Trinity Academy in Brixton we are combining three institutions on a very tight urban site that is a former further education college. The site is less than one hectare so we often have to go a bit higher than we want to and be very creative to provide the external space.

We are also looking at building student houses over schools and using the development profit to fund the school. That will bring a lot of challenges such as safeguarding, security and providing separate entrances. It is an interesting period for school design.

Increasingly, primary schools will need to provide three to five forms for each year. Critics of free schools point to the fact these extra places will not necessarily be provided in the area of greatest need.

Robert Evans

Partner, Argent



At King's Cross we are providing a community primary school using a Section 106 agreement, but the government now wants all new schools to be free schools or academies.

At Argent we have put ourselves forward as academy sponsors and were selected by Camden Council to build the first primary academy in the borough, co-locating with a school for deaf children. It is opening in September.

When setting up a new academy, land continues to be an incredible challenge. There is a lot of competition for sites, and with public money at stake, procurement can be time-consuming and difficult.

'One of the greatest challenges is the sheer amount of politics in the education sector'

For parents to create a free school requires a lot of resource and support and it means taking responsibility away from local authorities, which have been really important sources of expertise. I worry about whether this is an efficient model to draw new players into the market.

Multi-academy trusts, which could operate 20/30 schools, would be a more efficient model. Maybe there is an opportunity for the development sector to get involved here.

One of the greatest challenges is the sheer amount of politics in the education sector. It can be off-putting and lead to convoluted solutions. We are still working out the rules of the game.

Carol Lelliott
Partner, Nicholas
Hare Architects



The politics of austerity are delivering different outcomes for the higher education and schools sectors.

The new HE funding strategy, based on student fees, puts the student experience at the heart of things and this is driving design quality. Universities in London are particularly attuned to this as they need to attract the best overseas students.

With school design, the quality of the learning experience is being viewed more narrowly. The voices of the users – the schools themselves – are scarcely heard. The emphasis is on budget and a standardised product. The performance criteria are all pragmatic – ventilation, daylight, acoustics etc – which are not enough in themselves to create really great learning environments. Places and spaces that support social interaction and incidental learning opportunities don't count.

'The voices of the users – the schools themselves – are scarcely heard'

We need to augment these technical requirements with a set of aspirational guidelines, which relate to the quality of experience rather than just the effective function of a room.

The politics of immigration risks making overseas students less welcome and the funding of our universities may actually come to depend on our ability to build a love of learning in our own students from an early age. For the sake of education provision as a whole we need to correct this imbalance in the sectors.

Lee Bennett
Partner, Sheppard
Robson



School design in London needs an injection of big ideas in terms of architecture and procurement. There needs to be a fundamental change in attitude about the quality of our schools, but I am positive about the potential of raising the benchmark for school design in the capital. This follows our work with Liverpool City Council on its new model for creating architecturally engaging schools on a low budget.

'School design in London needs an injection of big ideas in architecture and procurement'

As the funding for BSF dried up, Liverpool responded independently and is now one of the few councils that have found a scalable solution of how to deliver high-quality schools. This approach, referred to as the Liverpool Schools Model, creates a flexible and economic clear-span 'shell' structure into which individual interior components are added to create a mix of learning and social spaces bespoke to the individual school's requirements. This design methodology has been used to deliver four schools.

More councils are now interested in adopting the Liverpool Schools Model, which is ideally suited for London. The model delivers school buildings in little over a year; these structures can be easily adaptable over the life cycle of the school.

If, in the future, the educational requirements of the area change substantially then the school shell could host a new use.

Dr Helen Jenner
Corp. director of
children's services,
LB Barking and
Dagenham



The capital remains in need of more primary and secondary school places.

In London, school sites are harder to find and more expensive to develop. There is more competition for space and the cost of building is higher. Easy expansions have already happened and the simplest rebuilds have been completed. The financial support we previously received from government was at best tight and in far too many cases insufficient.

The government has committed £7 billion to meet the challenge but we do not know how much will be invested in London. It has also planned 500 free schools, which are likely to form at least part of the solution here.

'The financial support we previously received from government was at best tight and in far too many cases insufficient'

Councils in London are working tirelessly to make sure London's children and young people have access to a good school place near to where they live. We've been successful so far, but five more years of insufficient funding, with costs for building secondary provision much higher than primary, means maintaining progress seems an unlikely prospect.

We will keep making the case for London's costs to be met, but there is a bigger question: how we can harness the expertise of local leaders and school place planners, alongside the resources of central government, to the benefit of London's schoolchildren.

Claire Kober
Leader, LB Haringey



The recent story of education in London has been one of unbridled success. When the London Challenge launched in 2003, fewer than 40 per cent of students in the capital achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE. By the time it finished in 2011, this had risen to more than 60 per cent. In Haringey, we've seen our schools improve still further, and even been singled out by the Department for Education as exemplary.

'If we are to future proof the next generation of young Londoners, then we must improve the quality of STEM education'

Despite this progress, it's clear that education at all levels in London needs modernisation if it is to continue to equip today's students for the capital's fast-moving job market. The growth of the technology sector, with world-leading companies such as Google and Facebook choosing our city as a place to expand their businesses, is a huge opportunity.

Employers currently find that almost half of vacancies in STEM occupations are hard to fill due to a shortfall in the required qualifications. If we are to future-proof the next generation of young Londoners, then we must improve the quality of STEM education. That's why in Haringey, we're establishing an independent commission to advise how STEM education can be improved.

If successful, we will prepare our students for this changing world.

Andrew Brown
Head of Regeneration
(Capital Works), LB
Southwark



Local authorities may no longer be able to build their own schools, but they are still responsible for ensuring the provision of sufficient places to meet demand.

Knowledge of every school's capacity to expand, informed by competent and systematic property review, is an essential prerequisite. Getting on the front foot with external parties, such as potential academy and free school providers, the Education Funding Agency and diocesan bodies, enables the local authority to help to shape provision. Lastly, an integrated approach to planning policy formation helps to ensure that appropriate provision for schools is built into regeneration and placemaking initiatives.

'Design excellence need not mean high cost'

Design excellence need not mean high cost. Talented architects can design out dysfunctional use of space from years of ad hoc school building alterations. We make sure that the architect and building services engineer see the project through from start to finish. For design and build, this is achieved by including novation and direct access provisions in contractors' terms of appointment. By working in partnership with external providers, financial resources can stretch further, as school places are mainly funded through the EFA with, at most, a top-up contribution by the authority.

Finally, more funding to reflect rampant price inflation currently prevalent in the London construction market would be most welcome.

John Deasy
Commercial director,
Hilson Moran



Having looked at many schools as part of our technical advisory role during the Building Schools for the Future programme, I'm afraid some of them were lacklustre. There has been a tendency to over-engineer school buildings, particularly from a building services point of view. This has made them costlier to run and harder to maintain and in nine out of ten cases the school systems fall into disrepair. Our philosophy is 'less is more' and we need to ensure that we install simple systems for lighting, heating and controls.

'We did some work last year for another borough on biorhythmic lighting to try to solve the problem of children falling asleep during class time'

We are working with a London borough to expand the school capacity, including refurbishing existing stock to make the schools more energy efficient. We also did some work last year for another borough on biorhythmic lighting to try to solve the problem of children falling asleep during class time, and acoustic studies to improve classroom audibility.

In some of these school sites you could make much better use of space. For example, catering for several schools could be centralised within the locality to free up space for teaching.

There is scope for other players to enter the market in school provision. The work of Peabody at the Thamesmead Estate in Plumstead is a good example of what can be done.

What they said

Some of the best quotes and facts from NLA speakers and, opposite, across the twittersphere via hashtags

For more live tweets and quotes from NLA events, follow the hashtag #nlalondon. For write-ups, go to www.newlondonarchitecture.org/news

‘We need to make streets places too.’

Gareth Sumner, principal urban design advisor, TfL Urban Design Team

‘Where will people on low incomes live in future? If I wasn’t sure before, I am sure now that we will see the hollowing out of London’

David Montague, L&Q’s chief executive, New ideas for housing - working group

‘We will aim to do one architectural exhibition every year’

Charles Saumerez Smith on the redevelopment of the RA #RAMasterplan

‘London is almost as densely populated as Shanghai’

GLA’s Jeremy Skinner #NLAINfrastructure

‘Our belief is that financial benefits will follow’

Grosvenor’s Will Bax on investing in public space #PublicLondon

‘London, you could argue, is the thought-leading capital of the world’

Thomas Heatherwick #NLAHeatherwick

‘(Investors) want to know how each area will change demonstrably and tangibly before their own investment goes in’

Mark Lucas Head of Inward Investment & Enterprise at LB Redbridge – Think tank on developing around transport hubs

‘Slow down, say hello and be aware there are other people in the street’

Henk Bouwman #NLACycleSummit

‘It is important to remember that we want a better, not just a bigger city’

TfL’s Lucinda Turner #NLAInfrastructure

NLA



I want Yair Ginor of Lipton Rogers Developments to come to my office & put some of his amazing cycling facilities in place!!

#NLACycleSummit – Rachel Botterill @London_MTB

Long term increase in cycling will come from more shorter trips. Showers more useful for lunchtime joggers

#NLACycleSummit @Davidntaylor – Mark Strong @ibikebrighton

Jorn Peters senior strategic planner, GLA: London will need 32k new homes, 40k new hotel rooms, 3m new trips by 2031

#NLAInfrastructure – Rob Scott @robxscoott

Need to look at what kills cyclists, but also what ‘nearly’ kills cyclists – Andrew Gilligan

@nlalondon #NLACycleSummit – maynard design @maynarddesign

Grosvenor will spend another £75m over the next 10 years to create more attractive public spaces across its portfolio

#PublicLondon @nlalondon – Drew McNeill @12just3drewit

The change in London’s cultural institutions was free admission – it brought shops and cafés to generate revenue

#CultureTriumphs @INGMEDIA



Wanted: innovation in housing

Peter Murray muses on the need for more and better ideas in housing – the subject of an NLA competition

Linus Pauling, the great American scientist, once said: ‘The way to get good ideas is to get lots of ideas and throw the bad ones away.’ His words sprang to mind as we sifted through the couple of hundred entries for NLA’s New Ideas for Housing Competition; although, I have to say, there were gratifyingly few really bad ideas. There were good old ideas, a lot of overlap of ideas and a lot of thinking that is hard to express within the confines of day-to-day practice. There were ideas from the large scale – top-down prefabricated products – and the local community-level process involving the homeowner or occupier in design and construction.

If necessity is the mother of invention, we should be very busy inventing right now. In the post-war period, there was a lot of invention: there was a substantial number of prefabricated housing systems, some using heavy concrete and some produced by the car and aircraft industries; soldiers returning from the war were encouraged to assist in group-build projects. In the 1960s and 70s, the UK was able to build up to 500,000 homes per year in contrast to the measly 220,000 we built in 2014. Although we know well enough now that not all of what was built was fit for purpose in the longer term, it was a gargantuan effort in a period of austerity and today’s critics of that period should bear that in mind and rue our own failure to get anywhere near required numbers.

There was a flowering of thinking and designs for new housing in the capital. In the public sector, the low-rise high-density schemes designed under Sydney Cook at Camden Council were revolutionary and remain exemplars of high-quality urban living.

The Greater London Council delivered many sound and well-built estates as well as radical ideas-led schemes like the Primary Support Structures and Housing Assembly Kits method (PSSHAK).

Walter Segal’s houses were of such simple construction that their construction could be undertaken cheaply and quickly by anyone, while Lewisham Council provided sites whose tricky topography made it uneconomic for standard public housing schemes. Segal’s work has recently been featured in a splendid video produced by the Architecture Foundation called ‘Walter’s Way’.

Stuart Lipton has asked why houses aren’t built more like offices; Farrell and Grimshaw were doing just that in the 1960s. The Park Road apartments designed in 1968 were a pioneering design with a central core that allowed potential occupiers no fewer than 73 variations in plan. The flexible layout, owing more to office technology than residential, remains unmatched in its ability to adapt to resident’s changing needs and lifestyles. It was delivered by a housing association set up by the architects; by avoiding the developer’s overheads a cost saving of 50 per cent on the market price was achieved.

It would be hard to look around London today and find such levels of innovation. The large residential developers deliver standard products in towers or mansion blocks of contemporary design; even the Athlete’s Village for the Olympics was a simulacrum of the Barcelona grid; we see Boris Johnson’s New London Vernacular popping up throughout the metropolis. They’re fine, but can’t

deliver the numbers this way – you can’t get bricks for love nor money and labour prices are going through the roof.

Reasons to be cheerful include Pocket Living which has been building smaller homes that make up for the lack of space with really thoughtful design; dRMM has plans to build a floating village at the Royal Docks in east London; construction companies like Laing O’Rourke are developing really efficient off-site production technologies; Rogers Stirk Harbour is working with the YMCA to develop affordable starter accommodation for young people. Their Y:Cube units are 26m² one-bed studios that arrive on site as self-contained units.

But it’s not enough. London needs to build something like 60,000 homes a year yet is currently not delivering half the number required. Land and housing prices are such that young professionals are finding it a struggle to live in the capital while those at the bottom of the housing ladder are being forced out of the city altogether.

We launched the competition to promote lots of ideas that will make a contribution to this currently intractable problem. There is no silver bullet, but a bit more innovation and imagination I believe can help to put a big hole in those numbers. **ML**

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Photo: Alberto Heras

London calling

New Londoner of the Year Zaha Hadid is keen to work in her 'home base city' London again as the practice aims to put many of its Tokyo stadium issues behind it. David Taylor caught up with her

'Architecture is painful.'

New Londoner of the Year Zaha Hadid is reflecting not just on the process by which her designs come into reality, but also the Tokyo affair – in which her practice found itself in a maelstrom of public criticism over her Olympic stadium design. It has had for her an uncanny resemblance to another saga involving a putative ZHA building over 25 years ago. This was the Cardiff Bay Opera House, which still rankles with Hadid for the way in which she believes she was the subject of an extreme form of prejudice that led to the scheme being abandoned. And she is angry about the way in which her friends this time round – Arata Isozaki and Fumihiko Maki among them – militated against her, in favour of opening the Tokyo competition again.

Hadid is on the line from Miami, where she is working on a string of projects that includes the 62-storey '1000 Museum' condos that are set to complete in 2017, the Garage – a car park for Miami Beach for which funding is being sought – and a study

for a small campus for 'the Brazilians'.

It's a place she likes very much, and work there and elsewhere in the US contrasts starkly with London, where the practice has nothing on at the moment, despite the successes of the Serpentine Sackler Gallery, Aquatics Centre (where she has had a party, but not swum) and the Evelyn Grace Academy in Brixton. Why so little activity? It's a puzzle, but Hadid thinks it is in part because her practice is pigeon-holed, that she socialises little with the developers she feels are more at home on the golf course, or that people feel they only do cultural projects. Whatever the answer, London is a place she loves, it saddens her she's not working here more, but the city has become obsessed with 'neo-rationalism', which doesn't sit with its essential character. All those high-density, low-rise buildings with small windows, she says, are too samey.

So, Tokyo, and Cardiff, and history repeating. Cardiff was a cause célèbre when she won the competition, only for it to slip away under a cloud

of political and personal mutterings and manoeuvrings.

'I made a conscious decision when they cancelled the project,' she says. 'I was very upset about it, obviously, but I have to turn a page and move on. I'm not bitter about it all. I still think it was really bad, but it is a recurring theme in our lives. The whole Japanese thing is very similar now. It is almost identical, if not worse.'

Where Cardiff was a project in which ZHA worked on the scheme for a year before submission to the Millennium Commission, Tokyo was a three-year affair, and ZHA is considering whether it will enter the reopened competition as well as reportedly joining forces with engineer Nikken Sekkei on a revised scheme. In Cardiff, though, she says she had support from across the country, members of the public approaching her to say they were embarrassed about the situation. In Tokyo, Hadid believes it is a different story, at least in terms of her profession. 'It is shocking and appalling the behaviour of the local architects,' she says. 'Isozaki, Ito, Maki – Maki, from

the day we won it he has been against it, lobbying, holding demonstrations, petitions. He has behaved very badly. First he said it was the wrong size, then it was too high, then it was too big, but he wanted to do the project; that is the bottom line.'

Hadid says she got Ito the Serpentine Pavilion and fought for him to get the Pritzker. And then this. 'They were furious that I won it.'

This is a sadness, as Hadid loves Japan and had her first show ever outside of the Architectural Association in Japan in 1985. 'I feel very sorry this has happened.'

Back in the UK, she is an admirer of the work of 'Richard and Norman', with Rogers being 'amazingly supportive' of Hadid and her projects over the years, not least with Cardiff and Tokyo. She also cites people like David Adjaye. But in London more generally, although she loves its busy-ness and vitality, even in the face of stark population rises she feels Crossrail will do much to allay in terms of infrastructure, she has big concerns over the housing crisis and affordability question. 'I feel very strongly that a city cannot exist on only the middle class and very rich people. I don't know how people can afford to buy a property.

They need higher density.' And there is that anxiety over a lack of work here. 'I would like to work in London because this is my home base. I don't have anything in London. We're not very pushy but I think developers in London think we just do cultural buildings. We need to expose that somehow.' Hadid is keen to do social housing in the UK, citing Oscar Niemeyer's Brasília as the optimum example of this in existence, but is also aware of some of the requirements here that make it 'impossible' to create something as special. She refuses to be paranoid about ZHA's lack of London work, but suggests that perhaps they are viewed as expensive. 'I don't know. There must be some sort of stigma attached to us. I don't mingle with [developers] also. I have a disadvantage. I don't want to bandy the woman thing again but it is a disadvantage in that sense.'

London needs 'some other idea', as there is only one operating on the city now: neo-rationalism. 'I think they are mimicking Berlin but Berlin is a block city; London is not. It is very irregular,' she says. 'We need to break the rhythm. It cannot be all rationalist. They use the excuse of the recession or sustainability to do what I call in Berlin Stone Age projects. Stone, or

in London brick, with small windows.' She feels the regeneration of King's Cross – almost universally admired in other quarters – expresses some of this 'confusion' in the city. 'Every development is low rise, high density. It's very strange.' This is a very dense interpretation of the programme, she goes on, which leaves little in the way of void or for public domain. London also has 'random towers' without any 'organisation of the skyline'. It's erratic. London needs to build at a higher density to accommodate everybody but dollar and pound signs are intervening for housing developers.

'Berlin is a block city; London is not. It is very irregular'

Is she optimistic about how the city is developing? It has improved immeasurably in 20 years, not in the quality of the buildings but on the social level, Hadid believes. In essence, it has embraced a sense of the Continental. 'Thirty years ago, walking around you would never find an eatery or a coffee shop or somewhere to rest your feet,' she says. 'People are just going out. The British enjoy the Continent and I think they have brought it back to London. I think that is a fantastic lifestyle.' The city used to be New York's dull cousin. No longer. But it has not become a better place to live in for those on lower incomes. And one of the key problems in central London is transport – the stretched systems and the proliferation of white vans and trucks – Hadid believes, and neither is the bicycle the only answer. Perhaps one answer is to learn from cities like Wuppertal or look to trams or elevated systems, she suggests. 'They need to find a solution because it is too jammed.'

Looking over Hadid's own oeuvre, she professes to a particular attachment to certain schemes. One is Rome – the MAXXI scheme where she



Field of dreams – the contentious Tokyo stadium design

Photo: Hutton + Crow



In the swim – the London Aquatics Centre

Photo: Inexhibit



Peak of performance – the cantilevered Messner Mountain Museum

Photo: Luke Hayes



Park life – the Serpentine Sackler Gallery

‘remembers every line’. Another is Baku (the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Centre), which she believes is an incredible achievement in terms of seamless quality. And another still is the recent ‘very sweet’ project in the mountain – a museum for renowned climber Reinhold Messner at the top of Alpine peak Mount Kronplatz, with its underground galleries and a viewing platform that cantilevers over a valley. But the ‘very stunning’ Aquatics Centre is right up there in the forefront. It stirs her particularly because it is cheap to swim in, open to all, and even overwhelmed one young female swimmer to tears. ‘That is why it is very important to balance one’s career and do public work’, says Hadid, ‘because there is nothing more pleasurable than watching people accessing these spaces. Through all my work we try to introduce a public domain in the building ... People learn through going to different domains.’

Hadid is designing exhibitions, furniture, even Adidas sneakers for Pharrell. Does she have the same design approach for this kind of thing as for buildings? The Aqua Table came indirectly from the Aquatics Centre – furniture is quicker, obviously, with milling technology changing the whole system of production. In a sense, then, they stem from similar roots. So which gives her more pleasure? ‘I love architecture,’ says Hadid. ‘But it’s painful. I personally think it is an amazing topic because it has so many layers, so many assets. It is so complex and complicated and you need so many people to churn out a building, so much expertise. It is amazing, but it is very tough.’ It is, though, important to keep one’s optimism, and move on, she says.

All of which contributes to Hadid’s New Londoner of the Year Award. ‘I must say I’m always very surprised when I receive something like this,’ she says. Why? ‘I don’t think about it. I’m not one of these plotting people who decide, “Oh, I should get an award”. So it is always a nice surprise.’ **ML**



Estate of the nation

Sherin Aminossehe is chief operating officer of the Government Property Unit and the highest-ranking architect in government. Peter Murray spoke to her

You can understand why George Osborne is keen on property. It is the second biggest bill the government has to pay after people, and it not only presents him with opportunities for efficiencies in the age of austerity, it also generates substantial amounts of money.

‘Government looks at its costs and thinks: Am I going to cut my people? Am I going to cut my frontline services? No, I’m going to look at what I own,’ says Aminossehe in her characteristic interrogative style. ‘Do I really need to have that much? Do I really need to be based in Whitehall? Do I need to have my own special shiny front door? Often the answer to all three of those is “No”.’

Aminossehe moved from private architectural practice into the civil service in 2011. She had been working for HOK on large-scale masterplans in the Middle East and was looking for a change. ‘I was doing a lot of paper exercises which went into a nice report and gathered dust on a shelf. I wanted to work in the UK where I could see something actually happening.’

Instead of designing masterplans she now disposes of unnecessary government property and helps departments use their buildings more

efficiently. ‘Over the last parliament we are looking at £1.8 billion receipts, 2,000-plus buildings and land released and we hope to be accelerating that over the next few years.’ The Unit has a commitment to deliver about £6 billion worth of receipts to the end of 2020 and is working with local authorities to deliver similar savings and improvements in performance.

‘Ministers from both the Cabinet Office and Treasury are asking us to take a more commercial view to portfolio management and to develop the One Public Estate programme, where we work with local councils and other public sector organisations to share buildings and re-use or release surplus property and land.’

To generate further reductions in departmental expenditure, Aminossehe is keen on hubs: ‘Who needs to be in Whitehall in Central London? What are commutable areas?’ she asks. Gone are the policies of the past when departments were moved to cheaper provincial locations; civil servants will move to commutable areas like Stratford, Croydon and Wembley. ‘Developments even as far out as Reading are really viable. We are also looking at IT, the way we use buildings,

space utilisation, at smart working and standards across government. It is about using desk space much more efficiently, allowing more collaborative working rather than having people sit at a workstation all day.’

This is just the start. As George Osborne announced in the Budget in March, from 2017 departments will be charged a commercial rent.

‘People think the majority of our estate is freehold, but it’s not. In London it is close to around 50 per cent, but if you look at the north east it barely hits 10 per cent. Across the country it is roughly a third of freehold. We will keep hold of freehold when it makes sense. It has to be in the right location, configured in the right way. We have to be able to use it as a modern building.’

So is the government building up long-term efficient assets in the manner of the great estates like the Crown and Grosvenor?

‘The analogy is a really interesting one. As we develop our hub programme and new property models we will be able to go much more into longer-term investment strategies. You could perceive Whitehall as a great estate in the making. I think this is a really exciting concept.’

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‘The One Public Estate started with 12 local authorities, went on to 32, including London authorities. Now we have funding to expand up to a further 100, which is brilliant. We are looking at data: Do you know what you own? If you know what you own, do you know what you are doing with it? If you know what you are doing with it, are you then being ambitious enough? If you think you are being ambitious enough in terms of asset management, are you taking it that step further? Are you thinking of the wider links to regeneration? Are you making your locale a better place as a result of the way you manage your asset? Finally, are you just managing assets for the sake of it or are you thinking of the tie-in to services and how you are actually delivering your services? We need to look wider to local authorities and get them to use their land much more productively for housing.’

One of Aminossehe’s favourite examples of the efficiencies this

interrogation can deliver is the local authority who spent just £10,000 to identify £35 million worth of land for housing that they didn’t even know that they owned. ‘That’s not a bad return for investment really!’

‘We need to look wider to local authorities and get them to use their land much more productively for housing’

So what will the government estate look like at the end of this parliament? ‘Our estate will be a lot smaller, and not only in London. In London we hope to go to about 20 buildings down from around 70. We are currently looking at where we think our hubs ought to be placed. In general you will see, I would hope, a smaller estate but also a better estate that is much more fit for purpose and what we need a modern government to do.’

As far as the Palace of Westminster is concerned, the GPU is working alongside Parliamentary Estates to provide accommodation should there be a full decamp of the building but that debate has yet to happen. Although Whitehall and Victoria are likely to remain the key hub for Government, the changes taking place in the estate are good for the area, Aminossehe believes. ‘If you look at Victoria Street, 10 years ago it was a ginormous monopoly of departments, it had a dead street scene because of the blacked-out windows at ground floor. Look at the amazing developments happening now, and that change creeping further and further towards Whitehall.’

She sees it all as a part of the evolution of the city and of the way government deals with its estate and manages its – our – assets in the most efficient way. ‘If we are not using our buildings there is very little need to hang onto them for a rainy day.’ NL



Centre of attention: Aminossehe is leading a charge towards creating the ‘One Public Estate’



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Intelligent densities, vertical communities

By Kent Jackson, design director, SOM

London is currently facing what many are calling a ‘housing crisis’. We at SOM are proposing that this housing shortage should be treated as an opportunity; a chance to create new and desirable housing typologies in denser configurations in response to the need to house an additional 1.5 million people over the next 15 years.

Our research has focused on identifying opportunity areas in London where a high-density housing model, which incorporates adaptable unit typologies and shared amenities, could house Londoners in an efficient and innovative way. Coupled with a holistic design approach, this new way of thinking could address the needs of a community, while minimising the impact to the environment and eliminating the need to look to the green belt for future development space.

‘We are proposing that this housing shortage should be treated as an opportunity’

In addition to preserving the green belt, among other sustainable considerations, SOM’s proposal puts forth a timber structure buildable up to 60 storeys that provides greater flexibility for future adaptation when compared with a typical residential construction in concrete. More importantly, using timber as the predominant construction material would not only maintain the amount of material used in construction, but also reduce the embodied carbon emissions by 80 per cent when compared against a concrete benchmark.

Our findings of timber prove to be both interesting and promising: if,

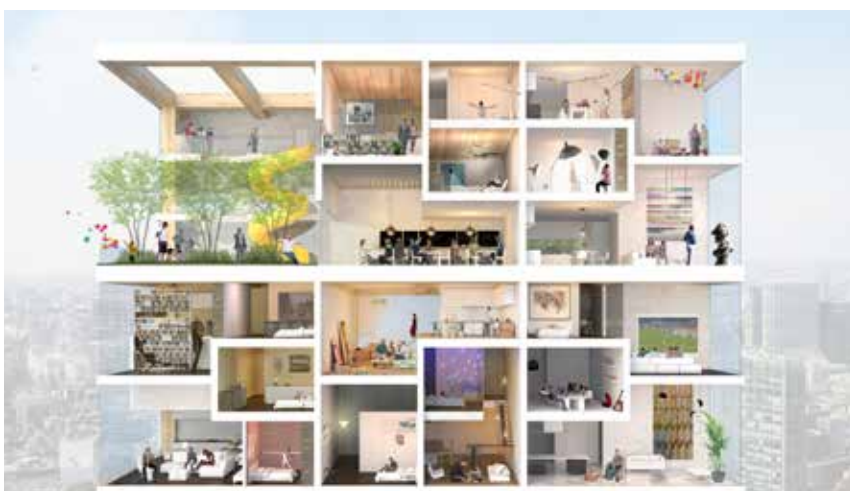
for example, the two hundred-odd residential towers that currently have planning permission in London were constructed from wood, they would only use a quarter of the UK’s annual yield of timber. And while UK suppliers are not yet set up to supply such a demand, it is worth considering the potential for UK industry.

At SOM, we are currently in the process of taking some of this ‘blue-sky

thinking’ and integrating these exciting principles into our design approach in order to make a long-lasting and meaningful change. To do this, we are working closely with city planners and influential organisations such as NLA to effect change by looking to evolve the current housing guidelines to enable architects, such as ourselves, to design and build better homes in which Londoners will aspire to live. **ML**



Wood works: SOM’s proposal is for a timber structure buildable up to 60 storeys



Green living – using timber could reduce embodied carbon emissions by 80 per cent

Life lessons

Bob Sheil is director of The Bartlett School of Architecture, crowned number one in the Guardian's list of architecture schools. He talked to Peter Murray about the school's links with London and modern practice

Architectural education originally emerged out of architects' offices and enjoyed close links with the profession. But when it became part of the university system, there was a tendency for schools to retreat into their ivory towers and connections to practice became fractured. Today, there is a marked shift among some schools to re-engage with the outside world, none more so than at The Bartlett School of Architecture. This is a part of a rather confusing array of departments that

'Today, there is a marked shift among some schools to re-engage with the outside world, none more so than at The Bartlett'

makes up The Bartlett UCL faculty of the built environment. Early next year the faculty will be expanding from its Bloomsbury campus into 3,000 sqm of studio space at Stratford in the refurbished Olympic Media Centre, which is being converted into a cutting-edge tech hub as it prepares for the opening of its new campus on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in 2019.

Bob Sheil, who is leading this shift in the architecture school, got his degree at The Bartlett and hasn't left the place since. When he started, the school was run along lines set by Richard Llewelyn-Davies, who headed the department in the 60s and 70s. 'It was a joint association with the planners and the builders. We went to the same lectures, and then we went off and did our own projects.'

Then along came Archigram's Peter Cook, who moved the few hundred metres up Gower Street from the Architectural Association on Bedford Square. Cook heralded a revival in the Bartlett's reputation, which had played second fiddle to the AA during Alvin Boyarsky's chairmanship and the school had produced students like Rem Koolhaas, Zaha Hadid and Nigel Coates.

Llewelyn-Davies's vision died out in the Cook era. 'All that building science stuff was parked in the School of Graduate Studies. It was an ideological decision. Peter wanted a complete free space for architecture.'

Cook focused on teaching. 'He put research in one corner and we were a teaching academy. It was the right thing to do at that time.'







Sheil: 'The Bartlett's introversion has run its course. It is time for us to say: "what else can we do in the world?" and bring projects in'

We did that for 15-20 years.' It was not unsuccessful. The school's reputation soared and its alumni did well. 'The first generation of Peter's students, who received the benefit of that revolution, are now in their 50s and starting to make a difference in the real world, like Simon Allford and Paul Monaghan. Right behind them there are Joe Morris and Mary Duggan, etc and there's another wave behind them as well.

'The Bartlett's introversion has run its course. It is time for us to say: "what else can we do in the world?" and bring projects in.'

So Sheil invited Peter Bishop, professor of urban design and former head of Design for London, with his extensive knowledge of London and its networks, to become director of enterprise and to build up connections in practice and business.

Enterprise is not new to The Bartlett. The Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA) and Space Syntax have been very successful but these are not part of the Architecture School.

Sheil wants to engage more directly with London, its politics and growth. There are plans to set up a Research Centre for the capital. As well as Bishop, the staff includes former City of London planner Peter Rees.

'We are recognising the fact that we have these enormous relationships that underpin everything we do. We would not be as successful as we are if we were not in London. The faculty is very international. About 50 per cent of students are from overseas – by which I mean outside Europe. We are offering an education that taps into London as a local and global resource. We have a team of academics who have a very practice-minded approach. It's not just networking, it's taking on tricky questions and developing a response.

'We are interested in making and fabrication where we will carry

risks in terms of prototypes that the commercial world cannot. The technicians in our workshops are incredibly knowledgeable and skilled. This overlaps with the changing shape of practices. It is very common now for them to have an R&D department. Practices are becoming like mini-universities, some even medium-size universities.'

As an example of the sort of projects Sheil wants the school to do, he cites a piece of work recently carried out for Thomas Heatherwick for a project in Shanghai where the designer was seeking to use a bamboo balustrade. The technical challenge was to compress the bamboo into a dense block and then shape it into a 3D curve. 'What we were able to do was verify that we could make exactly what was designed. Heatherwick Studio went to Shanghai, put it on the table and said: "there's the design, there's the data, this is it being made, we know what we are talking about, when we say we can do this, we can". And they won the bid.'

'I think a student should be able to walk into an office and be of use to them on day one'

The school has also been working with Factum Arte based in Madrid, founded by Englishman Adam Lowe, which specialises in 3D scanning of delicate artefacts, paintings, sculptures and spaces, such as Tutankhamun's tomb. 'The 3D copies are in such detail it allows us to pack up the originals and put them away. Not only that, but they can peel away the layers of all the restoration done on the projects in the past.'

Sheil is interested in apprenticeships. 'In many ways, the crisis in our industry isn't so much at the top end; we have an abundance of tools and an abundance of people. The big gap is

in the middle in how we are delivering buildings. We have a skill shortage.

'If we have an educational environment which is a catalyst to apprenticeships, undergraduates, foundation courses and Masters and link those to industry, we can become more than just a school of architecture.'

Education is not about producing office fodder, oven-ready architectural practitioners, he says. 'Education is not about mimicking practice. It complements it and is essential. Education has more to offer.


'We are educating for a future that we are trying to figure out. Our current first-year students were born in 1997 and they will be getting to the time of their lives when their education will be making a difference in 2028/30. What do we know about that? Things are changing so fast.

'Yes, I think a student should be able to walk into an office and be of use to them on day one, basic skills, basic knowledge need to be there, but each office has its own way of doing things, its own standard procedure, its own preferred way of designing, own preferred consultants. It can take a year for a student to get their heads around all of that.'

In terms of key computing skills, students can mostly teach themselves. 'Tutorials are set and we do open classes in computing, but there is a mountain of information out there. The shelf life of a program these days is four to five years. Rhino is a big thing right now but it will be gone in a few years' time and there will be something else. Some students are using their time in education to develop their own applications.'

And they won't all go into conventional practice. Sheil mentions two recent Bartlett undergrad students who set up Bio-bean to recycle waste coffee and turn it into fuel. 'They won The Guardian Entrepreneur of the Year and they have not even got as far as Part II.' Now that's enterprise! ■

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE REMARKABLE PLACES WE MANAGE

A photograph of two people, a man and a woman, working on bicycles at an outdoor repair station. The man on the left is wearing a black jacket and a beanie, and is holding a large black wheel. The woman on the right is wearing a black jacket and is smiling while working on a red and blue bicycle. They are both wearing black uniforms with a logo that says 'LONDON'. The repair station has a green table with various tools and supplies on it. In the background, there is a colorful mural and some trees.

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Why skinny skyscrapers are back in fashion in London

Bill Price, director, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff



Skinny to go: CIM Group and Macklowe Properties' 432 Park Avenue, New York

In Canaletto's 18th-century painting of London from across the Thames, skinny spires rise skyward from the bustling city below. In much more recent times, London's tallest buildings have tended to rise in a thicker, rectangular shape, with gherkin-resembling exceptions. Now a return to a more slender design for our skyline is making a comeback.

The main driver for this shift is the need to squeeze more space out of increasingly valuable real estate in prime locations in the city centre. At the same time, building footprints are becoming smaller and the effects of urbanisation and densification mean the equation is simple: buildings must go up, rather than out, to create this space.

Buildings used to be considered slender or skinny if they were five

times higher than they were wide. Now WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff is working on a number of slender residential skyscrapers, including one in Manhattan at 432 Park Avenue that is taller than the Empire State Building and has a height to width ratio of 15:1. We are also working with a number of clients in London on 'pencil towers'.

Intricate buildings can be expensive, but engineering design and improved construction technology make it not only feasible to build, but comfortable for those living or working very high up within these dimensions. One area where we have particular expertise is 'top-down' core construction. Here, the technology allows us to install a special type of foundation involving concrete piles containing steel

columns, which enables excavation into the ground while building upwards simultaneously. On The Shard, which gets more slender the further up you go, we had built the first 23 storeys of the concrete core and much of the surrounding tower before the basement had been fully excavated. This technique was a world first that saved four months on the complex programme.

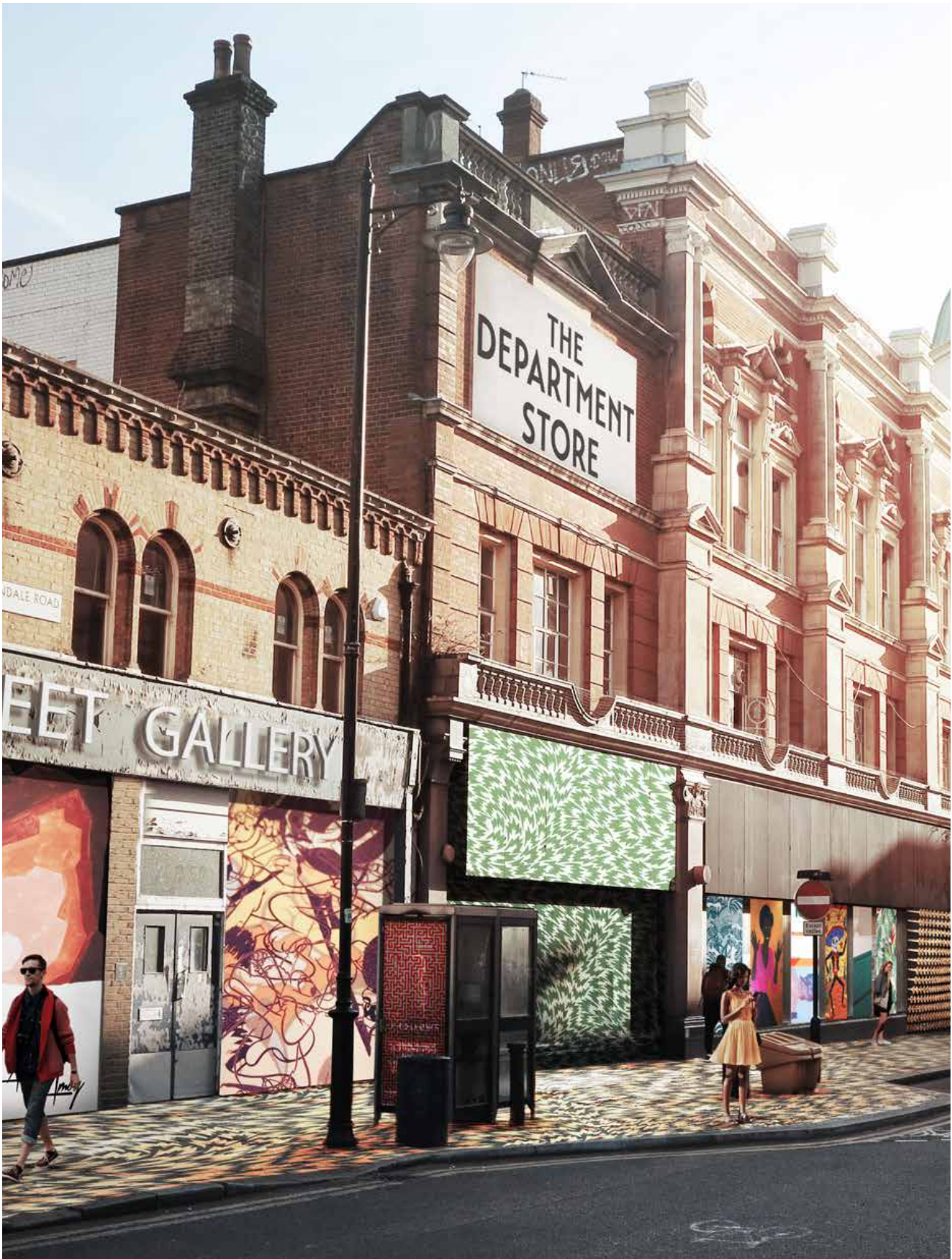
In terms of economic viability, skinny skyscrapers are comparable to smaller buildings because you are getting the same (or even more) space out of the same plots as before. As London densifies, if you can exploit a very small site for a high-rise building, you are potentially going to generate more value.

"Going skinny" means we have to be very careful with the effects of wind through modelling'

A key challenge for designers is that tall buildings are essentially obstacles in the sky, which impacts wind behaviour locally at pedestrian level and on the structure itself.

'Going skinny' means we have to be very careful with the effects of wind through modelling before planning. Sway and acceleration can be reduced by hydraulic systems that move the building in the opposite direction to the wind. This is clearly complex, but the engineering expertise is there; any maintenance required remains significantly outweighed by the increased development value.

Skinny skyscrapers are currently built for the higher end of the residential market, so they are not a panacea for London's housing crisis. However, their example shows that we have the ability to build taller in London as a way of creating much-needed housing. The next challenge is to find new and existing space where we can go higher. ■



Moving offices

A host of architectural and other firms are practising what they preach by upping sticks and creating new kinds of offices for their staff, and the public. By David Taylor

Influenced by rising rents, a quest to rebrand themselves and to become more public facing, a clutch of practices are seeking pastures new, entering into new locations and embracing a different style of workplace. In so doing they are tackling new ways of working and even incorporating gardens and gallery spaces, reaching out more to the neighbourhoods in which they sit.

One such is Squire and Partners, which is taking a bold step in terms of its location. Having been in King's Cross for many years now, in offices it designed near to its own bar at St Chad's Place, it has decided to venture south to Brixton. Partner Henry Squire said the move, to a large, old department store called Toplin House on Ferndale Road (pictured overpage), was needed to get space to cope with its rapid expansion. The practice looked 'all over town'. 'And then we found a building that we just fell in love with,' he says. Brixton is good in terms of accessibility and is a 'really fun area'

with a community that is not quite the case in King's Cross. 'It feels much more like London down there,' he said. 'It feels like it's a 24-hour place as opposed to King's Cross which feels a bit transient.' The practice will occupy the building and 'definitely' has plans to engage with the local community and local businesses, with which it aims to establish a 'creative hub'. It will create a social rooftop space expressed as pavilions, and is also thinking about a space for local people in the new building, along with 'making spaces', and will set up a St Chad's type bar and restaurant. The building, which it hopes will be ready next year, will also aim to be more of a 'shopfront' and Squire says it is a good opportunity to offer something of a practice rebrand via its own physical fabric. 'Going there is about trying to show people that we are really creative,' he said. 'It's a different stage in our development and we wanted to reflect that.'

Make Architects is another which has found a new home, using a fair

degree of nous in the process. It has curated a new space in a former basement car park a stone's throw away from its old home. The starting point for the practice was staying in the West End, with its accessibility to Tubes, airports, engineers and clients, says Ken Shuttleworth, as well as being easily commutable for its staff. But values had risen: 'So just to stay in the area we had to be really creative.'

The practice's new studio space in the basement of Middlesex House provides 15,100 square feet of offices and a garden under a 15-year lease from Derwent London. It includes plans for a new gallery space in the premises, presenting more of an outward, public-facing element to the firm and created to help local artists. Make says its design reflects the previous use of the space as a car park and is in keeping with the industrial feel of the rest of the building. It has turned the car park's old ramp into steps and incorporated ETFE, lightwells and a glass brick

floor to draw light down, while exposed pipework and services add to the effect. All the staff will be on one floor, open plan. 'We've left it fairly raw, fairly industrial. It has this workshop feel, which is what we've always wanted. It's just Make all over.' Make partner and lead project architect Charley Lacey said a key part of the design is a polished concrete slab which is both structural and also forms a floor finish, as well as providing the office with heating and cooling. 'It's great because you get these nice clear soffits across the space. People keep saying it's a poisoned chalice but for me it's just great to get a chance to do it.' And, says Ken Shuttleworth, the industrial feel of the place epitomises the practice's design ethos, while an extensive tree-filled 70 sqm garden will be where the practice can hold alfresco meetings and lunches. 'It's something we've never had, so to have a bit of external space bang in the middle of London will be fantastic.'

Or there is Woods Bagot, which moved from its Oxford House home on Oxford Street to a new site tucked away in Riding House Street.

The move here was about leaving accommodation that was giving out the wrong message to clients as it was

hemmed in by construction sites and Crossrail, and the noise and stressful hubbub of one of the world's busiest shopping street after a hard day at the 'high energy business'. The practice heads Jonathan Clarke and Jonathan French explain that this was not about saving money – the new three-floor office is more expensive. Rather, it is more about giving the impression of a buzzy, global practice with a real, local London presence, importantly in the West End around other consultants. But in a calmer area that retains links to the buzz staff may be keen on at lunchtime or after work.

It has dispensed with the four formal meeting rooms it had in the old place in favour of two, as they noticed that too many internal meetings and design review sessions were taking place there rather than on the 'shop floor'. Now, for non-private meetings they favour more mixing zones – an oversized bench-cum-desk at the building's new entrance, crafted for impromptu meetings to keep the receptionist as part of the action, a lower ground floor kitchen area, a pin-up area where schemes are shown and discussed. 'We found that clients like to see the buzz of the studio,' says Clarke. 'They liked to see people working and they liked to be involved.' French feels this

is a differentiator, and that clients can 'sample' the practice when they visit. And every Friday at 5pm the firm opens up to stage the London Salon – a series of talks and events lubricated by drinks from the in-practice bar. A new entrance for the building aims at more street presence, while there are shower rooms for its many cyclist commuters, and secure storage for around 25 bikes, as well as spaces that allow glimpses of models and 3D rendering kit for visitors and for those from the street.

"We found that clients like to see the buzz of the studio'. They liked to see people working and to be involved'

Aided by Pilcher Hershman, Woods Bagot considered the usual outposts in Clerkenwell, as well as toying with the idea of Shoreditch, Southwark, King's Cross and even areas west like Holland Park. All before stumbling on the 'lucky accident' that was their new, three-floor home. 'I think there is a definite move to self-promotion for other architectural practices,' says Clarke. 'We're committed to getting people in through the studio, not just other professions, but people that are part of the community. It's important for us to make this relevant London practice.'

Rogers Stirk Harbour has opted to make a more fundamental move in location terms, deciding to fly its nest next to Ruthie Rogers' Michelin-starred River Café in Hammersmith to take up a new space in a building it also designed itself – the Cheesegrater. The practice has been in Hammersmith for the last 30 years but will move into level 14 of the 47-storey Leadenhall Building, taking a 15-year lease (with 10-year break) on the 18,000 sq ft office space on the largest remaining floor of the scheme.

McAslan + Partners has gone down a different route, transforming an



Shopping for architecture – McAslan's new studio on Tottenham High Road



Woods Bagot's new offices are aimed to convey its status as a buzzy, global office, with local roots



Making a place – Make Architects' new offices are a conversion of a former car park

empty Tottenham shop into a 'design hub' in a partnership with Haringey Council, offering work placements and training to local people. The N17 Design Studio opened last December and is collaborating with the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London on a 12-month pilot project to give local students the chance to learn key skills. Haringey Council has taken a five-year lease on the building and it has been refurbished to create a community facility on the High Road, showcasing regeneration plans and engaging with local people on

the future of Tottenham. Haringey Council leader Claire Kober said the practice's enthusiasm for the area is testament to its potential to be one of London's centres for creativity, training and opportunity. McAslan's Aidan Potter said the space 'in the front line' on Tottenham High Road opposite the police station has room for eight full architects and has a significant and important educational outreach with a programme with local schools and to allow for more to engage with the creative industries. 'It is a small but significant attempt to

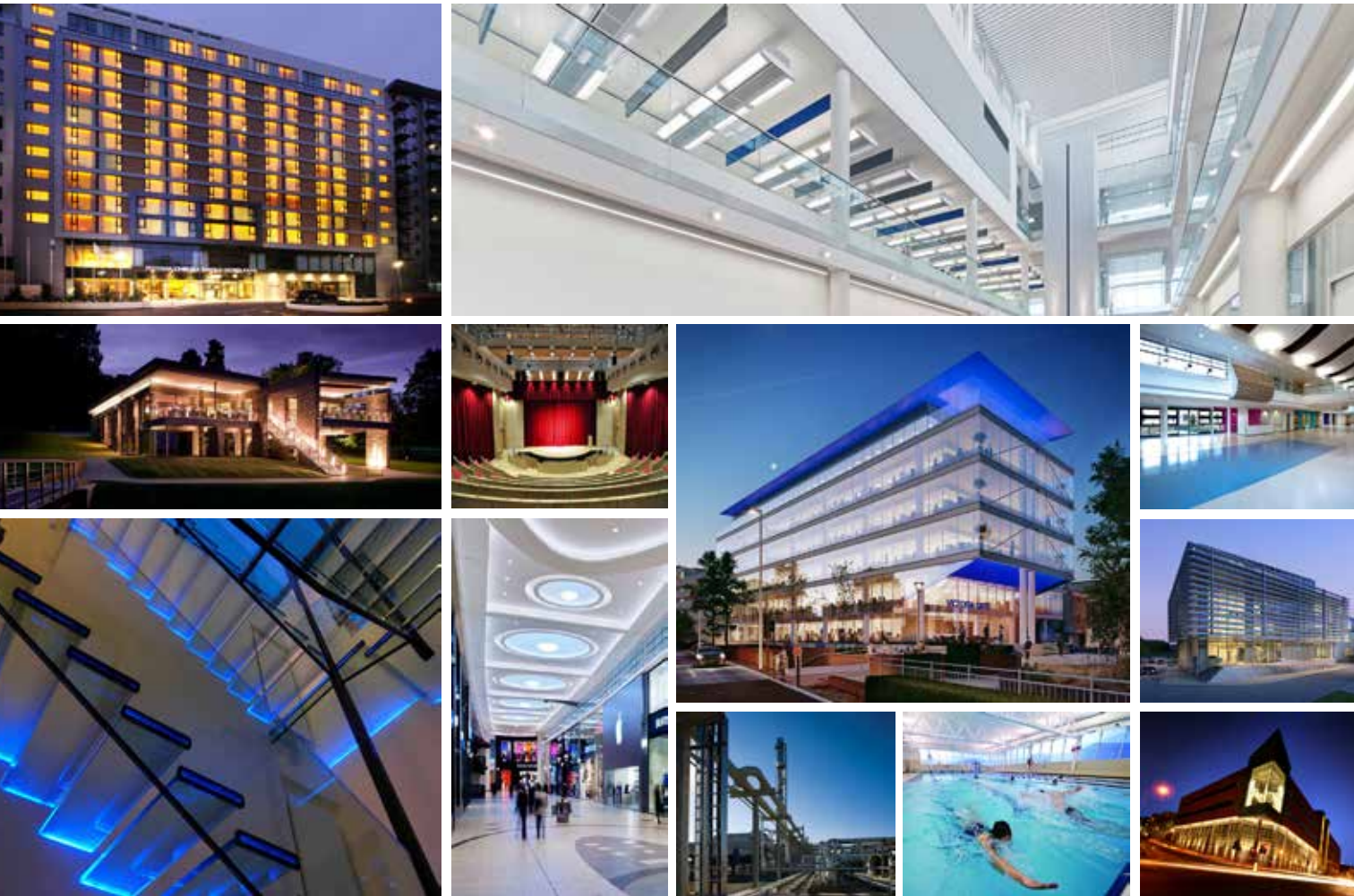
engage experientially and understand if not necessarily provide solutions to many of the issues that completely obsess and concern local people around the profound changes that will be happening there.'

Or there is Cathedral, the developer that is moving from its church near The Shard to 7a Howick Place – the former Phillips the Auctioneers European HQ – in Victoria. The firm and Development Securities are moving their combined 80 staff to the 33,000 sq ft premises, which is being designed by Coffey Architects and Ab Rogers Design, will have its own front door and will incorporate a new public space within the ground floor with a gallery and café.

Matthew Weiner, chief executive of Development Securities, said: 'We have been looking for the right building in which to make our home ever since we acquired Cathedral last year. This one is quite unique. We've challenged our architects and designers to deliver us something very special that will inspire our two teams.' Phil Coffey of Coffey Architects added that the building has 'a rich heritage but is a great blank canvas and offers us tremendous scope to create a modern, flexible office environment that is inspiring to work in'

Wordsearch has also found new pastures, having outgrown its Clerkenwell home after, according to director William Murray, having baulked at the prospect of signing a renewal for what would have been a record rent for the area. Instead, the property marketing firm has ventured south of the river to offices on Tooley Street, hugger mugger with Roger Zogolovitch's Solidspace and dRMM, with a space plan by Carmody Groarke. So is Clerkenwell just becoming out of reach? Is its traditional place as the home for architects, long after the printers, brewers and watchmakers, wearing micro-thin? It appears it might be. London is blurring. ■

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The Retail Line

By Nicholas Jewell, associate director, Ben Adams Architects

Drawing by Dougal Sadler

The Retail Line unites London's most iconic piece of infrastructure with investment from its landmark retailers to create new experiences of the city and affordable opportunities for small businesses.

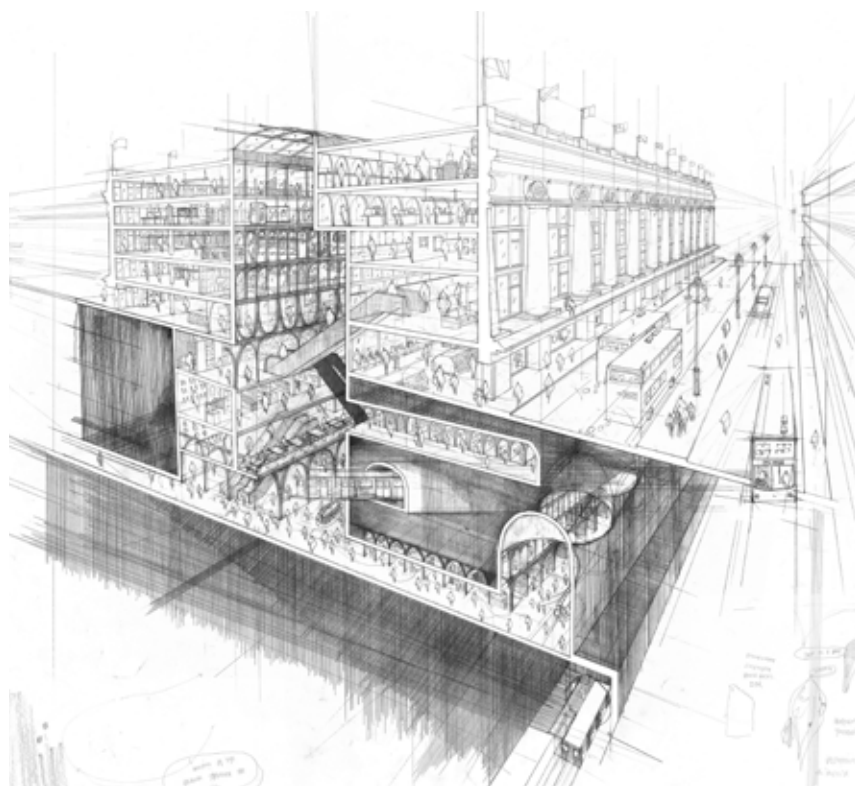
In 1909, Harry Gordon Selfridge opened his world famous department store on Oxford Street. Prior to opening he had campaigned, unsuccessfully, to have Bond Street Tube station connected into his store and renamed accordingly. If these notions were dismissed as fanciful at

the time, dense, mixed-use, retail-led development in Asia's hyper modern megacities proves how far ahead of the pack Selfridge was. China, Japan, Singapore and many others have made this combination of retail and infrastructure an operative reality in the making of their modern cities. Back in the UK, London's abandoned Tube lines and historical visions such as Brunel's Thames Tunnel continue to fascinate many of the city's inhabitants. We propose to open up this world beneath the city's feet.

A new Tube line, connecting London's iconic retail destinations, would make this historic vision a 21st-century reality. In exchange for enhanced proximity to London's commuters, each destination would be required to fund the creation of small-scale below-ground shop units, lining the pedestrian tunnels from the Tube into an atrium that would then arrive above ground in the Retail Line 'destination'. These units would be let on subsidised, flexible leases to independent and start-up retailers. In doing so, these smaller retailers would benefit from the footfall generated by journeys between the Tube and its anchor store, employing the classic shopping-mall formula of destination versus

'London's abandoned Tube lines and historical visions such as Brunel's Thames Tunnel continue to fascinate many of the city's inhabitants'

impulse to benefit the growth of new independent businesses in the capital. In doing so, the experience of the everyday commute will be animated, harnessing the potential of the city section to create new habitable spaces to meet, eat and shop below ground. The territory that forms a transitory moment in the everyday movement of millions of Londoners will be liberated from the purely utilitarian, creating a new world of possibilities enmeshed within the strata of history beneath its streets. ■■



Below the line: each destination would be required to fund the creation of small-scale below-ground shop units

In it for the long term

With major works such as projects for The Guardian at King's Cross, six Crossrail stations and a major masterplan in Manchester, Bennetts Associates Architects is at the top of its game. And it wants to stay there. By David Taylor

If a practice's architecture mirrors its owners' personalities, then Bennetts Associates' designs are affable, genial and trustworthy. Their buildings are like solid, long-term and loyal friends rather than flashy ships that pass in the night. But, ultimately, they also like a laugh with the best of them.

Bennetts Associates is all about the long term. Whether that's the buildings they design and – crucially – deliver, or the extraordinarily low 'churn' rate of staff turnover, the practice is instantly connoted with a

'It's a very egalitarian view of life we've got here. We try not to lord it over the whole thing'

considered, slow-burn and ultimately sustainable mindset. They describe themselves as being 'passionate about architecture which is timeless, humane and elegant'. And while it would be reductive and indeed unfair to call theirs simply a 'safe pair of hands' approach, the methodology is reaping dividends, with a team of 90 working on a wide variety of projects across most sectors, headlined by schemes such as that for The Guardian at King's Cross, six Crossrail stations

and an extensive design studio for Jaguar/Land Rover in the Midlands.

We meet at the practice's offices in a quiet backwater near to Angel Islington, with architects beavering away on projects in a series of distinct spaces across the site, peppered with senior staff. For this is the Bennetts way; an egalitarian, democratic approach to the practice of architecture which tries very hard not to have anything like a pyramid structure of management, and which, says Rab Bennetts, genuinely appreciates ideas no matter where they come from. Bennetts is, in fact, as far from the cliché of the egotist master architect sending down orders from above as it is possible to be. And this seems to be appreciated, with many of the staff who started out with him following his Arup days still with him and his partner Denise, and a turnover rate that is well below the norm.

'It's a very egalitarian view of life we've got here', says Rab. 'We try not to lord it over the whole thing.' Their name may be on the doorplate and the notepaper but the fact that the couple founded the practice is not the most important thing.

'We try to ensure it is as even-handed as we can make it. So empowering other people to express







Team effort: Bennetts Associates Architects prides itself on equality and low staff turnover

themselves is what it's all about.'

While they don't pretend there is an absolutely flat hierarchy, it is a very collaborative environment. There are regular parties, with people 'expressing themselves', even learning to cartoon concepts, and having a brilliant laugh and not feeling like there is any kind of restriction, Rab enthuses. Creating this happy-go-lucky environment is deliberate, but not difficult. 'I think we genuinely have a great laugh and are constantly taking the mickey out of each other in the office, and they do of us.'

Denise came to architecture quite late, and was the first generation in her family to go to university. Her interest in geography and planning coupled to her father's engineering background led her to meet an architect planner. 'At the end of a long conversation he said to me if I did planning I would be just so frustrated.' Rab's was a contrasting entry into the profession. 'I got hooked on drawing buildings when I was in primary school and never really put it down,' he says. His father was a building surveyor in the Ministry of Public Buildings

and Works, putting up prefabricated telephone exchanges, which got Rab's juices flowing more. The pair both worked at the GLC where they did their year out, primarily on housing projects – with 'town development' then something of a euphemism for resettling predominantly skilled people out of London. Rab worked on Thamesmead, just after *Clockwork Orange* came out. Rab went to Arup, Denise to Fitzroy Robinson and then Casson Conder, working on the Ismaili Centre for the Aga Khan for five years. Arup was all about structure, whereas Casson Conder quite often felt like it was carving volumes out of solids, says Denise. Rab stayed at Arup for 10 years, starting Bennetts Associates in 1987. But while he was at Arup he remembers recommending a series of practices for work when he couldn't do it; names like David Chipperfield, Nicholas Hare, Allies and Morrison. Karma paid off for the nascent Bennetts Associates, when it almost immediately won a big job from an ex Arup client. This was Imperium, an office building of three storeys

arranged in two parallel wings for Speyhawk Land & Estates in Reading, which led to recruiting Simon Erridge, then a new graduate, and Julian Lipscombe from ABK in 1992.

'I arrived at the right time, didn't I?' says Erridge. 'Powergen had just come through the door and it sounded like that job was going to turn into something'. It did, and arrived via a collaboration with Buro Four and beating off a list of illustrious architects they themselves had recommended for the job. The prospective clients arrived to visit the office, which in time-honoured tradition Rab and Denise filled with friends pretending they were staff. In the end, though, as with much of the work the practice does, it hinged on personal chemistry. The client was a 28-year-old woman who they got on with, and there began a series of projects which looked at sustainability properly from the beginning.

'We were saying "this is mad, what are we doing to our planet?"'

The firm's special interest then as students, and in the mid-1970s oil crisis, was sustainability, informed by books like *Small is Beautiful*. 'We were completely hooked on all that stuff,' says Rab. 'We were saying "this is mad, what are we doing to our planet?"'. Powergen was an energy producer, and wanted to show it could be trusted, albeit with a chief executive who wanted to be a 'fast follower' rather than a pioneer. The client was also interested in actual empirical evidence, says Denise, putting money into developing software in order to do the analysis on what was going to be the final building. Powergen also included Space Syntax, asking them to analyse the scheme during the design phase. Groundbreaking stuff. 'The driver for the building was that they were a privatised company but basically

civil servants,' says Denise. 'They had to get away from that mentality into the commercial world.' So they had to make their product efficiently and sell their product so that internal communication became very important to a firm that used to be in separate buildings and only met at board level.

'It was completely revolutionary', says Erridge. It was not just low-energy, but a better, more interesting workspace with better daylight, contrasting with some of the offices of the mid-1980s with their very deep plans, low, suspended ceilings, and air conditioning.

An Edinburgh office followed on the back of work for John Menzies and CT, then Wessex Water pushed the environmental angle even more, and the practice found itself with an in-depth knowledge of this building type, which it could apply to other things. Things like theatres, where from the first project Erridge worked on in the mid-1990s, air could be brought in under the seats rather than from air-conditioning units from the ceilings, for example. 'So all the buildings we did after that we started to apply sustainable thinking to,' says Rab. 'We had probably more in-depth

and better knowledge than anybody around at the time,' he adds.

Bennetts kept going with that research, documenting it empirically in order to counter a growing tide of 'greenwash' out there. This attracted other good architects to the office who were interested in 'genuinely' good architecture with sustainability because, says Rab, 'we think they are two sides of the same coin'. Those included Peter Fisher, who joined a little later in 2001 from Nicholas Hare.

They'd always said that they wanted as mixed a portfolio as possible and work followed including a series of projects for the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, where they created contemporary interiors in a Grade I listed building, and for Mace, which had just won the design and extension for the north terminal at Gatwick. Hampstead Theatre came about because Bennetts hadn't done a theatre before, and could thus apply fresh thinking. According to client, developer Vincent Wang, the practice was the only one of those invited who took a view about the whole site, not just the building. This became the Swiss Cottage masterplan, with a park in the middle and a Farrell

building at the bottom of the site. Erridge describes how the scheme allowed the practice to get involved with extensive planning consultations and engagement with the local community to do 'something quite revolutionary'. Like many of the projects – they have stayed in touch and are still in regular contact with the client as regular theatre-goers. 'It's great to keep in touch with buildings that you finish,' he says. It's also fair to say that Bennetts gets more than half of its work through repeat business, says Rab. 'We keep in touch with clients, who are genuinely friends like Jenny Topper at Hampstead. I think the relationship thing is desperately important in architecture. If you work with somebody for several years, you've got to get on, right from the beginning, to the end. And we do get on with people. We like a laugh.' Topper chose non-specialist theatre architects because she didn't want to be told what she wanted, says Denise. 'She wanted to go on a voyage of discovery, and to work it out.'

At Gatwick they called on help from friends David Marks and Julia Barfield, which kicked off multiple jobs for BAA. And in turn Hampstead drew the attention of the Royal Shakespeare Company, who visited the building, Susie Sainsbury and her team urging Bennetts to apply for the OJEU submission, which they did inside 12 hours. They won it, recalls Erridge, on the back of a very good competition process that involved workshopping, meetings and developing an initial idea of a scheme. Partly this mature approach was because the RSC had been stung by its appointment of Erick van Egeraat on the job. 'They realised that if you're going to work on a project for six or seven years, you need to get on with your team,' says Erridge.

Fast-forward and the practice is now also doing Chester Theatre, the Old Vic and Glasgow Citizens' Theatre and some work on the Shaftesbury



Keeping it on track – Bennetts is doing a number of Crossrail stations, including Ealing Broadway

Theatre. So now they come with theatre ‘baggage’, but have resisted forming specialist ‘teams’ based on sectors or geographies in contrast to what the RIBA recommends. ‘We are a general practice, and that’s what’s wonderful about it,’ says Rab. ‘It’s mindsets, not skillsets.’ Specialising also blunts the senses, Rab believes.

The practice prides itself on empowerment. ‘Some architects really feel it’s their scheme and they design it and the rest of the office draws up,’ says Rab. ‘We’re not like that AT all.’

That extends to encouraging staff to not be afraid of asking questions, says Denise, to create an open dialogue and collaboration with the whole design team. ‘We’re looking for a really very intelligent synthesis, a synthesis coupled with art,’ says Denise. ‘So you’re listening to people and really drawing them and being able to engage them in constructive dialogue.’ Erridge adds: ‘If you’ve got 10 minds around the table, use them.’ You orchestrate, but don’t lead, and don’t have all the answers, says Rab. Architects have to be multi-skilled to be able to orchestrate and be in the centre of the process, but contractors are increasingly in the driving seat, he believes, because architects aren’t

engaging with the industry. This starts at college, but architects should realise that contractors aren’t the enemy.

The practice is at 90 staff, with jobs on from £2million up to £200million and it turns down work as it has always done, especially those it considers ‘unsustainable’. That means nothing in the Middle East, and anything here which is quite clearly ‘energy guzzling’. Architects do not exercise their ethical judgement enough, Rab suggests.

As to the wider ethos of the firm, Fisher says it is a very difficult thing to define in words, and to avoid being trite. ‘Find me an architect that isn’t a leading sustainability expert,’ he quips. ‘That doesn’t actually mean that much in the grand scheme of things.’ But even this aspect of the firm seems considered and democratic. ‘Timeless, humane, elegant’ is something enduring and probably implies something a little quieter, that isn’t the big flash in the pan and has more long-term qualities than the iconic ‘sugar rush’ ‘one-liner’ schemes. ‘Or Jimmy Tarbuck architecture as one of my tutors calls it.’ A Bennetts building is more considered, gentle, and rooted in climate and how people engage with buildings and construction. ‘It is not about fashion,’ says Rab. ‘That might

mean that we are not fashionable but if a building looked dated a couple of years after it’s finished that’s not much good to anyone, especially the client.’ Julian Lipscombe adds that the ethos of standing the test of time and raising the bar in things like sustainability and workplace are now being taken on into urban design and more masterplanning work to create ‘good cities, good places’. This is particularly evident in work in Manchester Lipscombe is overseeing on a masterplan for 140 acres of the city centre connected to the HS2 project.

‘We are a general practice, and that’s what’s wonderful about it. It’s mindsets, not skillsets’

Just recently the directors took a trip back to Powergen, and, says Fisher, it was amazing how old-fashioned the buildings around it looked. John Menzies in Edinburgh is another, Denise says, that looks as good as it did at PC. This is real sustainability. And the firm treats delivery as importantly as it does design, says Rab, because it allows them to sleep at night and because he believes that is a part of the process architects are increasingly divorced from. In part this explains why firms he admires include Renzo Piano, Richard Rogers and David Chipperfield.

King’s Cross is something of a hot spot for the firm, with the Camden Council building and Midland Goods Shed following on from a feasibility study for another site on the plot. The former building came as a result of the local authority visiting New Street Square. The scheme has the best BREEAM rating the firm has ever achieved – 96.7 per cent and ‘outstanding’ – and has only been beaten by an industrial shed whose score is (only in the world of construction) over 100 per cent. Camden were brave to go down the route of the mixed-use



Point of view – 70 Mark Lane in the City next to Fenchurch Street Station



The King's Cross scheme comprises council offices, services, library and leisure facilities

scheme, started as it was in the teeth of recession in 2009, and in the glare of publicity, in particular from the *Camden New Journal*. But they actually saved £2m with no cost to the public purse in creating a new building – featuring a library, access centre, leisure centre, and two swimming pools, as well as 11 floors of offices – and properly rationalising the rest of their properties. The lesson on councils rationalising their spaces has been taken on close to home with Bennetts' own offices, extending into a former Italian restaurant with softer break-out modelling competitions and party space, while intensifying the rest of the property.

The scheme for The Guardian and Waitrose at the Midland Goods Shed will be 'phenomenal' and an enormously significant project for the

practice, says Rab, featuring a cookery demonstration area for Waitrose and series of conference spaces for The Guardian as it moves further into new media.

Other London works include a competition in Dartford and six Crossrail stations to the west of the centre, which have gone through a procurement process that has been long and problematic, with public criticism of the first iterations. Fortunately, second time around they have a 'family' of six station designs they are proud of for stations at Ealing Broadway, West Ealing, Acton, Hayes and Harlington, Southall and West Drayton. But its first Crossrail project was in 1993 to do the air rights development at Moorgate ticket office, for which it won planning permission

but not the final job. There is also the just-completed Derwent Building on Chancery Lane to be occupied by Saatchi and Saatchi, complete with a travertine stone with a distinctive vein, and artwork by sculptor Susanna Heron for Derwent's Simon Silver. 'He really pushes for something good, and we love that.' It has also built a barn-like Dogs' Rehoming Centre for the Dogs' Trust – not in Barking (they've heard all the jokes), but on a seven-acre green belt site in Basildon, Essex.

The practice also believes it has sorted its succession early, 'positively and proactively', says Julian Lipscombe (and admires that of Rogers Stirk Harbour), with news on this due later this year, but that conventional ownership with people buying in simply does not work.

So, what is the practice's ambition? Rab laughs. 'We're often asked that. We just love buildings, you know? I don't think we want to be the biggest or anything like that.' But what is ambition? asks Fisher. 'Is it not losing what's good but not sitting still and getting complacent? So we're trying to stick to what's good about the office but also trying to evolve as well.'

Beyond perhaps setting up an office in Manchester, there is an ambition to do more abroad. More generally it is to stay at the top of their game, avoiding complacency at all costs. 'But I think we're still developing, and I think that is nice. There's a lot going on, isn't there?' Rab beams. 'And none of the projects is dull. We're all just having tremendous fun at the moment.'

It almost sounds too good to be true. Lipscombe laughs. 'It does sound all rather cosy and wonderful, looking from the outside. But I've been here since 1992 and genuinely it doesn't quite feel like day one, but it doesn't feel too far off that. It's still good fun. It's still stimulating, it's bloody hard work, and beyond all that external perception we are all incredibly tough on each other. We challenge and push each other, and there's a good camaraderie.' ■



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The workspace crisis

Levent Kerimol from the GLA's Regeneration team argues we may be losing the businesses that make London tick unless we do more to find space to accommodate them



There is a crisis in the availability and affordability of business space brewing behind the headlines of London's housing crisis. Small businesses – from paint suppliers to dance schools, bakeries to aquarium showrooms – are struggling to find appropriate places of work. The cheap, scruffy, 'low threshold' enterprise space in pockets behind high streets, industrial areas, and small units suitable for growing businesses are in increasingly short supply.

The high value of housing outstrips any other use. The Mayor and the London Enterprise Panel (LEP) have raised concerns about permitted development rights that allow change of use from office, retail and light industrial uses to residential, squeezing out successful businesses.

However, the planning process has itself released industrial land at more than twice the London Plan target rate over the last decade, as planning authorities seek to make more land available for housing. Ongoing GLA research on industrial capacity is showing vacancy down to frictional

levels, and increasing rents. This is particularly acute in inner London.

Industrial areas not only provide space for the utilities and big distribution facilities that serve the city, but are also a reservoir of affordable space for all sorts of small businesses. Our work looking at these places in detail revealed that a business in Tottenham distributes 20,000 litres of yogurt per week, another produces 700 pairs of shoes, while others brew 15,000 pints of beer, launder 20,000 shirts and mix 700kg of hummus. The story is repeated in Park Royal, Old Kent Road and Blackhorse Lane, unnoticed and ignored by most.

London's 800,000-plus SMEs are a vital component of our economy. According to the London Enterprise Panel, 'small businesses are at the forefront of reshaping London's economic landscape in the 21st century'. They account for approximately £430 billion of turnover (and that's not including the financial and insurance sectors). Despite London's buzz of ideas and innovation and access to markets and skills, we risk losing talented entrepreneurs to global competition if we cannot provide appropriate workspace alongside the much-needed homes.

When non-residential ground-floor space is built in new mixed-use housing schemes, it is ironic that it can remain vacant for long periods. This is often put down to 'low demand', despite the space lacking basic fit-out, being more expensive than the surrounding established stock, and inconveniently

squeezed around the residential drivers of the scheme. Developers often have little interest in the hassle of ensuring the space is let, as it could devalue their asset and can be converted to residential soon enough anyway.

Part of the answer is to start taking 'workspace providers' as seriously as affordable housing providers. The Open Workspace Providers Group, formed to advise the LEP, includes co-working spaces, incubators, artist studios and maker spaces. They both understand and manage space that works for business and occupier needs. Their early engagement in schemes could encourage more workspace of all types to be provided in new buildings.

'Part of the answer is to start taking "workspace providers" as seriously as affordable housing providers'

Another part of the answer is to learn from places like Blackhorse Workshop, an open access wood and metal workshop funded by the Mayor and Waltham Forest, used by entrepreneurs to make prototypes and products, as well as skilling up local hobbyists. We need to intensify industrial uses and buildings, and create capacity in industrial areas. Small multi-storey light industrial and business units should become a more commonplace typology – whether they are for high-tech makers, hummus mixers, product designers or aquarium sellers. ■



PROJECT REVIEW

Tailor-made

EPR associate director Stephen Pey describes how his 24 Savile Row project shows how a collaboration with ceramicist Kate Malone can produce a crafted addition to the capital



This summer sees some exciting works of public art on display across the capital. From Carsten Höller's Isomeric Slides at the Hayward Gallery to Hans Haacke's Gift Horse currently atop Trafalgar Square's fourth plinth, London continues to showcase a rich vein of artistic talent. At the same time, the construction industry goes from strength to strength, with vast swathes of regeneration projects coupled with some dramatic additions to the city's skyline. With both art and architecture enjoying such success, can the two disciplines find common ground? We believe that the opening of 24 Savile Row in Mayfair proves that collaboration between architect and art isn't only possible, but, in the right hands, can produce something unique.

Mayfair ranks among London's most exclusive districts, home to some of the capital's finest offices, restaurants, shops and residential properties. Not least among its streets is Savile Row, known the world over as the sartorial destination of choice, and where the concept of 'bespoke' was born some four hundred years ago.

With such a unique tailoring heritage, Savile Row demands a setting of elegance and style where design is at the forefront. With this in mind, when we won the commission in 2012 for a multi-million pound mixed-use office and retail building on the corner plot where Savile Row and Conduit Street meet, I felt that the site warranted something truly distinctive. After all, the word bespoke was invented in Savile Row, where suits were 'to be spoken for' by a specific client. So, we knew we had to create a bespoke building, featuring material and design of the sort of quality to match and echo that tradition.

We therefore devised a scheme that would pay homage to the historic setting in its creation of high-end workplace and prime retail units, and also showcase the best in contemporary design in the arts and

crafts. As with a Savile Row suit, I felt the building should be expert cut, made with the finest materials. In order to achieve this, we approached renowned London-based ceramicist, Kate Malone, with whom we had already successfully collaborated on the new Amex Headquarters in Brighton. The opportunity to make 24 Savile Row a true integration of art and architecture in a way that had not been seen before was apparent.

Such an ambition required a close working relationship between artist and architect in order to successfully combine the highly technical and precise design with the more organic, free-flowing creativity of the ceramicist potter.

'The word bespoke was invented in Savile Row, where suits were "to be spoken for" by a specific client'

The success of delivery of the concept narrative depends on the strength of dialogue with each other – we had seen how good Kate is and how she works, so we brought her in on the Savile Row project and 18 months and 1,000 sample tests later we knew we had achieved something special.

The result of the collaboration was the 10,000 crystalline hand-glazed ceramic tiles that clad the main elevations of the building, making it – we believe – a work of art in itself; an ever-evolving canvas where the tiles reflect and refract daylight, capturing differing moods and subtly changing the appearance and tone of the building, depending on the weather and time of day. To create this effect, Malone had researched and produced a series of bespoke hand-mixed crystalline glazes for the building to ensure that each tile has a unique appearance.

As a final piece of public art, the building is positioned on a bespoke sand-cast bronze plinth, which serves

PROJECT REVIEW

as both a three-dimensional sculptural representation of the tiles' crystals, and also as a piece of architecture, providing a robust base for the building and enabling the straight lines and sharp angles of the glazed tiles to meet the slight incline of the street.

I have been pleased to observe passers-by stopping to photograph the building from various angles, capturing its changing appearance. Whereas other

buildings can remain anonymous and largely unnoticed, 24 Savile Row brings public art directly onto the streets of London. And in recognition of its combination of art and architecture, craft and science, the scheme has been shortlisted for both the International Design & Architecture Awards 2015 Office Category and the London Design Awards 2015. We have also recently been shortlisted for an ideas

competition by the Royal Academy to Reimagine Mayfair – another example of the ongoing relationship between architecture and artist maker.

Alongside its impressive external appearance, the building also scores highly in sustainable credentials. Its use of more than 1,000 sq ft of photovoltaics, a highly efficient VRV cooling system, and its green/brown roofs complete with terraces



Turning a corner – 'art, architecture and artisan manufacturing'



The scheme features 10,000 hand-glazed tiles

has resulted in a BREEAM Excellent rating. It is also entirely LED-lit.

The success of the building – both artistically and architecturally – raises the question as to how such a collaboration can be replicated across the capital. Modern office and retail buildings frequently incorporate showpiece works of public art somewhere on the premises to endow them with an elevated aesthetic appeal, but structures where the art is an all-encompassing and intrinsic aspect of the design are far less common. Our scheme has been a true collaboration between architecture, art and artisan manufacturing, producing a unique artisan-created building for a special place within London.

The city would surely benefit from more such collaborations. ■

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Magic Wandsworth

Leader of Wandsworth Council Ravi Govindia charts the progress being made on infrastructure and housing at Nine Elms and beyond to keep pace with the borough's fast growing population



Nine Elms – 500 homes delivered; 19,000 more to go

For many years Wandsworth has had one of the fastest growing populations in London and new investment is essential to keep pace with increasing demands for housing and infrastructure.

In Nine Elms and Wandsworth Town we have two vast and well-advanced regeneration programmes which are helping to meet these pressures. Both involve the transformation of vast industrial sites into new homes, schools, parks, offices, cultural attractions and many other uses besides.

In the case of Nine Elms we have delivered our first 500 homes, with another 19,000 in the pipeline. There is

also enough new business space being built to support 25,000 permanent jobs in what amounts to a major expansion of London's Central Activities Zone. Supporting this change is the Northern Line Extension, a project Wandsworth Council has championed for the last eight years. Spades are now in the ground and our two new Tube stations will open for business in 2020.

In Wandsworth Town our regeneration programme is further ahead. We have already delivered in excess of 1,000 new homes and seen the Southside Shopping Centre completely transformed into one of South London's most popular retail destinations. The

new Light Bulb business centre is also complete and now home to a thriving SME community. The pipeline also looks healthy with work now under way on the £600m redevelopment of the old brewery site, now renamed 'The Ram Quarter'. This development alone will provide 600 homes, a microbrewery, brewing museum, as well as shops, bars and restaurants set around a new pedestrian quarter.

Crucially, this development programme has given us the opportunity to redesign the one-way-system which has strangled Wandsworth Town Centre for decades. Working with TfL we will be publishing plans later

this year on a new street layout that will reroute the vast majority of traffic away from the high street and dramatically improve the local environment. This is set to be another watershed moment for Wandsworth Town and the catalyst for the next wave of new investment.

An area on the cusp of major change is Clapham Junction in Battersea. In 2014 the area between the famous train station and the Battersea riverside was granted housing zone status which has helped the council to begin unlocking its clear potential. At the heart of the housing zone are the council's Winstanley and York Road housing estates where we have been working up a comprehensive regeneration plan for the last two years. This site alone will see more than 1,600 new homes built in a 10-year delivery programme.

'Spades are now in the ground and our two new Tube stations will open for business in 2020'

The privately owned commercial sites surrounding the estates have the potential for many more, with several schemes already approved or under way. As with Nine Elms and Wandsworth Town, the council will ensure these projects come hand-in-hand with the vital new infrastructure a growing community needs. In this case our priorities are a new pedestrian bridge across the Thames from Battersea to Imperial Wharf railway station in Fulham and a Crossrail 2 connection for Clapham Junction station.

A project of similar scale is planned in Roehampton where the council has approved a new masterplan for the west of the Alton Estate. Again, our proposal is to rebuild hundreds of existing homes and increase overall density to help meet housing demands. The estate's services, environment and infrastructure will all be vastly improved. ■



Work in progress – the US Embassy under construction



Ale house rocks – the Ram Brewery heritage buildings

Heatherwick and the human scale

Thomas Heatherwick enthralled a large audience with tales from his portfolio of fascinating projects in NLA's inaugural annual lecture. By David Taylor



In conversation – Heatherwick and Murray on stage

Thomas Heatherwick wowed a packed audience at NLA's first annual lecture with a talk that explored projects from his first student structure of 'twisting glass', to the Olympic cauldron, to the Garden Bridge – a human-scaled 'place' for lingering and looking out across the city.

Heatherwick, who spoke for over an hour to an audience of over 900 people at the Institute of Education's Logan Hall, began with a description of his ethos of striving to 'make things happen'. This was first demonstrated

in his Manchester student years by taking a risk to create a single pavilion of twisted glass that now sits in Goodwood sculpture park, 23 years later. The goal then and now was 'to grab people's eyeballs', said Heatherwick, which was continued at Littlehampton with the East Beach Café, a 'raw' structure that 'hunkers down' as it looks out to sea.

Following an innovative, twisting and unifying window display he created for Harvey Nichols, the British Pavilion at the World Expo in Shanghai was

another turning point, with a brief that warned competition entrants to create something that was in the top five of all attractions at the show. With three-hour queues for each pavilion, this was a sensible strategy and Heatherwick's winning scheme 'deliberately made five-sixths of the site forgettable'. Despite having a budget half of the other Western nations, his team tried to second-guess what others were designing then designed the opposite. 'Could we make a building that could quiver in the wind and tingle?' asked Heatherwick. He could, with a scheme that shows off a quarter of a million seeds at the end of 25-foot acrylic optic fibres, rather than the obligatory films inside. After winning the top prize and attracting seven million visitors to the Expo pavilion, the next project shifted the order of

'The Garden Bridge is about lingering and looking out across the city'

magnitude even further. The cauldron at the London Olympics would be viewed by a billion and Heatherwick and his team – today up to 170 staff – came up with the idea of creating 204 separate copper petal elements which were brought together to make up the cauldron. 'It had never worked properly before that moment', said Heatherwick, against the 'embedded logic' of the British expectation that things will all go wrong.

Under construction now is a university building in Singapore which is a learning hub with 57 tutorial rooms that eschews straight lines in order to rid the institution of the dreaded corridor and instead offer more chances for people to meet. This is, again, a 'human scale' building, something which underpins much of the Heatherwick philosophy. The concrete scheme – essentially 12 buildings in one – is raw and

rough, with nooks and crannies and imperfections in the concrete to give it more humanity and warmth. Then there is the Cape Town art gallery – the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa – being created out of a former grain store, but with as much attention paid to the interior as the exterior. This is in a bid to stop people from simply visiting, taking photographs of the exterior, visiting the shop and leaving. ‘It’s the most tube-tastic thing,’ said Heatherwick, referring to the 42 huge vertical concrete silo chambers in the scheme. Inside, Heatherwick has chosen to cut into the tubes with the shape of a single grain of corn, super-scaled.



On a roll – the Spun chair in action



Crowd-pleaser – over 900 attended



Far pavilions – Heatherwick’s first structure of twisted glass

And then there was the Garden Bridge. This, said Heatherwick, was an opportunity (tendered for) to fill a gap in crossings along the Thames, with an average of 450m between them suddenly being 850m beyond Waterloo Bridge. The northern landing point at Temple is the centre of London, he said, according to research his team had done on the map measurements, but why must bridges always be a link? Why can’t they be a place? The project is essentially just two planters, with enough depth to grow a variety of plants, but it is also a garden that can ‘stitch London together’ and help reinforce the crescent of the Aldwych. ‘It’s about lingering and looking out across the city’, he said. ‘It has to be in the centre of the city or not at all.’ Heatherwick’s team is also developing a family of elements such as lighting components that enable people’s faces to be detected on CCTV, birdbaths and seating. And while projects such as the Shard and London Eye offer good vantage points for the public, this one is free, for always. With test piles in at the moment and construction starting next year,

Joanna Lumley’s idea over 10 years ago is nearing reality. ‘It’s a fascinating process trying to make a project like this happen.’ A big, grown-up city like London needed extraordinary things and anyway, said Heatherwick, ‘it would be pretty astonishing if there wasn’t friction’.

‘The goal then and now was “to grab people’s eyeballs”’

There was time for more reflections on schemes such as a collaboration with Bjarke Ingels for Google on its Mountain View Campus, his London bus (so much design scrutiny for two-storey buildings, but so little historically for two storeys on wheels, all around the capital) and a new plant-covered Maggie’s cancer care centre in Leeds. And finally there was also a response to a question about what makes him proudest. ‘It is inventing a system of evolving projects,’ he said. ‘It’s just a problem to solve and how you feel about it is just part of the problem. We problematise.’



City in the East

Significant moves are afoot to plan for a 'city in the east'; part of the city, rather than apart from the city. The GLA's strategic planning manager Colin Wilson says the time is right



In mid 2000 I overheard Richard Rogers declaring at a meeting of the Architecture and Urbanism Unit that what was needed in the Thames Gateway was a big idea, to capture the imagination, something that seemed to be absent from the debate about its future. This resulted in City East, a plan for the Royal Docks that radically changed its land use. Gone was the Victorian Tate and Lyle syrup and canning factory, the meat rendering plant and City Airport (to allow greater building heights) and the Royals was reimagined as a city in its own right. It was a plan that, at the time, was not a million miles from the plans that developers like Ballymore, who had purchased extensive riverside sites had commissioned for themselves.

There was a reasonable frustration about the slowness of the statutory planning system, by both AUU and developers, to actively plan for change rather than just describing and protecting the present status quo, and while the Thames Gateway never lacked for visions and masterplans of all shapes

and sizes, it always seemed to lack any coherent idea about what it was for within the wider city. As a consequence, the plans didn't really gel together. This was understandable given that in 2005 the planning of London and planners in London were still trying to get used to the idea of planning the city as a whole rather than as 32 separate boroughs.

'London's growth is driving a renewed interest in the east, and the potential exists to plan for it as part of the city'

The consequences of trying to resolve land allocation, and particularly housing and industrial allocation within individual borough boundary red lines, were significant. Newham, Tower Hamlets, Greenwich and Barking and Dagenham are not far apart in reality but, in the way their local plans articulated their futures, they may as well have been different worlds. In turn the London Plan,

while providing a written description of what the Thames Gateway might be, didn't provide any spatial guidance as to what this might look like on plan.

At the same time, while the Thames Gateway didn't lack for land, much of it was heavily contaminated and demand for development for both housing and commercial was rather thin. In a straw poll at a Thames Gateway annual dinner (something that didn't survive the 2008 recession), nobody in attendance lived in the Thames Gateway.

City East was in part a polemical piece and so wasn't founded in the statutory planning system it was looking to challenge, which meant it couldn't influence development. It was also in its own way like the borough plans a world of its own, rather than a part of the wider city.

Ten years later London's growth is driving a renewed interest in the east, and the potential exists to plan for it as part of the city rather than apart from the city; to manage the allocation of commercial, industrial, retail and housing land across the wider east of London and to consider relationships beyond into Thurrock and Dartford. Importantly, the opportunity exists to achieve a better fit between transport plans and spatial plans and to use the GLA's and boroughs' land holdings to speed up delivery. Until recently, London could rely on existing infrastructure provision, but as the population increases this is no longer the case. Experience with the Vauxhall, Nine Elms, Battersea Development Infrastructure Funding Study (DIFS), and subsequently at

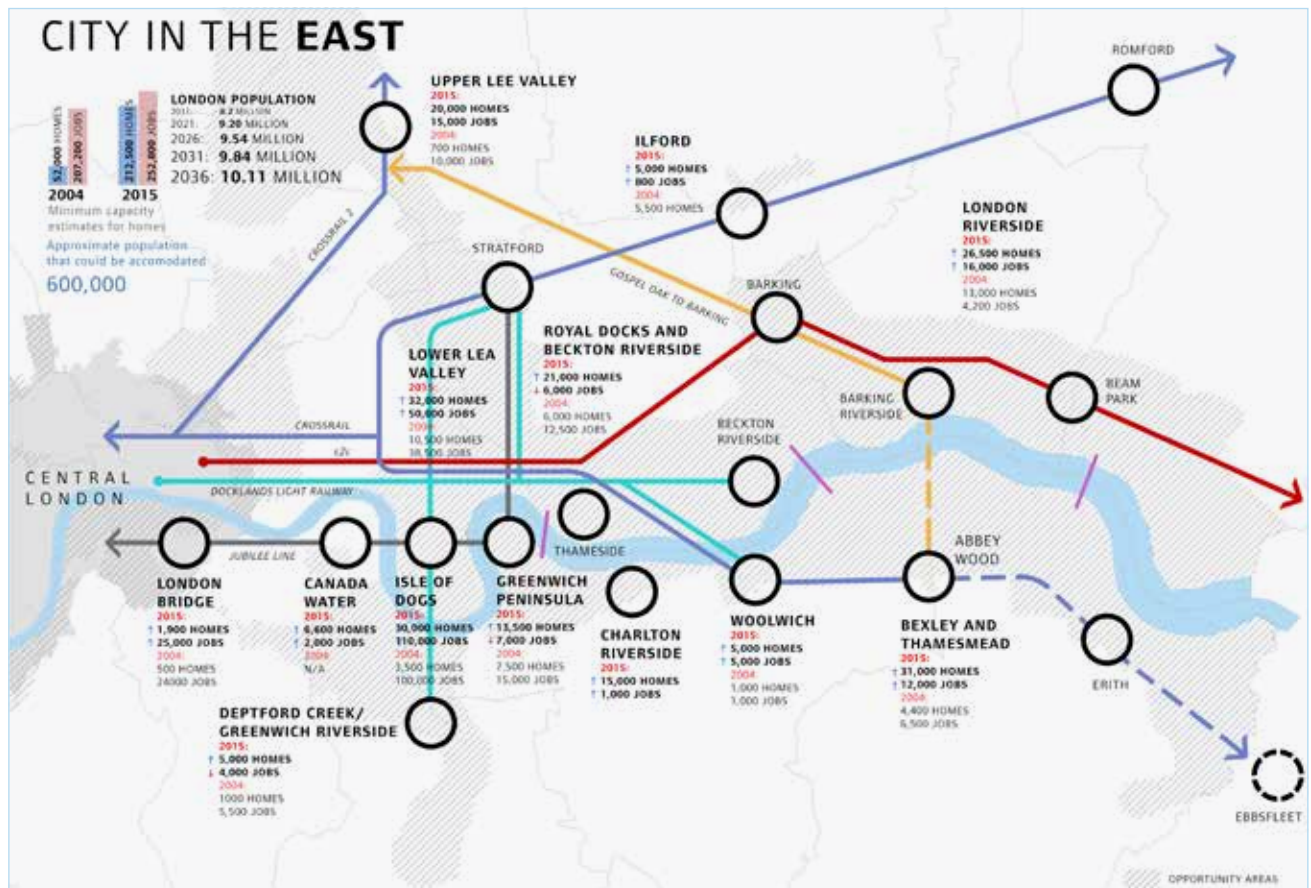
White City and Old Oak, show the benefit of providing spatial plans with a firm foundation in viability and a costed programme of transport, social and utilities infrastructure. The Mayor's Infrastructure Plan and its associated board have provided the locus and means to get the buy in and involvement of utility providers at a senior level in the plan making and plan delivery process. The Mayor's Housing SPG identifies that, with the agreement of the boroughs, a fixed-rate affordable level can be set in the Opportunity Areas and Housing Zones, based on the viability of development to provide a firmer footing for the delivery of all types of housing.

The scale of potential change has increased dramatically, as can be

seen on the plan. The east London Opportunity Areas in 2004 were estimated to have a minimum capacity for 52,000 homes; which has now increased to over 200,000, and that is a minimum figure. As work progresses on the frameworks, more development capacity is usually found as more detailed physical planning is carried out. But this isn't just about numbers. The GLA is working with its partners to deliver a suite of Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks covering what was the Thames Gateway, to produce a credible spatial plan that will provide the narrative for the delivery of London's largest remaining contiguous development opportunity within its current boundaries - the City in the East.

This scale of development isn't going to be delivered overnight. To avoid adding further monuments to the Thames Gateway masterplan graveyard, these frameworks will be sufficiently robust and flexible to withstand the test of time while providing sufficient discipline to create desirable places in which to live.

The timing to plan as a city is good. The majority of borough plan core strategies are about to be reviewed, the London Plan review will commence post May 2016 and TfL's plans are progressing. There is developer interest, there are significant public land holdings being brought forward for delivery and there is strong local and strategic leadership to deliver the City in the East. **ML**



Go east, young man: infographic on how plans for the east of the city are shaping up

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HEAL'S

Clive Dutton

NLA was saddened to learn of the death of Clive Dutton (1953-2015), a member of the New London Sounding Board and from 2009 to 2013 director of regeneration at LB Newham.

Clive was a man of huge energy, passion and boyish enthusiasm. His vision and appetite for change brings to mind Daniel Burnham's quotation: 'Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood.' Clive liked nothing more than standing in front of an audience, armed with a PowerPoint of outrageous images, and stirring its blood with plans for improving places and people's lives. It is apposite that when he was director of planning at Birmingham City Council his strategy was christened the 'Big City Plan'.

Clive started work in 1978 as a planning assistant in Montgomeryshire District Council, moving up through the ranks at various local authority planning departments over the years. He spent a brief period in the private sector as director of regeneration at Gallagher Estates. It was while at Gallagher's that he wrote a report for the government in Northern Ireland as a response to the economic and regeneration proposals set out in the Good Friday Agreement. The Dutton Report, published in June 2004, focused on the Gaeltacht Quarter of Belfast, one of the most deprived communities in Northern Ireland, and proposed using the Irish language and culture as the keys to its regeneration.

He took over as head of planning at Birmingham in 2005. The city boasted the largest local authority planning and development department in the UK, covering planning, regeneration, economic development, major projects, architecture, urban design, building consultancy, highways and transport, with a development portfolio of £20 billion. Such was the ambition that, in the depths of the recession, Clive flew to China with the idea of setting up a Bank of

Birmingham funded in the Far East with the second city's enormous land holdings as collateral.

Clive's legacies included the Big City Plan, launched in September 2010, setting out the detailed framework for radical change to the city centre over the next 30 years; the £600 million New Street station redevelopment where the first half of the new station concourse opened in 2013 and work is now under way to develop the old station; and the striking £193 million Library of Birmingham designed by Dutch architects Mecanoo.

In 2009 he moved to Newham, the principal host borough for the Olympics. There he was responsible for the Metropolitan Stratford Masterplan, the regeneration of the Royal Docks and Canning Town as well as the borough's Core Strategy and Local Development Framework.

He set up his own consultancy in 2013 providing high-level advice to governments, major developers and landowners. Clive was called back to Northern Ireland to develop an Action Plan for the regeneration of west Belfast; he worked on a 2030 Vision for Dubai, in Nigeria and Ghana, as well as the International Quarter in Stratford for Lend Lease.

He also found time to set up, with Megan Piper, The Line sculpture trail along the River Lea in east London as well as acting as an advisor to Kids Company where he supported chief executive Camila Batmanghelidjh in the search for affordable properties and workspace. Had Clive still been alive during Kids Company's recent problems he would no doubt have remained a doughty supporter, recognising in Camila a fellow free spirit. Towards the end Clive had become increasingly angry at the general failure to reduce inequality in the capital.

Clive was awarded an OBE for services to urban regeneration in 1998. He will be greatly missed.

Peter Murray





Our regular round-up of
conferences and events at NLA

BRIEFING NOTES

ON LOCATION

Is west the new east?

Supported by the Mayor of London

West London is giving the east a real run for its money with billions of pounds worth of projects, an Opportunity Area Framework and a Development Corporation to pull as many strings for Old Oak Common together as it can. And just as HS1 and Stratford station were the catalysts for the Olympics and the east's rise, the west is hoping that HS2 and Old Oak Common station will repeat the trick on the other side of town.

Those were some of the key messages to emerge from a special NLA On Location event held at Imperial College's Wood Lane Studios, itself part of the emerging west London picture.

While the east had the Olympics, the west had Old Oak Common –



© Google - Map Data © Tele Atlas

Britain's single biggest regeneration project – and Park Royal, not to mention the 'treasured wilderness' of Wormwood Scrubs, said William McKee, planning committee chairman, Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation. The aim now was to deliver a world

class, sustainable neighbourhood with some 25,000 new homes and 65,000 new jobs, he said, connecting existing neighbourhoods together and delivering new green social and physical infrastructure. This will require 'enormous financial investment' from planning gain or CIL, but already international interest has been shown in developing the area. 'These projects have the potential to deliver £7bn every year to the UK economy and transform the lives of people who work and live here,' said McKee. 'The future for west London is very bright indeed. West is indeed the new east.'

Victoria Hills, interim chief executive officer, Old Oak & Park Royal Development Corporation said the site literally has 'the x factor' with transport infrastructure lines crossing it, and it is currently the only place in the country where HS2 meets Crossrail. 'We think this will be the most connected part of the rail network', she said. 'We're delighted to be starting this 20-30 year project and the beauty of it is that we don't have any set ways of doing anything or standard format.'



West is best? Development opportunities at Wood Lane and beyond

Alex Williams, director of borough planning, Transport for London said that population increases – London is growing by some six new residents every hour – mean that London's networks are likely to be used by 11.5bn trips per annum, up from 9.5bn now. This will affect the road system, where 'the story is not as good as it could be', and where the Mayor is looking at 'radical options' such as tunnels as at Hammersmith's 'flyunder' idea, where around 1,000 homes could be built above ground.

The conference also heard from HS2 head of architecture Laura Kidd, who stressed the important 'catalyst' effect of all stations and the 'contextual' nature of designs for the station at Old Oak Common; Mike Cummings, regional director of Park Royal for SEGRO, who said we must be mindful of the part industrial schemes play in London; and Sarah Ebanja, advisor to QPR, which still wants a stadium in the area despite the club's relegation from the Premier League 'in a central place people can walk to'. Professor David Gann, vice president (development & innovation) at Imperial College described the university's plans for an innovation district at Imperial West to stay ahead of the world's leading universities – 'White City will be on people's lips for 20 years' – while Alistair Shaw, MD of Television Centre for Stanhope,



Paul Monaghan on the BBC

said the developer's aim was to create a 'decent place for people and the public' with 'great life and a buzz about it' in a scheme which includes Soho House and 1 million square foot built out in phase one. AHMM director Paul Monaghan added that his practice's scheme for TV Centre maintains the iconic view but will include penthouses on which AHMM is working with five younger practices, while Capco director of planning and development for Earls Court Anette Simpson stressed the need to work in partnership with local authorities and the GLA. 'Developers like Capco do need to be great stewards of great places,' she said.

KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Developers told: 'be ready' for knowledge economy boom

Sponsored by Bilfinger GVA

London developers must be nimble, flexible and open-minded to new areas in the capital if they are to reap the rewards being offered by the burgeoning knowledge economy market. But they should avoid being over prescriptive and above all ensure they are ready to meet the challenges being demanded by such a growing and diverse sector.

Those were some of the key points made at an NLA breakfast talk on the knowledge economy, which opening speaker Chris Hall, senior director of Bilfinger GVA, described as covering science, creative, media and technology subsets. London is important to the sectors – and they to it – primarily because of scale, with

London's economic output a quarter of the country's growth – 18 per cent since 2009, double the rest, and a workforce in the capital of which 53 per cent have a degree. Traditional city sectors have grown but have been hit hard by the recession, said Hall, but although the press concentrates on the big companies like Google and their locational decision-making in TMT, 50 per cent are SMEs that are reflective of a new 'start-up culture'. But they are going beyond traditional core and 'fringe' locations, with new investors coming into the market with new models of providing space, and new locations being opened up by overland rail connections. 'This is a tremendous opportunity for those looking to draw these sectors to your localities,' said Hall. 'We think it is very dynamic so you have to be nimble and keep up with changes in the sector. It is very diverse – there is no one size fits all – but at the same time being over specific about what type of place and facilities you create may lead you down a cul-de-sac.'

Matthew McMillan, head of inward investment at Croydon, described the measures his authority is taking to attract tech companies, including pointing to Croydon's travel connections, letting 21,000 sq ft of its own space to a tech incubator,

'It is very dynamic so you have to be nimble and keep up with changes in the sector'

improving local internet facilities, and attracting new ventures such as Boxpark to help to shift perceptions of the place. McMillan added that the authority has implemented business rate cuts and is assessing what the 'new live/work space' might be like to attempt to address affordability issues.

Argent partner Nick Searl said the key thing was to create businesses to attract the talent that London needs,

with an emphasis on creating the right sort of place, as at King's Cross, aided as that was by the lure of Central St Martins to firms which wanted to draw from its youth, energy, 'vibe' and footfall. 'Creating a place that people actually want to come to and spend time in is absolutely fundamental,' said Searl. Euston, he added, is the next big opportunity, building on developments such as the Crick Institute.

Finally, Demand Logic chief executive Joe Short described his firm's Cognicity Challenge winning design, which allows building users to glean efficiencies by using an embedded device that analyses performance. 'We think we have totted up savings of approaching 3,000 tonnes of CO₂ annually already,' he said.

HOUSING

'Superdensity' schemes pose risk to London's essential character

Co-hosted by HTA, Levitt Bernstein, Pollard Thomas Edwards and PRP

London risks becoming a victim of its own success, creating too many tall buildings at 'hyperdense' levels rather than mid-rise, street-based schemes that preserve the city's essential character.

That was one of the key messages to emerge from a fascinating breakfast talk at NLA, entitled 'Superdensity the Sequel: Designing high density housing and sustainable places'.

Claire Bennie kicked off proceedings by asking who in the packed audience

had ever lived above the fifth floor in a building – around 15-20 per cent raising their hands – and then whose organisations are involved in designing or commissioning tall buildings – with almost everyone signalling positively.

Andrew Beharrell, senior partner, Pollard Thomas Edwards, said the pace and extent of physical change in London today was greater than ever, post-war, which was a sign that people want to live and work in the capital. This is the main reason why the population is growing at 300 people a day and on course for 10 million by 2031. But this success creates a challenge for infrastructure, while the 'intensity and character' of London's housing has changed dramatically in the last 15 years. NLA research showed that 263 towers are on their way, and although planning policy indicates that 'tall' is anything over 10 storeys, 20 storeys-plus has become 'the new normal'. Densities are also rising. 'There are now schemes in London edging up to 500 homes per hectare,' said Beharrell. 'We're calling this hyperdensity.' We need to learn the art of placemaking in very dense developments, he added, and mid-rise, street-based alternatives could meet all of London's housing needs.

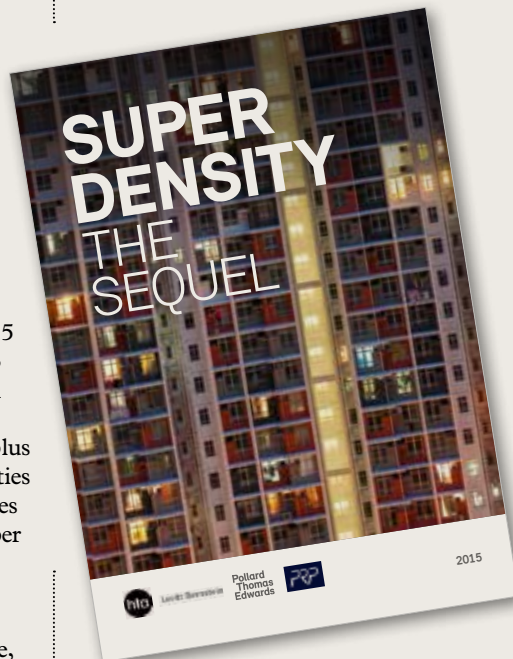
HTA managing director Ben Derbyshire said the problem is not confined to London and that one sees in developing countries 'with increasing alarm' the way that the point block is

'The population is growing at 300 people a day and is on course for 10 million by 2031'

being bought wholesale as the solution to urbanisation. 'Streets work,' said Derbyshire. 'They are a city's greatest asset.' Schemes should be designed for life, then spaces, then buildings, he added, in accordance with the thoughts of Jan Gehl, and towers should enhance, not blight the ground plane. Derbyshire's

messages for a new Mayor include the need for a London Plan to fight for devolved land and property taxation.

Levitt Bernstein managing director Matthew Goulcher said that much of this is about the need for diverse communities and continuing to integrate a variety



The HTA/PTE/PRP/Levitt Bernstein report

of uses. Spiralling property prices and a lack of affordability have led to a changed landscape where young professionals struggle to find accommodation in London. Sharing is perhaps one answer – some 40 per cent of LB's staff of around 100 are in shared accommodation, but the main battle is against a loss of city character. Policy needs to focus on larger family dwellings, with planning encouraging mixed use. 'We need to simplify the whole environment of Section 106 agreements and need to secure more affordable housing with less room for manoeuvre' he said. Schemes should be designed to integrate specialist housing, with targets set as bed spaces per hectare, he added.

Finally, PRP chairman Andy von Bradsky said the lack of maintenance on 60s and 70s buildings had led to their collective failure and an ongoing problem we're now dealing with. Management needs to be factored in from the beginning, and it is much easier to mitigate management costs in mid-rise development. 'We're not against high-rise – this is not an anti-tower rant. All we're saying is that there needs to be greater rigour and scrutiny to the way we design high-rise buildings.'

INFRASTRUCTURE

New funding mechanisms needed to feed London's infrastructure

Sponsored by AECOM, Bircham Dyson Bell and Transport for London

With a population growth now measured at nine new residents every hour, London must continue to invest in infrastructure across the board to stay globally competitive. And while plans for Crossrail 2 are well advanced, the capital needs new and innovative sources of funding to enable it and schemes like the Bakerloo Line Extension to go ahead.

Those were some of the key principles to emerge from a special half-day conference at NLA into the infrastructure needs of the capital. These, said opening speaker GLA assistant director for economic policy Jeremy Skinner, include 1.5 million new homes, a 50 per cent increase in public

transport capacity, 600 more schools and colleges, 40 new facilities for waste and 9000ha of green space, all needed by 2050. All cities need greater fiscal independence to grow, said Skinner, who added that the GLA will publish an infrastructure activity map and database later this summer. 'The broad conclusion is that we need to think much more creatively about how we can fund the infrastructure we have,' he said.

Transport for London's head of strategy and policy, planning, Lucinda Turner said that TfL was under pressure to become self-reliant and had already taken 15 per cent out of its cost base. But ambitious aims such as tunnelling and decking projects including at Hammersmith and the fact that the number of daily trips across London is forecast to increase by 5m trips to 30m trips per day by 2021, mean that there is a growing case for devolution of responsibility for decision-making and funding. 'We need new funding sources and to better exploit existing ones,' said Turner, with value capture, such as devolved stamp duty, in its sights. 'Business as usual just won't cut it much longer,' she said.

Crossrail 2 managing director Michèle Dix said the transport challenge was acute since the network is becoming more intensely used, with the number of people travelling to work in central London up by almost a third since 2004. But there is a gap in the network that Crossrail 2 – twice as big as Crossrail 1, aptly – will plug, unlocking housing and promoting jobs in the process. Around half of the Crossrail 2 £27bn cost can be found through existing sources, but, said Dix, we have to be more inventive, with perhaps a hotel bed tax or in other value capture – the increase in stamp duty alone would give 50 per cent of the line's cost. The 'Mayor's priority transport scheme' already has a safeguarded route, with its next milestone the submission of its business case.

The conference also heard from City of London Corporation chief information officer Graham Bell on

the Square Mile's initiatives to improve broadband and wireless connectivity and London Communications Agency director Sarah Baranowski, who said that housing is the 'new transport' – the big political issue that will figure strongly in next year's Mayoral campaign. AECOM associate director for sustainability, Michael Henderson, outlined the need to look at a more integrated approach to water-cycle management because London and the south east are 'running out of water', while Bircham Dyson Bell partner Shabana Anwar showed how 'nationally significant' infrastructure and other projects could benefit from going down the quicker and more certain development consent order. British Land's residential development director Emma Cariaga outlined the Canada Water project as a new part of London, while Peter Elliot, senior property development manager at TfL, demonstrated how the organisation is looking to develop some 10m sq ft of property over the next 10 years to raise £1.1bn, with a new, 'grown up approach' instead of selling under-utilised properties. Weston Williamson

'We need to think much more creatively about how we can fund the infrastructure we have'

partner Rob Naybour said stations had become unique public buildings that are part of everyone's urban experience on a day-to-day basis, with projects like its Woolwich Crossrail station aiming to drive regeneration. And finally Cllr Mark Williams, cabinet member for regeneration, planning and transport at Southwark Council, made the case for the £4.7bn Bakerloo Line Extension. The BLE will unlock development on the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area, where Southwark has raised its aims to create around 10-15,000 new homes. 'We desperately want this and desperately need it,' he said.

BIDS

BIDs gearing up for challenges of next decade

Sponsored by Bilfinger GVA

BIDs have made a major contribution to London's physical environment in the 10 years since their inception, with a wide variety of services provided to make the capital a cleaner, greener, and more liveable place.

That was one of the key positive messages to emerge at NLA's London BID summit: the role of BIDs in improving the capital's commercial centres.

The capital now has some 46 BIDs in operation, with chief executive of British BIDs Julie Grail focusing on achievements across sectors including 'cleaning up, promoting, enlivening and innovating'. They have also, said Grail, developed significantly in their first decade from place management to place shaping, taking on more of a strategic voice, and with property-owner BIDs the latest form of the movement. Grail cited PaddingtonNow's work in recycling, Inmidtown's work on zero to landfill, Victoria's green audit work, BID-organised events such as a cinema festival in Vauxhall, a food festival in Waterloo, and yoga in Hammersmith as well as others including Kingston First's extensive work on rejuvenating markets in the borough.

Kingston First chief executive Ros Morgan said that the market had been critical in the success of the town centre and had removed what was a real negative impact on the town and barrier to its vision, with an annual spend there of £4m across 30 stalls.

But the funding question facing BIDs is a factor too. 'Ten years ago I could confidently stand up and say it is about additionality', she said. 'With the austerity cuts and councils having to merge and offer joint procurement, those boundaries are starting to go from black and white to very grey.'

LSE director Tony Travers said that BIDs first came about 10 years ago in an economy that was growing and where public resources were plentiful, so it was easy to argue that any services provided were 'additional' to those provided by councils, else there would have been little enthusiasm from its business funders. But with funding now in 'an awkward position', down from 4 per cent of the economy to 3 per cent now and projected to fall further, council cuts have in some cases been as much as 50 per cent in four years. 'Nothing has happened like this in modern times,' said Travers. 'It makes Margaret Thatcher look like a radical expansionist'. But what the past tells us about the future, Travers went on, is that councils will be forced to make the biggest cuts in planning, cultural services, environment, transport and highways. 'That is, the services which most closely resemble BIDs' concerns,' meaning BIDs and BID funders will face a choice to accept that BID services will replace

those delivered by local government or refuse to replace them and accept lower standards of cleanliness and so on.

But problems were developing around transparency. 'I don't go through a week now where I don't get a call from an aggrieved business that doesn't like the BID,' she said. And the funding question will have ramifications. 'There are some big things to come but also some worrying things,' she said. 'We mustn't become an arm of another organisation, not least the public sector,' Grail warned. 'There's a real nervousness about an expectation on BIDs to do something that their businesses do not believe is the right objective.'

'We mustn't become an arm of another organisation, not least the public sector'

The conference also heard from speakers including the Portman Estate's strategic projects director Simon Loomes, who said that with budget cuts and additionality, the years to come will see a marked change in the management of the streetscape. Bilfinger GVA senior director John James said that occupiers now wanted active, interesting and lively places that BIDs could help to create. 'They all want something more now,' he said. As one of the biggest mixed-use estates managers in the UK, the firm has a unique perspective on managing public realm in private ownership, James added, with good communication, transparency and openness the key for BIDs.

Lambeth programme director for strategic and neighbourhood investment Sandra Roebuck said BIDs were important elements in areas such as Vauxhall, which is 'on the tip of transformational change' and whose meanwhile projects help locals to see



British BIDs chief executive Julie Grail

‘what change could look like’. But austerity cuts could, Roebuck admitted, affect the baselines agreed with BIDs. Finally, Northbank BID chief executive Ruth Duston said there are interesting challenges and opportunities ahead. ‘There’s an enormous opportunity for BIDs to become much more strategic in approach and have much more of a voice at the table,’ she said. ‘Yes, it’s all about additionality, but it’s much more now about partnership working and looking more creatively at how those partnerships can be established. There’s a real evolution among BIDs and we have an opportunity to have a much bigger stake in how we shape and influence going forward. There’s a massive opportunity in years to come for us to be key players in the placemaking agendas of the areas that we operate in.’

STREETS ARE PLACES TOO

Oxford Street and Park Lane in sights for overhauls

London must concentrate on balancing the place and movement needs of the capital’s streets, with major work required on Oxford Street to help it cope with even more visitors after Crossrail is up and running.

That was one of the key messages from the ‘Streets are Places Too’ conference at NLA, whose scene was set by Arup director Alexander Jan. The Oxford Street Weave work his firm has undertaken for the new West End Partnership aims to help the area cope with the high levels of ‘stress’ the area’s streets are feeling in the run-up to Crossrail’s opening in 2018. Even

now, some 280 million annual visits are made to Oxford Street, Bond Street, Regent Street and 22 other adjoining streets. With those figures set to rise, they need managing and dispersal, with the Weave project preparing a ‘road map’ to allow for more and better public realm, green routes and better pedestrian connections throughout the West End. There was also scope for experimentation, said Jan, with Sir Peter Hendy recently signalling that the time may be right for a radical new bus ban approach on Oxford Street. Ultimately, Jan said during questions, ‘there is a real prize to go for’, with the potential to think about some kind of boulevard concept running from Farringdon to Marble Arch as an exciting potential Mayoral project.

TfL urban design team principal

‘We need to make streets places too’

urban design advisor Gareth Sumner said that streets are the lifeblood of our city, and that TfL was aiming to shift the emphasis more from them being simply for movement to being places. Underground stations have always been movement hubs but in reality have never been designed as ‘factories of movement’ alone, he said, with shopping, art, busking and architecture all part of the picture too. But it is important to get the public realm around stations right as the first thing that people see of an area – and first impressions stick. So TfL will be launching station public realm design guidance later this year, while the Roads Task Force work has categorised nine street types in the capital based on the balance of movement and place. ‘This allows place to be recognised from the start,’ said Sumner. ‘We need to make streets places too.’

Finally, architect Liam Hennessy presented an idea which encapsulated much of the spirit of the speakers

preceding him. The proposal is to transform the southbound carriageway of Park Lane into a boulevard, with the northbound section easily big enough, said Hennessy, to take all the traffic as a two-way street. As it is, the central islands of Park Lane are inaccessible and in area are greater than Grosvenor Square. ‘It’s an extraordinary wasted space in central London,’ he said.

PEOPLE NEED PLACES

Good places make money

Sponsored by Broadgate Estates and Cluttons

Building high-quality public realm has real, tangible benefits for people’s wellbeing and a city’s liveability – and can bring financial rewards too.

Those were some of the key messages to emerge from a breakfast talk as part of NLA’s Public London Programme.

Chaired by *Never Mind the Bollards* curator Sarah Gaventa, the ‘People Need Places’ event was kicked off by Bartlett professor Matthew Carmona, who declared that there had been a ‘renaissance’ in public space since the 1980s, albeit one where such schemes are too readily susceptible to budget



Never Mind the Bollards curator Sarah Gaventa



An exemplary public space? King's Cross's Granary Square

cuts in times of austerity. We shouldn't always think about formal public spaces, said Carmona, regulators need to be flexible enough to understand how public spaces are evolving and diversity must also be recognised. 'It's important to have something for everybody but not necessarily everything for everybody,' he said. The best spaces are also clearly delineated, encourage active uses, are meaningful, comforting and relaxing, and not just in the summer months. 'One of the key failures is overdesigned public spaces.'

Grosvenor's director of placemaking Will Bax said that for most of the last century our approach to dealing with city growth has 'brutalised' the people who inhabit those cities. But with a Grosvenor estate that runs from Mayfair and Belgravia to Southampton, Lille, San Francisco and Tokyo, public realm 'is at the heart of how we think about everything', Bax added. Building on work with Jan Gehl, Grosvenor has invested £20m over the last five years on its 'stewardship' and schemes including at Mount Street, as well as a pocket park in Belgravia that had made deep impressions on the children Bax helped plant shrubs.

An emotional survey the company ran last year showed anecdotal evidence that 'places that are planned for people make people happy', but creating great places also has to be more than philanthropy. 'There's an acknowledgment that investing in public space requires patient capital.' Such investment pays real dividends, with rents at Mount Street outstripping those in neighbouring streets by 6 per cent, and a further spend of £75m across all its sites to come. 'Our belief is that financial benefits will follow.'

The event also heard from head of research at Cluttons Sue Foxley, who demonstrated research that showed that for those looking to buy residential accommodation, the 'micro' locational issues such as green spaces, amenities and a 'villagey' feel rose up the pecking order once they were in, with an 'urban feel', for instance, going down. And Günther Vogt, director of Vogt Landscape demonstrated how cities are dealing with the idea of the green belt as a park system, as well as smaller schemes such as planting birch trees at Tate Modern. 'Placemaking sometimes is really simple,' he said.

NYLON

A tale of two cycling cities

Supported by KPF and in association with the Forum and Institute for Urban Design

London and New York have much to learn from each other as they both get to grips with rapidly growing populations and more people than ever before affected by their respective cycling strategies. And while initiatives such as London's mini-Hollands, cycle superhighways and quietways are important elements in a drive towards a safer cycling environment, legislative changes and political leadership are also powerful tools in creating a culture that is better for all road users.

Those were some of the main points to come from a special NLA event – *Cycle Strategies: Safer Streets, Better Places*.

'Promoting cycling in city streets is a political challenge'

The event, held simultaneously in the two cities over a live video-link, was kicked off by Josh Benson, assistant commissioner, street improvement projects, NYC Department of Transportation, who outlined the city's Vision Zero Action Plan, adopted last year by Mayor Bill de Blasio. Sarah Burr, Senior Strategy & Planning Manager for Cycling at TfL provided the London overview, with a goal of increasing the 585,000 cycling journeys that are made every day in the English capital to 1.5m per day by 2026, along with a reduction of those killed or seriously injured by 40 per cent by 2020.

'Our aim is to get more people cycling, more safely, more often,' she

said. Safety concerns are the main reason why people do not take up cycling, and TfL is working to improve infrastructure, normalise cycling behaviour and tackle problems with freight vehicles, backed by a £1bn pot over 10 years. Burr said her department was looking to New York and the economic benefits of cycling to see how we can do that better in London, and said she was excited by quietways, which will have on-street navigation systems for cycling, and mini-Hollands in three outer London town centres. These will be rolled out across the UK if they transform their environments as much as predicted. TfL is also working to categorise all roads in London, since only the busiest – around 20 per cent – need some kind of segregation; and with fleet operators to educate them, coupled to new fines for those which don't fit safety equipment later this year. As in New York, she said, it was about making sure speed constraints are enforced.

Paul Steely White, executive director, Transportation Alternatives in New York said on freight, sidebars had been installed on lorries, but that promoting cycling in city streets is not so much a design challenge or a policy challenge but a political challenge,

and these changes to our streets and street culture do not go uncontested. In Prospect Park West in Brooklyn, for example, a bike lane was installed but there is still a lawsuit pending to remove it. Steely White said he wished New York had London's congestion charging to allow more road space for bike lanes, but what made Vision Zero happen was the victims' families. A 'battle for the streets' had been helped by passing a bill last year that makes it a criminal offence to not yield to a pedestrian at a crossing or fail to yield to another cyclist in a bike lane. 'We can make design changes but unless there's a current change in the culture, so that we're actually respecting that right of way, we won't get very far'.

The event also heard from Matt Winfield, deputy director – London, Sustrans, who said that the 14 deaths of London cyclists last year were 'disproportional' and it was 'horrific that people die on the roads of London just going about their daily business'. He said quietways will represent a 'step change' in provision, and, if more than 3,000 passenger movements are made per day then those roads need some form of segregation, such as the 'armadillos' used in Camden. Sustrans would also



Property cycle – in New York and London

like to see more centre line removal, which leads to speeds dropping, studies show.

Broadgate Estates CEO Steve Whyman said that extremist views and 'tribalism' were unhelpful, and that we need to collect more data on 'near misses' to arrive at better prevention of incidents, and perhaps London needs to be bolder in its road death reduction aims. It was also critical to get strong central political leadership to try to get better freight consolidation, while Skye Duncan, global designing cities Director, National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) said her organisation's design guide allowed cities such as New York and London to learn from best practice across the world. Both cities have 'come a really long way in the last decade', said Duncan.

Finally, London Mayoral candidate Christian Wolmar added that London could learn from the impact of organising victims, with New York's example added to Holland's, whose growth in cycling was stimulated by the mothers of children who had been killed. Wolmar added that London had learnt from the patchy first generation of super highways but that 'radical measures' were needed to segregate freight transport away from cyclists, perhaps mirroring New York's night deliveries programme. 'We did some of this during the Olympics but we haven't built on that,' he said. 'Both cities have a lot to learn from each other.'



Wolmar: we need 'radical measures' to segregate freight transport from cyclists

CULTURE

Reimagining the Royal Academy

The Royal Academy is working hard with David Chipperfield Architects to get more out of its site for visitors and the wider Mayfair public alike, helping to develop the area as a recognised cultural district as well as a luxury shopping one.

That was one of the key points to emerge from a fascinating breakfast talk on the academy's redevelopment plans given by RA secretary and chief executive Charles Saumerez Smith and David Chipperfield Architects' associate director Nick Hill.

Saumerez Smith: 'We will aim to do one architecture exhibition every year'

The £50m scheme – which is supported by a £12.7m Lottery grant and will be completed in time for the RA's 250th anniversary in 2018 – links Burlington House and Burlington Gardens for the first time and unites the two-acre site. It includes new spaces for exhibitions and displays, dedicated exhibition galleries, a new link bridge, Clore Learning Centre and double-height lecture theatre with over 260 seats. 'We will aim to do one architecture exhibition every year', said Saumerez Smith.

But while there is, he added, a great deal going on in Mayfair, it is 'hard to engage people in town planning' with inconsistency over how different streets are treated, and what Saumerez Smith believes is a lack of joined-up thinking linking separate projects together. 'I'm rather messianic about it,' he said.

'I'm preoccupied by the immediate neighbourhood, but when Crossrail exit opens in Hanover Square it is in our interest and London's interest that the neighbourhood is thought of not just as luxury retail but cultural.'

The idea of creating a new public link between the buildings – from Piccadilly to Mayfair – has quite profound consequences for the organisation of the academy, said Hill, 'like trying to build a bypass through a nature reserve', even if the sculptural in situ concrete link is a modest one. 'When we have done our work you might not notice what we have done. That's not a bad thing.'

The daylight lecture theatre is in a horseshoe plan, the better for flexibility, debate and audience engagement, with a steep rake to give more visibility to the audience. 'It's a modern theatre design but it does have a foot in the past,' said Hill. Rooflights will be opened up again in Burlington Gardens to allow more daylight into spaces, while the front of the building will be cleaned and a ramp and stairs added and space created for café seating or exhibition display. There will also be new spaces for the RA schools, including a permanent space for the public display of work by students at the heart of the site. The integration of the schools into the visitors' experience will also reveal the RA's important role in arts education and long tradition of training artists.



The 'reimagined' RA

PUBLIC LONDON

Improve public realm; enhance London

Sponsored by Broadgate Estates and Cluttons

London has come a long way in recognising the primacy of public realm to the city in the last 10 years but must raise its game to stave off the pressures of a population set to rise by a million more in the next 10.

That was one of the key messages to emerge from a keynote speech given by Landscape Institute president Noel Farrer at an NLA conference on public realm. Schemes such as the Olympic Park, said Farrer, show the way that landscape-led city design had emerged as a major force, with playable landscapes like Granary Square adding to connected spaces such as Woolwich Square and people-centred places like Dalston Eastern Curve. London is a 'narrative of change', said Farrer, and 'we must never see our work as fixed', and London must remain a green city, with grand gestures like the Garden Bridge important to show that London can 'embrace change'. London must remain a city for everyone, he added, but a particular area of concern is the development at Nine Elms, which is too small, disconnected and underinvested. 'Landscape has not had the right prominence here,' he said.

For GLA area regeneration manager Paul Harper, the strides made by London are due in part to a series of initiatives and publications and former Mayor Ken Livingstone's being 'appalled by the shabby and neglected state of some of our public spaces'. That prompted exemplar projects,



The Garden Bridge – a ‘grand gesture’ that shows that London can embrace change

the 100 Public Spaces programme, manifestoes and the really significant shift of TfL giving equal importance to place as to the movement functions of streets. Ben Plowden, director of surface strategy and planning at TfL, said that 10 years ago he was asked to don a radio mic and try to run across one of the adjudged worst crossings in the country, at Vauxhall Cross. But it was a mark of how far the city had come – aided by the Mayors, developers and the boroughs – that it is now looking to instill dramatic improvements to places

‘Let’s just make spaces which look local and relate to the vernacular rather than have a one-size-fits-all policy’

such as Vauxhall, and at outer London Crossrail stations. The conference also heard from Victor Callister, assistant director of environmental enhancement at the City of London, on the importance of creating people places and dramatic improvements to areas like Aldgate, and Pat Brown, who showed the lessons from places like New York, Lyon and Bilbao. In part these were about being decisive

and overnight moves, such as at Times Square, but they are also about joined-up government and deciding to invest in cities as a way of investing in the wider region. ‘Let’s just make spaces which look local and relate to the vernacular rather than have a one-size-fits-all policy.’ Camden’s assistant director, environment and transport Sam Monck said that, faced with dramatic cuts to local authority budgets, it was time to entertain notions of things like the visitor levy to pay for maintenance, and even public toilets run by private companies. ‘We don’t need to be the people who do everything now,’ he said. And while DSDHA architect Nicola Ibbotson showed how schemes such as that to pedestrianise and green Alfred Place could provide an oasis in the West End alongside the newly two-wayed Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street, Publica’s Lucy Musgrave showed how a reworked Hanover Square could do the same for Oxford Street, as well as providing an attractive backdrop to the area’s new front door, the new Crossrail station. Finally, Broadgate Estates CEO Steve Whyman demonstrated that each area should be managed according to its idiosyncrasies, and to a judgement call to what constitutes a security issue. For Anna Strongman, senior projects

director at Argent, building public realm first had helped, while a ‘tweaking’ or ‘enlivenment’ fund the developer sets aside can improve spaces once they see how the public use them.

COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT

London remains top draw for international investment

Sponsored by Charles Russell Speechlys

London looks set to remain the most popular location for international investment from across the globe, aided by supportive government bodies and a favourable development environment. But it faces challenges including finding projects large enough to satisfy demand from China and elsewhere, a raft of regulations creating ‘doubt and fear’, connectivity problems and competition from other cities.

Those were some of the key points to emerge in an NLA briefing on commercial investment in London.

The event was kicked off by JLL international capital group director Matthew Richards, who branded London a ‘country in its own right’ given the \$45bn of commercial real estate transacted in the city in 2014. This, said Richards, is only beaten by the US and Germany, and is higher than the whole transactional volumes of Japan. ‘It is absolutely huge’ said Richards, ‘but the key defining point is the variety of international capital,’ with some 60 per cent of those transactions coming from overseas and 70 per cent



NLA's PechaKucha evening on 'fresh thinking in public realm design', hosted at Henry Wood House, designed by Buckley Gray Yeoman for The Office Group, had eight speakers including Carl Turner, TfL's Gareth Sumner, and Argent project director Ian Freshwater. Issues ranged from how public realm is funded to accessibility improvements.

when it is central rather than greater London. And while international investment was dominated in the past by one region at a time, such as the Nordics, then the Japanese and Germans, today the interesting factor is the sheer diversity of investors that are coming to London. There is a 'healthy balance' to the mix and nature of origin, with a big growth of Asian investors into the London market, and one of the reasons is the nature of global savings. China's savings rate is expected to grow at 17 per cent per annum, with India at 16 per cent and Brazil at 14 per cent. 'The developing world is saving at a tremendous rate and that means more capital into different structures,' said Richards. In fact, it has been predicted that by 2022, some 40 per cent of the world's total savings will be held in China. The challenge for London is to find projects big enough to satisfy this demand, and the future will involve more marrying of equity and expertise. 'There is a requirement to partner up,' said Richards.

This is where Argent partner David Partridge has valid experience, with ongoing work in Manchester with the city council on land opposite Piccadilly station, and the firm's history in partnership to regenerate the King's Cross site with LCR and other landowner DHL. The Manchester project shows how the council will work in partnership to get a £800-900,000 annual income and stake rather than a one-off cheque for £5m for the land. At King's Cross, again, the process was

a 'creative' one with a similar best-of-both-worlds outcome; progress when LCR needed it, and value when it had been created. This principle has allowed Argent to, in turn, give its BT pension scheme backers a rate of over 30 per cent over 15 years, not including King's Cross. Now, said Partridge, Argent is working at Brent Cross with Barnet, Tottenham Hale with Haringey, and is talking to housing associations and other entities that are keen to unlock value from the land they hold, with cities on the radar including Birmingham and Bristol as well as Manchester and London. It is also working with the Related group of companies – behind the 15m sq ft Hudson Yards project in New York – to bring money and expertise to bear on the UK housing shortage. 'We are going to be looking to build up a huge build to rent portfolio off the back of their platform and their expertise,' said Partridge.

The conference also heard from Huw Stephens, Head of UK transactions at AXA Real Estate, who said that, although London's infrastructure is 'creaking', the city's centre of gravity is shifting eastwards and to fringe areas, with tenants wishing to be 'centre of the action' and able to indulge in amenities such as bars and restaurants close to work. Tomáš Jurdák, managing director, HB Reavis UK, provided the investor view, emphasising his firm's wish to be a long-term player, while Malcolm Dowden, consultant, CharlesRussell Speechlys, ran the rule over legal issues affecting investment decisions. There

were regulations coming into play over issues like climate change which were creating 'confusion, doubt and fear' in the market, he said, and 'crucial' issues like connectivity problems particularly affecting small business had prompted the GLA to run a rating programme for buildings across the city. London's legal market, so long a centre of excellence and pillar of the city, is also changing, with advances being made in the sector in Singapore, Dubai and elsewhere, in an attempt to attract legal business away. 'We must never forget that you can hear similar talks in other cities competing for global pre-eminence,' said Dowden.

DENSITY

Intelligent densities and vertical communities

Co-hosted by SOM

London must battle to overcome preconceptions about density that stretch back to slums and overcrowding and look at its sharp population growth as less of a crisis and more of an opportunity to create new housing solutions.



NLA held another PechaKucha event at Vision London. Called 'What is London made of?', it investigated new materials that are improving the efficiency, responsiveness and design of London's buildings. Speakers included Piercy and Co's Lucia Berasaluce, Waugh Thistleton's Andrew Waugh and dRMM's Steve Wallis

That was one of the key points to emerge from an NLA breakfast talk, which began with SOM's design director Kent Jackson proposing a new model for delivering vertical communities at 'intelligent densities' in order to attend to a rise of 1.5 million in the capital's population levels by 2030. London, said Jackson, does not figure highly in density terms on the international scale, with cities like New York and Barcelona denser environments, and even London's densest areas such as Kensington and Chelsea or Islington more akin to Brighton in feel than a landscape peppered by tall buildings. If the density levels of those areas were replicated across the whole of London it would cope with 21 million people. 'So the crisis isn't a crisis,' said Jackson. 'It's an opportunity.' One of the keys lies in 'repairing' the city, intensifying in areas of high PTAL ratings and Opportunity Areas, and only a small uplift is required to densities from 20 units/hectare to 23.5 million to reach the 1.5 million extra needed, perhaps



Hitting the heights – SOM's tower

with buildings in the 10-30 storey range. But the 'touchy' thing is how we go about building tall, said Jackson, especially in a city where the design of office buildings is more advanced than the residential sector and where the transition to more of a high-rise typology has not yet been made. The GLA is doing 'all the right things', said Jackson, but its measures had failed to allow for more 'aspirational' housing to come forward, and very similar, 'bland' and 'mundane' products are being constructed. To create a more characterful and sustainable form of housing, SOM has developed some research into 10-storey increments on timber towers, with a 60-storey version created with 70 per cent timber to see how far the idea could be pushed. The prototype – which is about 'blue sky thinking', since there would be a limit to how much capacity there would be – allows for a significant carbon reduction equivalent to taking some 880 cars off the road in the UK. There is also, said Jackson, more scope to cluster and share energy across uses especially in opportunity areas. 'It comes back to seeing, not squandering, this opportunity we have today of bringing everything together in communities and thinking about how we develop the residential crisis and work together to solve it and not add to the problems in London.'

Discussion of the principles in the model included planning manager at the GLA Colin Wilson, who said that many of the problems of the housing crisis in

the capital were down to the price of land – 'It's dementedly expensive, and everything flows from that,' he said. Sturgis Carbon Profiling managing director Simon Sturgis said it was about striking a balance between storey height and the level of infrastructure required at low-rise. And Manhattan Loft CEO Harry Handelsman said that potential purchasers were increasingly asking if there was the potential to combine flats,

'It comes back to seeing, not squandering this opportunity we have today of bringing everything together in communities'

the developer endorsing such flexibility, although doing this in high rise presented challenges. First Base head of design Steve Newman said the flexibility inherent in the proposals was something he applauded, champions and includes in design briefs. But ultimately, he said, it was the people and activity that makes a place, with buildings as the backdrop.

Finally, LSE director Tony Travers, speaking from the floor during questions, said London was once twice as dense as it is today, with the response from planners to slums and overcrowding being to allow for development in railway-enabled areas away from the centre. 'We're always up against that and convincing people that density isn't about overcrowding,' he said. 'I think there is partly a selling exercise to be dealt with here.'

THINK TANKS

Around once a month, NLA holds Think Tank sessions with 15-20 invited experts, to discuss emerging issues affecting the capital

THINK TANK

New ideas for housing – working group

How can we best improve the speed, scale and quality of housing supply?

That was the question posed to a group of invited experts at a special NLA Insight Study Working Group to try to stimulate new ideas and encourage more innovative responses to London's housing shortage.

The session invited responses from all present around the table following a paper written by architect and housing development specialist Claire Bennie, and was kicked off by head of development, EC Harris, Mark Farmer, who highlighted the fact that the funding map for delivery is now a very changed one, with a further government clampdown on public funding to come. This leads to a requirement for

longer-term institutional money, with a different model around rented return, but the biggest obstacle is likely to be construction industry capacity and the ongoing reduction in traditional site-based skills, meaning that long-term money backing more off-site construction could be one answer. 'We need to do something differently, that's for sure' said Farmer.

HTA managing partner Ben Derbyshire said that the devolution question was key to a city region perspective and to enable the mayorality, boroughs, and Home Counties around the green belt to come together to create a coherent plan about spatial development and delivery, covering the important issue of quality. Drawing on his work on 'Supurbia', Derbyshire suggested that a significant number of homes could come from intensifying the suburban footprint of London. Double the footprint of just 10 per cent of that and you could provide 20,000 new homes per annum over five years.

We are in a housing crisis, said Argent partner Richard Meier, and yet the policies around Housing Zones are not enough to address that. Can we be more radical in how we use Housing Zones? The service planning authorities provide and the quality of skills delivered is also an issue, said development director for Grainger plc David Walters – do elected members share the vision? What can developers and others do to help skills in housing and planning teams? NIMBYism, too, will be a consideration as estates of old come to the end of their life cycle.

For Bill Price, director, head of UK client management, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, the skills to create great homes exist. But the release of government land needs more clarification on terms, and density is a contentious issue. Further afield, it is the Netherlands that provides a number of relevant lessons, said Gerard Maccreanor, director, Maccreanor Lavington, especially as the nation really delivered following a housing shortage after the war, but over a 60-year period, suggesting that a longer-term view was required on these shores. The concept there of Doorstroming – that people move five times in their lifespan – allows for mobility, is a more effective use of space and increases living standards for all.

Sally Lewis, director, Stitch Studio, is interested in the way the public interfaces with housing, and believes that the public can engage with the process and quality therein, perhaps through the concept of streets, enhanced by politicians talking about them too and sites on those streets interacting with each other more.



Housing innovation – Herzog & de Meuron at Wood Wharf

For Neil Deely, partner, Metropolitan Workshop, very-high-density housing of the sort being proposed in parts of east London with ‘absolutely no limit on density’ is an enormous time bomb ticking and a major management issue for the future; there should be a halt to some of the unrealistic densities being proposed on inappropriate sites. James Felstead, director, Child Graddon Lewis, believes that intensification in the outer zones – 3-6 – is key, offering potential residents much more than just housing. ‘I’m not sure that always gets thought about,’ said Felstead. Would extending the cycle network as part of transport infrastructure allow a reappraisal of PTAL ratings too?

Dr Noble Francis, economics director, Construction Products Association, said that market volatility – which focuses on land value and is dominated by major housebuilders, rather than SMEs – dictates the business model of housing. Between 1968 and 1973 Great Britain was building 400,000 units a year, split equally between private

‘I’m afraid it is a long-term problem and does come down to the way in which land is distributed’

and public sectors. This meant that if there was a fall-off in demand the public sector could at least offset some of the fall in the private sector. In 2008-2009 there was a 52 per cent fall in private sector housing starts and over half of all social housing was provided through Section 106, which meant that not only does public sector not offset the fall, but it exacerbates it. And if the market is that volatile and falling that much, the only business model that will help is not one which builds more houses, but which writes down the value of land. SMEs have been decimated by recessions, falling from 12,215 in 1988 to 2,710 in 2013, because of those falls in demand and their dependence on cashflow. ‘So we have an incredibly volatile market, and what that doesn’t incentivise is investment,’ said Francis. That is, investment in manufacturing which likes a rate of return over 30 years, and in skills. Those brick factories are hard to bring back once mothballed, after all.

Alex Lifschutz, director, Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands, questioned whether what has been built is up to standard anyway – and who today has the long-term view, the vision? ‘I think that’s the problem we have.’ Large tracts of land are sold to raise revenue for all sorts of subsidies that would otherwise come from government. But there is another model. In Scandinavia landowners release land they own and major landowners hold the vision, releasing it in packets that are smaller and accessible to SMEs but where the supply is controlled. Flexible tenure is also very important, said Lifschutz, and PRS is very much affected by housing values – ‘I’m afraid it is a long-term problem and does come down to the way in which land is distributed,’ he said.

Duncan Bowie, senior lecturer in spatial planning, University of Westminster, believes that the key issue is not how many units we build but what we build, where we build it, and who can actually access it. The challenge is how we use the investment that is available. To have a wider range of output, we need to use suburban capacity and urban extensions including into the green belt, said Bowie. Pocket design director Russ Edwards said that none of the ideas about innovation will get anywhere unless planning is addressed, whether that is ring-fencing funding for planning teams or funding them centrally. In addition, around half of London’s workforce falls into the ‘intermediate’ tenure category, but only 2 per cent of housing stock does, so there is an obvious mismatch there. And very few London boroughs actually understand their intermediate needs – the squeezed middle – said Edwards. ‘We think that needs to change.’

For Joe Morris, director, Duggan Morris Architects, his practice has won consent for thousands of units but less than 10 per cent of his staff own a property and 90 per cent rent in an unprotected market rent so struggle. Wasn’t there something odd about that? And mightn’t we push issues away from cost and procurement and towards quality? So creating places defined by houses, shops and facilities is an important factor in creating cohesive communities, in contrast to the ubiquitous, bland schemes coming forward. Different methods of delivering housing such as cooperatives, self build and community land trusts should be worth considering, he said, with schemes delivered by philanthropic means.

David Montague, chief executive, L&Q, said it is normally the case with reports on matters like housing that there is ‘no silver bullet’, but there is one here, he feels – and that is courageous, long-term, cross-party planning. A plan is needed which commits to 1 million homes in London over 20 years, and if it happens, that will deliver jobs and investment in off-site construction. But we have to consider affordable rent, said Montague, because why would any housing association invest in a product in the current scenario. ‘Where will people on low incomes live in future? If I wasn’t sure before, I am sure now that we will see the hollowing out of London. These are profound times we live in.’

Finally, the original housing report author Claire Bennie suggested that, actually, housing should best be seen like infrastructure, and absolutely necessary, as it is in Holland. But in the UK she feels we have left the public behind. ‘They don’t understand why the population is increasing; they don’t understand what their city is any more. They see it being taken over by global forces and the whole narrative has not hit home. To me there needs to be some kind of tsar, some kind of mega housing leadership where you have a huge conversation; you tell people about land use, you tell people about population and what is London, this city we’re living in.’

THINK TANK

Transport hubs

Co-hosted by RTKL

What makes a successful mixed-use transport hub?

That was the question wrestled with by a select group of professionals involved in the creation of transport hubs, surrounding development and facilities, at a special NLA think tank session on the topic.

RTKL director Mahmood Faruqi opened the session with a series of lessons from projects abroad and their implications for a London he believes can address its housing supply issues by developing at higher densities near transport hubs. In Beijing in China, RTKL is designing a project which matches the capacity of a new metro line and correlates that to the density of the scheme, taking into account buses, walking and cycling. We need to do this kind of density mapping according to the capacity of the network, and in recognisable urban forms, said Faruqi – streets, squares and buildings that are more about people than they are about development. In Dallas, Texas, RTKL is designing around a new DART station another mixed-use neighbourhood with a high density for the area, while in Shanghai a new town centre for the outer fringe

‘One of the dangers is that Crossrails 1 and 2 are seen just as creating value for housing, raising problems of excessive speculation’

caters for a range of housing typologies. ‘It’s about creating places which can be active day and night and become community hubs,’ he said. ‘This is delivering not for numbers, but quality and sense of place.’ London must

look to design for place, not just numbers; density does not necessarily mean tall buildings; mixed use must be embraced to deliver high value for the transport network and communities, and the focus should shift beyond zone 3 to address density around Tube stations.

Crossrail is one of the projects which sees itself as both a catalyst for development as well as a developer in its own right, said Ian Lindsay, land and property director, Crossrail. Places like Abbey Wood and Thamesmead are already seeing development coming forward off the back of the new transport capacity Crossrail will have, and the urban realm being provided will act as the facilitator for more.

And yet, said head of inward investment & enterprise at LB Redbridge Mark Lucas, although Crossrail will generate increased land and property values in areas where values have been a disincentive for development, that uplift may not be

enough. Which is why Redbridge has put in a bid to become a Housing Zone, and especially since potential national and international investors want to see more edifying real experience on the ground than they do now. ‘They want to know how each area will change demonstrably and tangibly before their own investment goes in.’ Nevertheless, we must lift our ambition, Lucas added, with too many ‘clone stations’ and not enough suburban stations looking to become, say, collection points or introducing elements like exhibition space or art. Certainly, said CEO of London and Continental Railways David Joy, stations have not changed even as much as petrol filling stations have over the last 20 years. This is as much to do with how they are owned and operated, but stations are ‘definitely on the agenda’ in terms of how they can be ‘reinvigorated’ within station development zones and capturing value, he added. Another Housing Zone, this time already designated, is at Renewal’s New Bermondsey, which has enabled the 2,500-home mixed development to unlock, said Mark Taylor, the scheme’s director of development. New infrastructure such as the DLR and Jubilee Line Extension has helped revitalise south London’s historic lack of connectivity and Taylor hoped that the Bakerloo Line Extension, for which Renewal is lobbying, does not get ‘derailed’ by Crossrail 2.

Many design issues come into play when discussing density, said Levitt Bernstein partner Jo McAfferty, and all depends on what is appropriate. PTAL often seems a very crude method of establishing what is appropriate in density terms, she said, especially when it comes to residential, but it was important to add value quickly and early, as Argent has achieved at King’s Cross in its creative curation of public spaces. Gareth Fairweather, principal consents advisor at Transport for London, said that TfL is looking at different ways of measuring accessibility, integrating other elements such as walking and cycling routes in a new connectivity assessment method called WebCAT. An interesting design question nobody has quite figured out yet, though, added McAfferty, is how public realm is made to work for families next to transport infrastructure, while with an ageing population there are also ‘enormous opportunities’ to integrate healthcare into central transport hubs.

Perhaps, said executive director regeneration and housing at LB Ealing Pat Hayes, stations could look to develop more over their large surface car parks, and the public sector must get better at thinking about where densification can be achieved. London is dotted with small, slightly substandard secondary town centres, Hayes added, which could be good candidates for

such treatment, and even sites for tall buildings. But developing over railway lines, many felt, was complicated and expensive, with risks for developers on liabilities. Crossrail will open up lots of places – as it has already begun to psychologically put Ealing more on the map in terms of its new ‘Zone 1’ travel time – ‘but we should focus more on the prosaic stuff’, said Hayes.

One of the dangers is that Crossrails 1 and 2 are seen just as creating value for housing, raising problems of excessive speculation on housing, as well as issues of affordability and diversity. Other areas such as employment should not be forgotten, said assistant director of planning at LB Haringey Stephen Kelly. There is also an opportunity to look at the CPO process with Crossrail 2, said Lindsay, which militated against sensible masterplanning and placemaking discussion on Crossrail 1. If it gets funded ‘in an age of austerity’, Crossrail 2 will have more of an opportunity to look at a more ambitious scale of development around transport hubs, partially because of the nature of the areas it goes through, added Lindsay.

One fear, though, is that we will waste the ‘most amazing period of transport investment in London’, said Keith

Brooks, head of property at EC Harris, with the planning system not changing enough to respond to it and not being bold or prescriptive enough to drive development around stations. There seems also to be an overwhelming obsession with housing, said British Land’s residential development director Emma Cariaga – ‘I’m much more interested in the idea of what stations can do for a place and a borough.’ British Land’s new town centre scheme is anchored by Canada Water Tube station, and there is a role for stations to be much more than housing ‘dumps’, she said. In fact, this only highlights the fact that land assembly is the problem, said Stephen McDonald, director of place, LB Barnet, and is perhaps the real reason behind why projects like Canada Water have taken so long. In Barnet, moreover, McDonald has been successful in convincing the Treasury to part with £200 million to build a new station, but most of that money is on land assembly. ‘It’s not about planning,’ said McDonald. ‘It’s about being able to put sites together around existing or potential transport nodes where you can then do something interesting.’



Renewal's New Bermondsey – the regeneration scheme is a Housing Zone which will fund transport improvements

BuckleyGrayYeoman

SHOREDITCH · LONDON



Shot at Henry Wood House London, England

Photographer: *Donald Michael Chambers* | Model: *Ava @ Established* | Architecture: *BuckleyGrayYeoman*



Coffee break with Hilary Satchwell

Director of Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design

What is your proudest achievement and why?

I really love seeing streets, spaces, buildings and communities shaped through the work I put into them. That really brings the reason for doing my job to life. But recently I have co-written a book about briefing that sits alongside the RIBA Plan of Work 2013 and that feels like a big achievement and one that I am very pleased to have had the opportunity to do. Focusing on the briefing side of development projects really made me think about how we get to the best outcomes from the work we do.

What would you have been if you hadn't chosen the path you did?

I've always been interested in buildings and the environment around us, long before I started on the path to studying architecture that led to my role in urban design and masterplanning. A lot of what I do now is steering projects to good outcomes through collaborative working and developing strategies to help clients deliver good places. So I can imagine that I could have ended up in some other relatively strategic role that has a positive and practical impact on people's lives.

But I really don't have a burning desire to go off and do something different.

Tell us a secret

I really love interesting pavements and try to collect small pieces of them if I can. I think it started in Lisbon many years ago, but really I would love a piece of one of the lovely patterned Barcelona pavements.

Which is the worst building in London?

I really don't like the Walkie Talkie. I find it rude, overbearing and really just not a good addition to the city skyline. I think tall buildings should get smaller as they get towards the top and this one does the opposite in such an outspoken way.

Which is the best?

I find it hard to identify one, but I think the masterplanning at King's Cross is turning out magnificently and it is certainly creating some really good spaces and places.

I did really love the London 2012 stadium. I thought it was superbly designed and yet so simple. Nothing was overcomplicated and it really worked. I saw both Olympic and Paralympic athletics there and the first time I went I was in the very top back row and it was still brilliant. I would happily have watched athletics or other events there on a very regular basis.

What or who has been the biggest influence on your career thus far?

It has probably been Andy Karski, who was my director when I started at Tibbalds in 1996 and who I worked with for about 15 years. He was very good at throwing us in at the deep end on some quite large projects but always made sure we had robust reasons for doing what we did. I think the other key influence is probably Francis Tibbalds, who unfortunately died before I started working in urban design but whose legacy for 'making people-friendly places' has always been part of the work we do.

What is the biggest challenge facing masterplanning in London?

Delivery – development is so complex to make happen, sometimes I wonder that it happens at all. People find the planning system complex but compared with actually getting all of the elements in place to build well it's really pretty simple. Specifically for masterplanning, lots of the challenges are around getting highways on board and the various stakeholders that need to agree.

Is London getting better at placemaking?

Yes, broadly. We really need to talk more about the sort of city we want and to make sure we don't end up making things worse because of a lack of discussion and debate. All sorts of agencies and organisations have to work together to make good places and no matter what else is going on we need to make sure we don't all disappear into silos.

Sometimes we just need to say what we think is important and then make sure it happens – a good example is the London Housing Design Guide which is making sure that we have space standards that work for how people need to live with storage, reasonable ceiling heights and good-sized rooms.

What single thing would improve the planning process?

Planning officers who felt empowered to (and were trained to) have reasoned opinions and give advice throughout the process rather than just in writing up their committee report. There are some really good ones but when you just get nothing back from an extensive pre-app process it is very frustrating and not what the planning process is for.

What would you do if you were Mayor for the day?

Spend a lot of money very quickly on segregated cycle lanes in the Copenhagen model and find a way to reduce lorries in central London.

Crossrail Place

We take a look at the tropical roof gardens and leisure complex above a new Crossrail station at Canary Wharf



Client:
Canary Wharf

Architect:
Foster + Partners

Engineer:
Arup

Landscape architect:
Gillespies

Roof engineer:
Wiehag

Retail consultant:
Bruce Gillingham Pollard



Photo: Nigel Young

The client's account

By Andrew Unwin, project executive, Canary Wharf



addressing the increasing demand for social and leisure facilities.

Crossrail Place is a distinctive seven-storey structure, with a striking roof designed by Foster + Partners. The practice has created a unique design with a beautiful and intricate latticed timber roof, which sits in North Dock at Canary Wharf.

The building, delivered by Canary Wharf Group, will house the concourses, platforms and ticket halls for the new Canary Wharf Crossrail

station, when trains start running in 2018. The public can visit Crossrail Place, as the levels above the platforms are home to a major new leisure destination, including a cinema, restaurants and fitness facilities. The top level contains a new public space for London in the form of a stunning exotic roof garden.

To build the roof structure was a major challenge. An incredible variety of external and internal constraints had to be considered. The dedicated partnership and cooperation among all stakeholders – contractors, architects and structural engineers – made it possible and a huge success.

The opening of Crossrail Place is a defining moment for Canary Wharf. The area is constantly evolving, providing a diverse range of options,



Photo: Nigel Young

Place, made – the seven-storey structure sits in North Dock at Canary Wharf

A key element in the successful delivery was getting the right contractors. The Seele and Wiehag partnership was crucial in ensuring a streamlined project management, since the interface between the membrane roof and timber construction was crucial.

'The opening of Crossrail Place is a defining moment for Canary Wharf'

Seele and Wiehag built the engineered timber & ETFE roof structure in just nine months. The



Crossrail Place in Numbers

3

floors above the water level of the North Dock

310

metres from one end of the curved roof to the other, which turned on its side, would be taller than Shard

4

floors below the water level of the North Dock

564

steel 'nodes' connecting the timber beams

40

Olympic swimming pools that could be filled by the amount of water (98 million litres) removed from the North Dock during construction

1418

Glulam timber beams that make up the roof

256

metres from one end of the exotic roof garden to the other

prefabricated and ready-for-assembly single components of glulam were assembled into a 300-metre lattice structure. Over 1000 cubic metres of timber was processed into 1,418 timber beams. Over 500 highly complex yet economically optimised steel nodes connected each timber member. The timber structure was then covered in over 780 ETFE cushions, along with air supply systems, flashings, gutters and maintenance & access systems.

The canopies at the ends of the roof comprise one double curved beam.

The assembly of the canopies was a particular challenge, protruding 30 metres over water. An engineered timber platform was constructed over the water, which allowed us safe access to the canopy above.

By optimising the geometry and structural details, an economical solution could be realised. This attention to detail and commitment to quality enabled the construction of one of the most architecturally significant and aesthetically distinctive buildings in London. NL

The architect's account

By **Ben Scott**, partner, **Foster + Partners**



In 2008, Foster + Partners was commissioned to design a mixed-use scheme encompassing the over-ground elements of a new station for the Crossrail project at Canary Wharf. While the station below this development will be operational only in 2018, the shops, restaurants and roof garden were opened to the public in May this year. Located in the north dock, adjacent to the HSBC tower at Canary Wharf and the residential neighbourhood of Poplar, the scheme creates an accessible amenity between the two, providing new shared and open space.

Central to the scheme was a new enclosure unifying the station and other elements including new retail units and a park, as well as furthering the main aim of the Crossrail project – to open up London from east to west with a series of high-quality projects. The design is characterised by a landscaped, sheltered public park on the roof, accessible from ground level by connecting bridges. The movement and access throughout the building is designed to be intuitive, escalators, lifts and staircases open on to the same areas providing a legible and inclusive experience to all visitors.

The park and the rest of the building are enclosed by a distinctive roof, which wraps around the building like a protective shell. This 300m long timber lattice roof opens in the centre to draw in light and rain for natural irrigation. Timber was an appropriate material to enclose the



Image: Foster + Partners

The shops, restaurant and roof garden are now open. The Crossrail station opens in 2018

park – it is organic in nature and appearance, strong, adaptable and is sustainably sourced. It also clearly differentiates this building from others on Canary Wharf's estate, which are predominantly stone, metal and glass. Timber has a great nautical and architectural history on the Wharf and this building is uniquely situated within the waters of West India Dock.

'The design of the lattice itself is a fusion of architecture and engineering'

The design of the lattice itself is a fusion of architecture and engineering. Remarkably, despite the smooth curve of the enclosure, there are only four curved timber beams in the whole structure. To seamlessly connect the straight beams, which rotate successively along the diagonals, the design team developed an innovative system of steel nodes, which resolve the twist. The visual simplicity of the arching timber lattice belies the geometric complexity of the structure, which is made up of 1,418 beams and 564 nodes, 364 of which are unique.

Between the beams there are ETFE plastic cushions, which are filled with air and lighter than glass. The air



Photo: Nigel Young

The lattice – a fusion of architecture and engineering

cushions, which are a highly insulating material, create a comfortable environment for people to enjoy the gardens all year round, as well as providing a favourable microclimate for some of the plants, which include some of the species that first entered Britain through the historic docks.

The area around the station is designed to encourage people to use the new park and shops at the weekend – as well as during the week – creating a lively new community facility. Four levels of shops, cafés and amenities sit

above the Underground station, the arcade making use of natural light to minimise energy consumption and welcome people into the building. Most public areas are naturally ventilated, making use of passive cooling measures, and the development features rainwater harvesting and grey-water recycling, adding to its sustainable credentials.

When open at night, the building will glow, drawing visitors to use the public facilities and garden and creating a welcoming civic gateway to London's growing commercial district. NL



Image: Foster + Partners

'When open at night, the building will glow, drawing visitors to use the public facilities and garden'

The engineer's account

By Tim Worsfold, associate, Arup



The principal engineering challenge that Arup's team faced delivering Canary Wharf Crossrail station was how to create habitable space in the middle of a historic dock in close proximity to noise-sensitive corporate neighbours. The building is surrounded by water on all sides and had to be designed to accommodate the entrance and exit of two 7.1m-diameter tunnel boring machines.

Early schemes developed by Crossrail assumed that the dock would

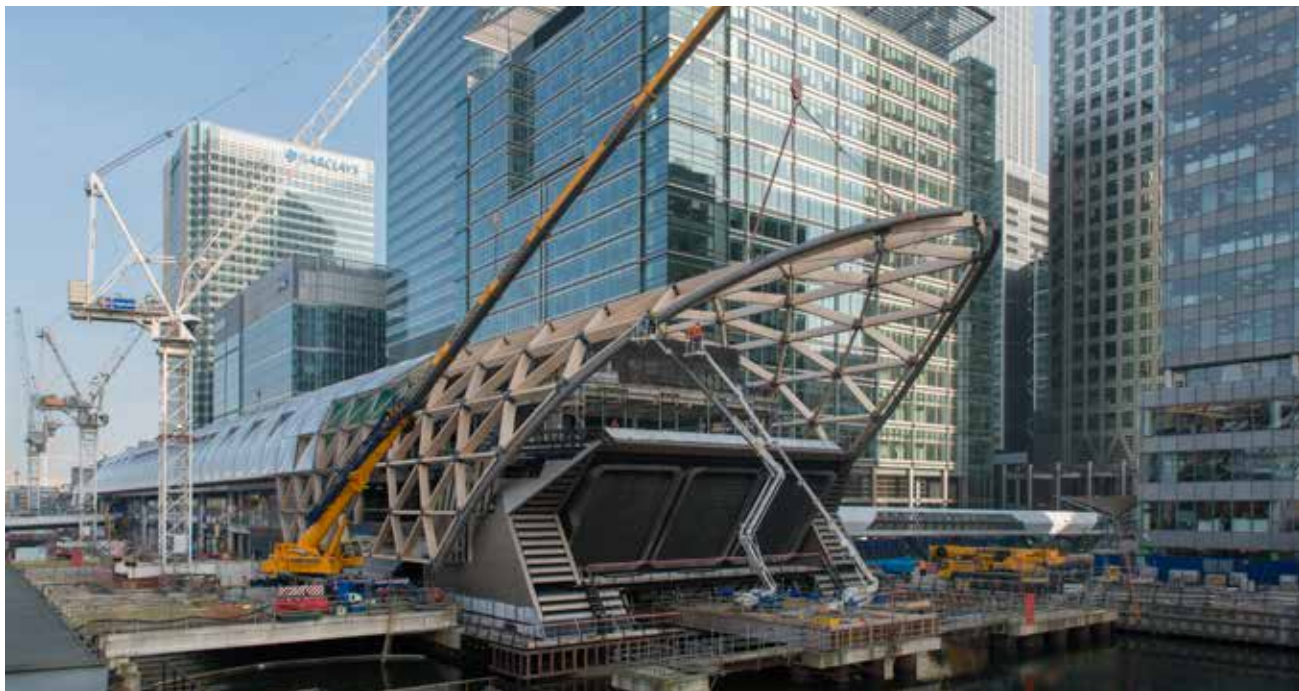
have to be fully or partially infilled to allow for construction of a station box more than 300m long. After Canary Wharf Group was appointed as the design-and-build developer on a fixed-price contract, we worked with them and Expanded to optimise the design and to reduce the total cost of the station. Optimisation of the station ventilation system in particular helped achieve a shorter station box. We were also able to reduce the box width over the station's central section. Overall, efficiencies reduced the box to 260m long and 25-30m wide.

Working with Canary Wharf Contractors and Expanded, we were able to develop a method of constructing the station box in a fully drained dock – without the need for partial infilling. Critical to the success of this approach was the Giken

'silent piler' system, enabling rapid construction of a watertight cofferdam retaining wall. Within this space the dock was drained and a six-storey building constructed using a top-down/bottom-up method from the dock bed level. This technique shaved a full year off the construction programme.

The two-storey submerged station has been designed to last 120 years, while Crossrail Place, the four-storey retail and leisure development that sits above it, has been designed to allow for a high level of adaptation and flexibility. Radical reconfiguration of the retail units is possible without any impact on the station structure below. The building services for the station and Crossrail Place are completely independent.

Crossrail Place has great scope for future adaptation thanks in part to the provision of 'soft spots' for future escalators, currently filled in with concrete planks. The main retail units are generally double-storey, and within each unit the tenant has considerable flexibility over where



Arup and Expanded developed a method of constructing the station box in a fully drained dock without the need for partial infilling

to place openings for stairs, lifts and escalators. Openings can be made without requiring major structural work and double-height unit entrances can be infilled easily with steelwork connected to supporting plates cast into the concrete.

Crossrail Place's impressive roof garden is nourished by soil up to 1.2m deep. The garden retaining walls and other structures were designed to be free-standing and to 'float' over the base waterproofing, without needing to penetrate it. This also allows the building operator to change the garden layout without undertaking structural alterations.

'The two-storey submerged station has been designed to last 120 years'

At 310m long, Foster + Partners' roof is the world's longest continuous timber roof to date. Arup worked with Foster + Partners to optimise its geometry by minimising the number of individual timber elements and steel nodes. This delivered considerable cost savings, while enabling efficient structural action and preserving the overall geometry. While the roof is continuous, the retail building below is divided into three separate structures that each move independently. This meant that the roof had to be designed to allow for some of its supports moving in opposite directions.

Canary Wharf Crossrail station is one of a series of Crossrail projects undertaken by Arup. In a joint venture with Atkins, we have designed 42km of bored tunnels and have led the design of Tottenham Court Road, Custom House and Woolwich Crossrail stations as well as Plumstead Sidings. Separately, we are supporting contractors during construction of Bond Street and Liverpool Street stations and we are engineering several Crossrail over-site developments. NL

The landscape architect's account

By Armel Mourgue, associate and lead landscape architect, Gillespies



Crossrail Station roof garden provides a new welcoming public space atop Canary Wharf Crossrail station – a space that works to unite the residential neighbourhood of Poplar and the business district of Canary Wharf.

From the very beginning we envisaged the top of this station to be an extraordinary world, an unexpected landscape that you would see from a distance, and when illuminated at night, would provide a glowing beacon among the high-rise buildings of this commercial district.

This is not just another typical public garden in London, but a celebration and tribute to the North Dock's maritime past and the arrival of Crossrail.

Our design for the garden evokes a ship laden with unusual and exotic specimens from around the globe – a nod to its maritime past. Under a transparent semi-permeable lattice canopy – open at the top to draw in light and natural irrigation – are hundreds of plants collectively representing and showcasing the many native countries visited by ships of the West India Dock Company, which unloaded their wares where the station now sits. The plants were transported in Wardian cases – mini glasshouses that protected them – and these inspired the design of the transparent lattice roof structure and the selection of plants housed beneath.



Photo: Gillespies

'An extraordinary world' – the ship-like rooftop garden



Photo: Gillespies

The gardens feature a single landscaped walkway with smaller paths creating opportunities for chance encounters and 'true escape'

The geographic location of the site – directly north of Greenwich – places the docks virtually on the Prime Meridian, dividing the western and eastern hemispheres. This positioning inspired our planting division of the gardens into two geographic zones, showcasing both occidental and oriental species. Plants from the western hemisphere such as ferns and Sweet Gum are on the west side of the Meridian line, with Asian plants such as bamboos, magnolias and maples on the east side. The semi-permeable canopy structure enclosing the garden helped to create a localised microclimate allowing us to use more sensitive and rare species of plants.

Due to the complexity of planting, we commissioned Growth Industry to provide specialist planting consultancy. Growth Industry's role included the production of reports on planting concepts, planting character, species selection criteria

and commentary on sustainability and climatic aspects.

The positioning of the garden above a station provided a number of physical constraints and challenges – shallow substrate depth, weight of planting and an overhead roof structure. We embraced these challenges by constructing the

'The semi-permeable canopy structure enclosing the garden helped to create a localised microclimate'

garden over a reinforced slab that acted as a wide tray containing enough lightweight soil to support mature trees and plants. To allow for root growth and drainage of the trees and plants, footpaths had to be elevated on lightweight supporting structures. A detailed structural grid was developed to govern the positioning of the trees,

allowing the taller trees to benefit from the large openings in the structure.

The construction of the garden was very complex and involved craning all material – soil, plants and trees – through the openings in the roof.

Internally, we have organised the garden around a single landscaped walkway with multiple smaller paths that branch off in different directions, creating opportunities for chance encounters and providing visitors with a sense of true escape from their urban surroundings. We positioned descriptive plaques along the walkway to present the information we gathered about the history of the site and the plants selected.

The place was designed with local schools and local community groups in mind. An amphitheatre is nestled among the planting to provide a space for events or for school groups to use after a discovery walk through the garden. **NL**

The roof engineer's account

By Huber Clemens, director, Wiehag



Wiehag is a market leader in providing sophisticated engineered timber solutions throughout Europe. Crossrail Place, a design led by Foster + Partners, is a keystone project reflecting both Wiehag's expertise and its status as an innovator.

The timber structure, which spans approximately 31 metres, extends the entire length of the building situated above the Canary Wharf Crossrail station, which has a total length of 260 metres. The cantilevers at each end arch 30 metres over the water's surface. The longitudinal ends of the roof are open – so the roof is an open construction. In the tendering

phase, the design was originally conceived as an elliptical arc shape with a concave curvature as indicated in the floor plan. The diagonal beams were to follow a spiral line, and run in a twisted (helical) fashion. This original version would have resulted in both high processing costs and high wood waste. In a subsequent design and planning stage, Wiehag was commissioned to develop an optimised economic solution together with the architects.

The primary difference of the revised design was the conceptualisation of a unified grid and the barrel shape of the roof. The result was a more harmonious roof construction using straight beams. The complexity of the rotation consequently shifted to the respective nodes.

In the central area, the side lengths of the triangles in the individual lines were kept constant. This resulted in a greater sum of equal parts and thus simplified both the construction as



Photo: Nigel Young

The roof is an open construction

well as the production process. In the open central area, which exhibits average humidity levels, a reduced number of wooden beams was planned. The resulting increased static requirements were consequently carried by the remaining glulam members, which were additionally protected from rain and other climatic factors by three-sided rear-ventilated panelling.

To adequately manage the complexity of the architectural planning, precise rules were conceived and observed. For example, the positioning of all components was collected and documented in tabular form. Subsequently, 3D models for structural engineering, architecture and assembly were created. Based on these parameters, Wiehag designers were also able to set the control data for the CNC machine for individual components to the automated joinery machine.

No standardised software exists for the structural design of the 3,050 connection points. Also, due to the great variety of geometric parameters and load combinations, it was not economically viable to calculate



In the factory – creating timber for the 31m-span structure



'A sophisticated timber solution'



In detail – exploded roof section

the loads for the steel nodes and fasteners with 'envelope' loads in all combinations. Therefore Wiehag structural engineers created their own design tables and macros. In this manner, it was possible to verify and prove the load combinations occurring at each connection. In addition, comparative calculations were carried out with spatial 'finite element models'.

During a construction period of six months, which ended in March 2014, individual prefabricated elements were assembled to form the 300-metre long roof structure. One thousand cubic metres of PEFC certified timber, derived from local, sustainably managed forests, were processed into 1418 timber beams in Wiehag's state-of-the-art production plant in Altheim, Upper Austria. ■

The retail consultant's account

By Rupert Bentley-Smith, director, Bruce Gillingham Pollard



The opening of Crossrail Place represents a seminal moment for Canary Wharf as it is set to provide the trigger for transition between what is an incredibly successful business location, to further progression in the form of Canary Wharf Residential, and from our perspective, the next generation of retail and leisure.

'The nature of the building has carried huge appeal to prospective tenants'

Between the directors at Bruce Gillingham Pollard we have been involved with the Canary Wharf estate for the last 25 years, witnessing and aiding Canary Wharf Group to take the retail and leisure proposition from zero to almost 1,000,000 square feet, now incorporating over 300 shops and restaurants. Crossrail Place is the latest addition, with 100,000 square feet of retail and leisure set over the top four floors of a seven-floor building that stands at 256 metres in length. It's located away from the spine of the retail malls but designed to link effortlessly back to the heart of the retail with the majority of the operators being situated at Level -1; the same level as Canada Place mall, currently the busiest location on the estate.

Opening three years ahead of Crossrail's first train service, the Crossrail Place scheme is a dynamic

project, creating excitement and appeal for brands who have been looking for an opportunity to take their first steps into London's East End. The attraction for the brands is to capitalise on the existing and ever-increasing demand from the working and residential population, but with an eye on 2018 when the building will become an active station as part of the most exciting change in transport infrastructure to happen in London for many years.



A new retail destination

The nature of the building has carried huge appeal to prospective tenants; everything from the Foster + Partners-designed roof through to the unique roof garden which references both the history and geography of Canary Wharf, and also its presence in the middle of North Dock. The development is outdoor, in contrast to the majority of retail and leisure at Canary Wharf, and this provides an insight into the thinking for future developments at Canary Wharf, which will be dominated by unprotected streetscapes and squares. The strategy was to target retail, restaurant, and leisure operators who do not have numerous existing outlets, and who would provide a definite point

of difference to anything on the current estate. A plan designed to satisfy the appetite among the local population for new concepts, and importantly at an accessible price point so as not to be exclusively for the corporate spend, and to add further to the offer for the weekend customers.

Everyman cinema and the boutique spin studio Psycle provide strong leisure anchors one level below the water at Level -2, while at promenade level, restaurants such as The Breakfast Club, Sticks'n'Sushi, Chai Ki and Ippudo are all restaurant concepts with only a few existing London locations, and remaining with the same theme, Notes is providing the coffee offer rather

than one of the more obvious national brands. Further to this we specifically targeted Bespoke, a high-end destination bike shop located on Farringdon Road, and the Big Easy will be launching a 10,000 sq ft flagship unit with terrace overlooking the water at Park Level, for an abundance of lobster and live music.

No office tenants directly above, and no reason to go to Crossrail Place other than the building, the roof garden, and the collection of retail, restaurants and leisure, makes this a first for Canary Wharf, but the early indications and all of the feedback to date suggest that Crossrail Place is a significant addition to Canary Wharf's social and cultural community. ■



Photo: Gillespies

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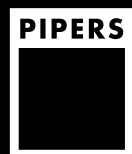


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Bloomsbury

By Mark de Rivaz, steward at the Bedford Estates' London estate

My London lies in the heart of the capital. It glories in a long history encompassing a rich diversity of people, buildings, culture, literature, learning, discovery and innovation. The people who have lived and worked here over the centuries add a special character to the terraces of elegant Georgian buildings and tranquil garden squares.

In my London there is a myriad of things to do and see. You can discover the history of the world in one hundred objects at the British Museum; visit Charles Dickens' home; see where the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was founded; pass by where Charles Darwin lived and started developing his theory of natural selection; visit Hawksmoor's inspiring and beautifully restored St George's Church.



Great estate – Bloomsbury's Store Street

My London was home to Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey, Vanessa Bell and friends, also known as the Bloomsbury Group. In 1739 Captain Thomas Coram founded his 'Hospital for the Maintenance and Education of Exposed and Deserted Young Children' – still flourishing today as Coram, the UK's oldest children's charity. Sir Hans Sloane, who bequeathed his lifelong collection of 71,000 books, manuscripts, natural specimens and antiquities to the nation in 1753 – thus founding the British Museum – lived here for most of his life. So too did Millicent Fawcett, pioneer of women's suffrage.

My London's peaceful tree-lined streets belie the cutting-edge activities going on behind the facades. It is home to some of the world's leading higher education institutions, with probably a greater concentration of academics, researchers and students than anywhere else in Europe.

From the day the British Museum opened its doors it has granted free admission to 'all studious and curious persons'. Today the museum attracts over 6.5 million visitors annually. More than 22,000 students study at London University's 17 colleges. Bloomsbury continues to be a powerful magnet for the studious and curious.

Bloomsbury is well placed for the future. Many of its listed Georgian buildings have been refurbished and restored, its garden squares have been re-landscaped, its public realm has been reinvented, through collaboration between the public and private sectors, to create places for all to enjoy.

Many of Bloomsbury's characterful streets have been reinvigorated with new life and vibrancy. Store Street stands as one of the Bedford Estate's successful regenerations, from a drab street of dull shops to an eclectic mix of quirky independent boutiques, galleries and cafés, spilling out onto the pavement.

Crossrail will bring great changes to the area. Tottenham Court Road and the east end of Oxford Street are already seeing significant redevelopment; the improvements to St Giles Circus around Centre Point will be transformational. Developments to the north, the creation of the vibrant King's Cross quarter, the recently launched Knowledge Quarter, the prospect of HS2 and the attendant redevelopments around Euston Station will all increase further the importance of this part of London.

'My special and unique London will forever be Bloomsbury'

Bloomsbury sits in the centre of this transformation. While London changes around it, its historic character will be maintained through Conservation Area status, its many listed buildings and open spaces. This will enable it to remain an oasis of tranquillity at the heart of our world-leading city.

I'm proud and privileged to have been a part of one of London's Great Estates, which collectively have done so much to preserve, conserve, enhance and improve key areas of London – not only the built environment, but also the public realm and crucially the diverse communities of residents, workers and visitors. The Estates' continuity, vision and long-term aspirations are ensuring that our London is an evolving, exciting place that continues to surprise and delight.

My special and unique London will forever be Bloomsbury. ■

Mark de Rivaz has announced his retirement will take effect from next March