# NEW LONDON

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## **QUARTERLY**



Housing special: Easing the crisis New Londoner: Sir Bob Kerslake Profile: Helical's Gerald Kaye

Top of their game: Fletcher Priest Building review: German Gymnasium

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# NEW LONDON QUARTERLY

#### **New London Quarterly**

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#### Front cover

Sketch of an imaginary housing scheme for London By Peter Barber

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As NLQ hits 25 issues young, we felt it was time to come up with a new kind of cover for the new year, so asked architect Peter Barber to create a bespoke sketch for us to use. His brief? It was pretty open, but was broadly housing, to mark our special feature and NLA's exhibition on the subject, and of course London. Barber was generously forthcoming, but did so with a rallying cry made, as he said, as much in anger as it is in hope. Here was an aerial view of a low-rise, street-based, high-density neighbourhood, he said; the way London's brownfield sites should be developed, as a counterblast to 'doughnut blocks', high-rises and those who want London to sprawl into the countryside. 'It is also a critique of the prevailing functionalist planning orthodoxy and its tick-box space and light standards', Barber went on, 'enshrined in ever-proliferating policy which consigns these kinds of sociable, walkable, properly compact urban forms to the historical scrap heap.'

Strong stuff. But London must certainly grapple with its housing crisis – or 'emergency' as it was deemed at one NLA session on the issue this quarter. So Mayoral hopefuls including frontrunners Zac Goldsmith and Sadiq Khan should make it their number one concern, as recommended in this edition's Viewpoint, and in our Housing special with lessons from Europe and

further afield. Happily the subject has some of the best brains working on it, including New Londoner Sir Bob Kerslake, as well as initiatives such as that being undertaken by the Mayor's Design Advisory Group, producing reports for the prospective new Mayor on what 'good growth' might mean for the capital in housing and other fields. There will also be the results of a design charrette held by the GLA, NLA and Arup, which may feed into the latest and crucial iteration of the London Plan.

One man creating residential for the City fringe is Gerald Kaye, chief executive designate of Helical Bar, profiled in this issue. Meanwhile, Top of their Game this time is Fletcher Priest, which is also producing a housing masterplan near Cambridge on brownfield, former MOD land that the government is watching closely. And in our new feature on Next Generation practices making great strides in this and other sectors, we look at Ben Adams Architects and Coffey Architects. There is plenty more besides, including our Briefing Notes section featuring topics as diverse as hotels, culture, workplace and education, as well as On Location looks at Croydon, the South Bank and the City. But housing London's growing population is the cause célèbre underpinning all. Happy New Year and enjoy the issue.

David Taylor, Editor

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First Base's Barry Jessup sings the praises of Shoreditch







## The quarter

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

#### **Buildings**

Studio Egret West and Hawkins\ Brown won planning permission for *Millharbour Village*. The scheme for Galliard Homes is a residential-led development of 1,500 homes, including schools, parks, commercial and office space, creating a significant new community on the Isle of Dogs. Coffey Architects and Ab Rogers completed Howick *Place*, their headquarters building for U+I. Gasholder Park, a tranquil new green space inside Victorian Gasholder No.8 King's Cross designed by Bell Phillips Architects, opened. Stanton Williams' new glazed entrances to Tottenham Court Road station opened at the base of Centre Point, replacing a fountain and street clutter with the two structures on a raised piazza. HOK's interior design



Dogs' life - Millharbour Village



Coffey time - U+I's new HQ

team and fit-out contractor Overbury delivered a new London headquarters for *Hachette UK* on Victoria Embankment. Boris Johnson approved plans to redevelop the *Tavern & Allen Stands & Thomas Lord building* at Lord's. The replacement for The Pinnacle at *22 Bishopsgate* won planning permission from the City of London. The 62-storey scheme, designed by PLP Architecture for Lipton Rogers and AXA Real Estate, includes 1,500 bike parking



New-look - Hachette's headquarters



It's a gas - the new Gasholder Park at King's Cross



City slicker - 1 Undershaft

spaces. There was another tower proposal in west London with Sellar Property's Renzo Piano-designed 65-storey scheme in Paddington, 31 London Street. Eric Parry Architects revealed plans for 1 Undershaft, a 73-storey building that is exactly the same height as The Shard and which is being dubbed 'The Trellis'. The scheme is for Singapore-based Aroland Holdings and will sit between the Gherkin and Leadenhall Street's Cheesegrater.

#### **Competitions**

London-based architecture and design collective Assemble won the Turner **Prize** for its regeneration scheme for derelict houses in Toxteth. South Park Plaza at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park won the Design for Large Scale Development category at the 2015 Landscape Institute Awards. LDA Design provided support for the execution of the design led by James Corner Field Operations. Danish firm Bystrup Architecture, Design and Engineering won the competition to design a new bridge for pedestrians and cyclists from Pimlico to Nine Elms. AHMM won the Stirling Prize for Burntwood School in Wandsworth. *Tottenham Hotspur FC* won permission to build its new £400m 61,000-seater stadium, to designs by Populous.

#### **Planning**

Government announced that the decision over airport capacity will be pushed back to later this summer – after the Mayoral elections. Adidas announced it plans to open a five floor, 43,000 sq ft flagship store opposite Selfridges on Oxford Street, to designs by *PLP Architecture*. Chelsea FC unveiled its £500m *Herzog and de Meuron*-designed stadium plans.



Sporting chance - Adidas

#### **People**

There were OBEs in the New Year's Honours list for professor, architect and Royal Academician Trevor Dannatt, architect Joanna van Heyningen and both Bob Allies and *Graham Morrison* of Allies and Morrison. Former Academy of Urbanism director and DEGW co-founder *John Worthington* was awarded an MBE. Mike Davies announced he was stepping down from the board of Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners as the practice made five new partners and finalised its move to a new studio at the Cheesegrater, just before Christmas. The new partners are: **Stephen** Barrett, Stephen Light, John McElgunn, Tracy Meller and Andrew Tyley. Martyn Evans announced he was stepping down from U+I. George Osborne announced that London will get £11 billion investment in its transport infrastructure and councils will be allowed to spend 100 per cent of their receipts from asset sales in the Spending Review. Julia Peyton-**Iones** announced she is to leave the Serpentine Gallery in July 2016.



Living landscape - the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

## **Viewpoint**

# What should the next Mayor of London's number one priority be?

By Damian Arnold



**Michael Stiff** Director. Stiff + Trevillion



We need to make it attractive for the older generation to downsize and release units for young families. For example, in the private sector the Mayor needs to lobby central government to repeal stamp duty for those downsizing.

The notion of intermediate housing for key workers should be extended to include all those who have jobs and earn less than £40,000 a year. For the developer, viability arguments are wasteful, expensive and time consuming.

The Mayor needs to help those who want homes rather than investments. In the private sector, 'buy to let' merchants have effectively sliced off the bottom rungs of the property ladder. Local authorities should be allowed to increase council tax on anything but the primary residence unless it is let at a pre-determined rent level. If housing association property is to be sold off this will become an even more important issue.

#### 'The Mayor needs to help those who want homes rather than investments'

There is already a strategy document in place that sets an agenda for improving London's air quality. This also needs to be made a priority. The recent VW scandal has brought this issue to the top of the agenda, so now is the time to restrict car usage and to encourage cycling and clean energy sources.

Michael Lowndes Executive director, Turley



Both Mayoral candidates have said that housing will top their briefs but the Mayor will have to deal with competing interests for land at a strategic level that are almost impossible to reconcile.

One of the unintended consequences of the government's change of use reforms from office to resi is that the offices being converted are the ones that start-up entrepreneurs need. However, it is important for a balanced economy that there are places to work.

#### 'The offices being converted are the ones that start-up entrepreneurs need'

Under the Housing and Planning Bill, affordable housing will be replaced by discounted market sales to a maximum of f.450,000. However, at that price it will still exclude people of medium-to-low incomes. If the bill gets through, the Mayor must influence how many of the houses brought forward are affordable under the new definition.

Many people working in London are forced to live outside the city but commuting in is very expensive. The Mayor must look at how to make it cheaper for people working in London to travel to work.

The new Mayor will also have to clarify GLA policy in response to powers extending permitted development rights upwards. The Tory candidate Zac Goldsmith is backing the Create Streets agenda, while the Labour candidate Sadiq Khan is more relaxed about building upwards.

**Katie Kopec** Director, development consulting, JLL



Perhaps the single most important thing is what the incoming Mayor does not do. That may sound a little odd, but far too often our politicians do not appreciate the negative impacts of change itself. Change should be gradual and forward-planned in order to allow markets to adjust.

There is growing disquiet from investors after several years of policy volatility. Investors underwriting new development need reassurances that a regime change does not equal a rewriting of the rulebook. Housing zones, estate regeneration and a range of enabling infrastructure, are reliant on a stable backdrop of policy support to gain momentum and should in our view be left alone. As should the need to introduce further incentives to get PRS/ Build to Rent schemes as a mainstream element of housing delivery.

#### 'The main job must be to ramp up efforts to wrestle greater revenue raising powers from the Treasury'

Behind the scenes, the main job must be to ramp up efforts to wrestle greater revenue raising powers from the Treasury. London is way behind the likes of New York in being able to generate and redistribute tax revenue.

The loss of industrial space to residential under permitted development rights is becoming a concern. The Mayor must guard against the loss of any more industrial space to ensure that London has the employment space it requires to be sustainable.

**Ben Derbyshire** Managing partner, HTA Design



The Mayor's first priority should certainly be more and better housing and the Mayor should work hard on campaigning for the continuing devolution of powers to the GLA.

The demand side policies in the Housing and Planning Bill will serve to rob social housing Peter to pay homeowning Paul, while supply side permitted development liberalisation brings with it real concerns about quality. By contrast, one can really begin to be inspired by a citizen-led Mayoral vision using devolved powers for more and better housing of greater diversity.

#### 'Encouraging the making of things in the city would be an incredibly important thing to do'

If London's authorities can collaborate in the interest of citizens as Manchester's have, we could yet see the local reinvestment of property and land taxes and quality regulation of landlords. A reforming Mayor should use their powers and have the courage to allow innovation and diversity, from hyperdensity of superb quality in a few select locations, to much more midrise superdensity around great streets and the enrichment of 'supurbia' by small enterprises on a big scale in revitalised outer boroughs.

Meanwhile, encouraging the making of things in the city would be an incredibly important thing to do, especially now that micromanufacture is becoming so prevalent. This could be done by liberalisation of class orders, revitalisation of live/work as a concept and fiscal incentives.

**Jane Groom**Board director, London
Communications
Agency



Go back to the Fifties and Sixties and you will find that London's boroughs delivered half the homes being built in England. Now that figure is just 0.5 per cent. This is because London's town halls have since been limited by outdated and overly cautious rules that limit their borrowing powers for housing, and much of what they can borrow has to be used to keep existing stock up to standard. The London Finance Commission, the current Mayor and the Local Government Association have recommended loosening these rules, HM Treasury has resisted. The mandarins do not want extra debt sitting on their balance sheet, even though it would be set against assets which were, literally, as safe as houses.

#### 'There is no serious recognition in the draft Housing and Planning Bill that local authorities could be a part of the solution'

The new Mayor should prioritise this. As a PR consultant, I'm aware that the financing of such things is neither a particularly sexy subject nor an obvious vote winner. But it would make a significant difference to the supply of new homes.

There is no serious recognition in the draft Housing and Planning Bill that local authorities could be a part of the solution. So by lobbying government to lift the borrowing ceiling on town halls, the new Mayor could show that we're working towards a common goal.

**Pat Hayes** Executive director of regeneration and housing, LB Ealing



Given the fact that house purchase in new developments, even with a 20 per cent discount, is likely to be unaffordable for most working Londoners, I would want the new Mayor to use the GLA's borrowing powers to purchase sites in and around London to build housing for rent at a broad range of price points. I would like to see this done in collaboration with boroughs already doing this, and the Mayor should intervene in areas where there is not the ability or desire to deliver affordable housing.

#### 'The Mayor should expand the super highway network to create segregated cycling corridors along all the main routes into central London'

To this end, the Mayor should acquire all publicly owned land at Old Oak Common and redevelop this as a mix of housing aimed at those on combined household incomes of up to £90,000.

The Mayor should use the London Land Commission to manage the release and development of public sector land assets, particularly where achieving the greatest scale of development requires complex land assembly or the relocation of facilities.

Finally, the Mayor should expand the super highway network to create segregated cycling corridors along all the main routes into central London as well as phase out all diesel-engine buses and restrict taxi numbers within Zone 1. This will turn London into a truly world-class city.

**Jerome Frost** Director of planning UKMEA, Arup



London parents everywhere must be very confused right now. For the first time ever, their school-leaver children and their retirement-age parents all want to live in the centre of the city. Gone are the days of suburban ambition, innercity flight and retirement community utopia. All this demand is driving up city centre house prices and land values, pushing out the lower waged and young, early career professionals and isolating what remains of RSL and local authority housing stock into ever more besieged pockets of affordability. The consequences could be far greater than the Housing Bill can cope with.

In the US, Alan Ehrenhalt has highlighted 'the Great Inversion' with lower paid and immigrant communities pushed out to the lower-cost suburbs and the middle classes and higher-paid white collar professionals repopulating the inner city.

#### 'The bill seems out of kilter with the current momentum towards devolved city regions'

Recent deprivation mapping work by the University of Sheffield suggests the same trends may be emerging in London, with inner urban gentrification pushing poorer communities out to the lowercost suburbs. Therefore, a primary challenge for the Housing Bill is to create housing affordability and availability. The bill seems out of kilter with the current momentum towards devolved city regions. Later revisions might therefore consider the case for devolved housing policy.

**Pat Brown** Vice chair of the Mayor's Design

Advisory Group



The Housing and Planning Bill is a paradox. So much government rhetoric is about solving the housing crisis. Yet aspects of the bill undermine the social housing supply or threaten to further inflate house prices, reducing affordability still further. It effectively puts private sector housing on steroids, but I haven't met anyone who thinks that London's housing needs, social or otherwise, can be met predominantly through the private sector.

#### 'I would like to see the Mayor be an intelligent "client" for London, encouraging inward investment'

The new Mayor should be like the conductor of an orchestra with all his instruments playing harmoniously towards meeting London's needs.

Workspace is another critical issue. We need a growing supply of space to match a growing economy, yet currently – whether through Permitted Development Rights or industrial land being lost to resi – we are losing this vital resource.

Given these competing demands, and a growing population, we need to fit more into London. So it's even more important to use our space effectively, with architectural and urban design quality front and centre of the Mayor's vision for London. Currently, the Mayor's Design Advisory Group is leading an inquiry into achieving 'good growth'. I would like to see the Mayor be an intelligent 'client' for London, encouraging inward investment, but guiding development that is fit for our city.

**Richard Powell** Executive director. Grosvenor Britain

& Ireland



London's population growth throws the next Mayor sizeable challenges, from upgrading transport infrastructure to creating new routes to skills that young Londoners need.

But perhaps the greatest challenge is that of unleashing new homes people can afford. A step change increase in the supply in all forms of housing will be needed.

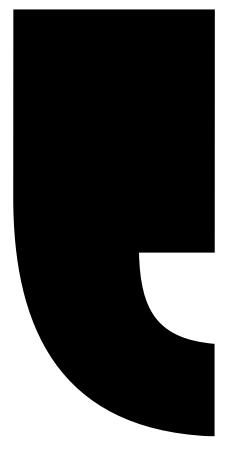
There is no single solution and the risk is a new Mayor will try to cover too many bases. They should focus on the big changes most likely to have a material impact.

Among them must be a renewed effort to get surplus public sector land into the market in a developable form. The Mayor should establish a new compact with the boroughs. A Mayoral delivery agency could take two years to establish, so an immediate, creative set of partnerships is needed.

#### 'Perhaps the greatest challenge is that of unleashing new homes people can afford'

If progressive boroughs come forward with their needs – for skills, help in land assembly or better transport links - the Mayor should be ready to respond. In turn, the Mayor should partner with public sector landowners to identify, assemble and designate sites for new housing, deploying CPO powers if necessary.

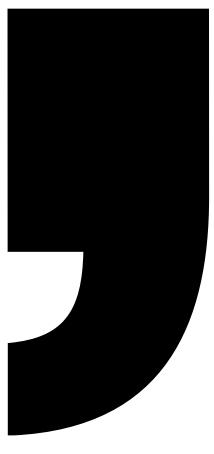
The Mayor should also drive the case for a private rental sector for Londoners on low and middle incomes, where necessary at discounted rents.



# 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



'It's not our job to plant the garden, but it is to ensure there is fertile soil there to begin with'

GLA's Adam Cooper #nlaculture

'Planning is not necessarily a "computer-says-no" profession'

GLA's Stewart Murray #nlaculture

'The British Museum has more visitors than Belgium'

GLA's head of cultural strategy Justine Simons #nlaculture

'Guys, you have got to start thinking about alternative ways of building'

**Deputy mayor Eddie Lister** warns construction industry #CityInTheEast

'London is growing by 6 new residents every hour, a car load every 40 minutes, 2 buses every day or 2 Tube trains every week'

#CityInTheEast

'Barking & Dagenham will be the centre of London at some point. We are the secret you never knew you had'

**B&D** leader Cllr Darren Rodwell

'Exceptional architecture buys acceptance'

Islington Council's Karen Sullivan #HousingLDN

'At the end of this year we will have 5 million sq ft of development under construction'

Battersea's David Twohig #NLASouthbankOL

# 'The north is more stately; the south is more vibrant'

Southbank Centre's Jude Kelly on London #NLASouthbankOL

## 'The British buyers are back'

CBRE chairman of residential, Mark Collins #NLASouthbankOL

'It was always the architects who wanted to spend the money & builders who wanted to save it'

Perkin School's Keir Smith #NLAEducation

'Don't get hung up on tech.
Don't get hung up on millennials.
This is about all of us'

Office Group's Charlie Green #NLAWorkplace

'The mansion block has this amazing quality of combining an urban frontage with signifiers of domesticity'

Alison Brooks #HousingLDN

#### # NLA



Justine Simons, GLA: 'Logic will get you from A to B, imagination will get you everywhere.'

#nlaculture - @jlgclondon

Justine Simons, GLA: 'London's competitor is Tokyo.'

#nlaculture - @ilgclondon

Sir Edward Lister: 'Creating new places must be more than a cold piece of planning, we must factor in culture.'

@nlalondon #NLACulture – **@futurecityblog** 

Great way to spend a day off work visiting #HousingLDN by @nlalondon. Imaginative ideas on a really hot topic.

@paschalena

LB Ealing Pat Hayes: 'Insufficient schools will start to undermine the London economy'

#NLAEducation – @HilsonMoran

Good session this morning @nlalondon #HousingLDN.
Stats aplenty ... Alex Lifschutz 'current rates of building mean houses need 178[-year] lifespan!'

@Downey\_Andy

Did you know that 31% of London's private gardens is located in just five (outer) boroughs!

@nlalondon #HousingLDN - @AukettSwanke

Sadie Morgan: dRMM: #CLT is simple, sustainable and safe.

#housing LDN-@rorybergin



## The resilient city

Peter Murray looks at the continuing history of London reinventing itself in the face of external forces

The fact that 2016 marks the 350th Anniversary of the Great Fire of London provides an opportunity to ponder on the impact of conflagration and disaster on the long-term viability of cities in general and the City of London in particular. As ghastly as disasters are – both natural and manmade – affected places often see a revival of their fortunes as development renews the fabric and the infrastructure.

# 'The lessons of history can be valuable in understanding their long-term impact'

After the Great Fire, when Charles II, Wren, Hooke, Evelyn and others were keen to rebuild with a renaissance plan of wide boulevards, vistas and squares, their plans were thwarted by the merchants who wanted to get back to business and rebuild their premises straight away. Over several decades, the buildings of the Square Mile were renewed, with the bonus of Wren churches and St Paul's Cathedral. The Georgian city was essentially a new city, albeit on a medieval ground plan; it was the world's major trading port and became the centre of the British Empire. The influx of money from all corners of the earth during the 19th century led to its ousting by the Victorian city – when 80 per cent of the buildings were replaced (about the same percentage as were destroyed in the Great Fire).

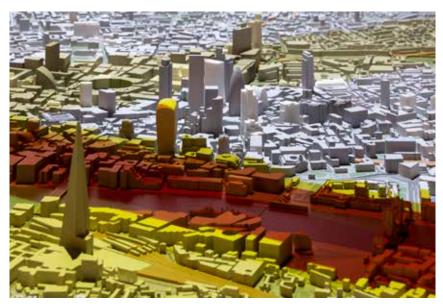
After the Second World War, the City was renewed again, not always with

buildings of great quality. As a result, the significant changes that have taken place since the 1980s have only been able to happen because there was no resistance to the demolition of unloved structures like Holford's Paternoster and Bucklersbury (now Bloomberg Place).

The IRA bombs of the early 1990s also had a big impact on the shape of the City; not only did they destroy the Baltic Exchange, thus opening the way to the development of 20 St Mary Axe and the creation of the City cluster, they also generated the concept of the 'ring of steel' security cordon.

The ring of steel permitted the Corporation to restrict the passage of vehicles through the Square Mile and the immediate changes that took place in the quality of street life and the reduction in pollution started a journey for the street team in the City which began with the improvement of small and often leftover spaces to the recently proposed improvements at the Bank junction. The exclusion of all traffic except buses and cycles will hugely improve the quality of one of the capital's most important public spaces, which until now has been an unpleasant death trap. Full marks to Michael Welbank, the Chairman of the Planning and Transportation Committee, for pushing this radical change through. There will be a 12-month trial of the changes, at the end of which, hopefully, they will be made permanent.

This year I am Master of the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects, one of the modern livery companies in the City. I am organising a programme of talks around the idea of 'Rebuilding the City' looking at how architects, surveyors and developers have been key to the resilience of the City in the face of destruction and attack from external forces – a very relevant topic today and one where the lessons of history can be valuable in understanding their long-term impact. NL



Bouncing back (again) - the City



## Man for a crisis

Peter Murray talks to Lord Kerslake, former civil servant and chief executive of the Homes and Communities Agency, about the London Housing Commission

We meet in Bob Kerslake's office at King's College Hospital in Camberwell, where he is Chairman of the NHS Foundation Trust. A large, spare room, its only alleviating feature is an A0 site plan of the 100-year-old hospital. Kerslake points out the changes he plans: to upgrade buildings and extend the estate, to increase the density and expand capacity. Just the sort of issues on a local scale that he is looking at London-wide in his role as chairman of the London Housing Commission, set up by the left of centre think tank the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). Other members of the Commission include Nick Walkley, chief executive of the London Borough of Haringev and Christine Whitehead of the LSE.

#### 'We won't tackle the underlying problem until we see housing as a vital infrastructure alongside roads and plan accordingly in the long term'

Kerslake says he has received a strong response from the industry and a wide range of ideas. He plans to publish the report on 7 March. It will be one of an array of reports which are being produced by a wide range of groups and organisations to inform the future Mayor of the issues he faces, and the possible solutions he might pursue.

'We have invited the candidates to the launch; I hope it's in their diary. It will give them a chance to give their initial response. It is a genuinely expert cross-party initiative. I have spoken to Zac Goldsmith. Sadiq welcomed the Commission when it was announced. I hope we will have a listening ear.'

It is likely the candidates will need little introduction to the problems: a crisis that if it is not addressed will damage the capital economically and socially; a crisis of supply that has put the price of housing beyond the reach of ordinary people.

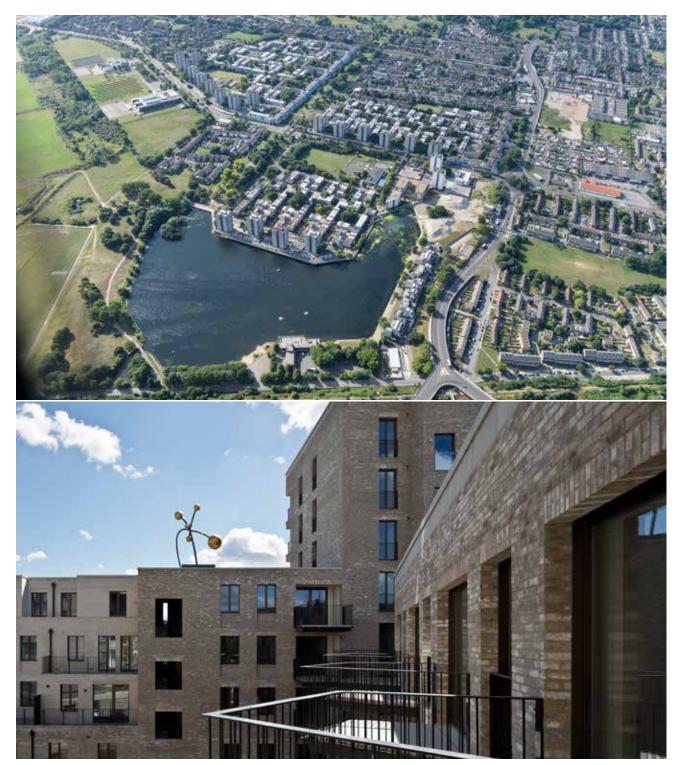
'The Commission is trying to answer two questions,' says Kerslake, 'What should the Mayor do in the first instance? What steps can he take on planning and land that will make a difference? And then what would it take to double the supply of housing in London and crucially keep it at that level?'

'There isn't going to be a magic wand. We will require action on a whole range of things. It is not about any particular type of housing – we need more housing for sale and for rent; we need more social housing. We should avoid simplistic solutions.

'London won't be able to respond to the scale of the task without another significant wave of devolution to the London boroughs. My worry is that national government policies do not move fast enough. And we won't tackle the underlying problem until







Unfinished business: Peabody is working with Bexley and Greenwich on restarting Thamesmead's ambition

we see housing as a vital infrastructure alongside roads and plan accordingly in the long term.

'We want to open up to ideas. That's why I really enjoyed being a judge of NLA's competition and exhibition. We must not fix on one solution.

'Also, we have to resist the narrative that if we do build at a faster rate, it is going to be at the expense of quality. That is a common theme that keeps coming up. It is true that some of the projects we are doing in London are not so great, but I am not persuaded that it is a consequence of the current rate of build, but of other pressures. We have to find a way of delivering more and better housing. I think that is perfectly possible.'

Is this about maintaining space standards and resisting the reduction in regulation?, I ask. And what about developers like Pocket, which are delivering smaller but well-designed homes for the intermediate market?

'Quality goes beyond standards', he says. 'It is about whether or not you are creating spaces that people will want to live in. We all know places that have conformed to the standards but were not successful in creating a sense of place. You should have some flexibility, hence I am open to the sort of solutions Pocket are putting forward as one part of the answer.'

Kerslake highlights one of the most striking features of housing supply in the last couple of decades – the decline of the small house builder.

'Part of the reason for this is because the task of making a planning application for a small site has become too complex, too expensive and too long. There are ways in which we can simplify that. Similarly, the use of OJEU as the way of procuring development on sites adds to the complexity. We definitely want to explore a more simplified route to procurement.'

The planning system is often quoted as a key problem because of the capacity of planning departments in the face of considerable cutbacks.

'Developers talk of overstretched teams and turnover of staff in local authority planning departments. It is a crucial issue. I was told that 90 per cent of planning students go into the private sector. We risk having a very imbalanced system with a lot of very well equipped private sector organisations compared with some very stretched and stressed public sector organisations. Both need to have the resources and capacity to function well.

'As well as development control, place shaping is about economic development, architecture, urban design and landscaping. We need to discover our ability to create mixed teams who can do this.'

Do we not need greater involvement generally from the public sector in the delivery of housing? Should we be emulating the postwar production of social housing? The housing associations and private sector have failed to fill the gap left by the demise of the council house building programme.

'There were two schools of thought in government. One was the one that took the post-WW2 graph as a point of reference which is largely public sector, not just funded but commissioned and delivered by local authorities. The other story tends to be in the Treasury, which points to the interwar years which was largely a private sector period where there was less planning. So, depending on which of those periods you take, that influences your judgement about what is needed. My personal view is that neither was sufficient. We definitely need a more effective planning system, but I do not believe we can deliver what we need without some form of government funding. If you don't put public money into the affordable supply, you end up paying for it on rent and housing benefit.'

Surely, the nub of the problem is that government looked to the private sector to solve its housing problems, but the development business doesn't see it that way?

'The private sector shifted a great deal of new homes for a long period. Most of the flux was around public sector buildings, except in the crash in 2007 when private building fell off a cliff, to well under half of what it was. It has risen back but not to what it was. I wonder whether the private sector in its current form, the major house builders, do have the appetite to grow beyond where they were before. Their focus is on restoring their balance sheets and building added value in terms of return. They will be very cautious about exposing themselves in the way they did prior to the downturn. To look to the private sector as the complete solution is unrealistic.'

These are no ivory tower views. Kerslake is chairman of Peabody and is closely involved in one of the largest housing delivery programmes in the capital.

'Thamesmead is a new town of some 14,000 people. It is an area which has huge potential and natural assets, but these are not well harnessed. The fragmentation that followed the abolition of the GLC effectively stalled the projects in the area. So we are now unifying the housing association role, the commercial role and the community role. Our ambition is to work closely with the two local authorities, Bexley and Greenwich, to restart the ambition that was once there. Thamesmead straddles both urban inner London and suburban outer London and we have been asking what sort of character are we trying to create? Where do we start?

'We have the big picture clear in our heads and we are now delivering individual components with a range of architects and masterplanners.'

Kerslake says that a new river crossing is absolutely key. The area has the potential to be double its size but it will need the new infrastructure, either in the form of a bridge or a tunnel. Peabody prefers a tunnel. He also wants a guided bus system and



Man with a plan - Kerslake believes there is huge scope for change with projects like Peabody's for Thamesmead

interconnecting pathways for cycling and walking.

'Transport infrastructure is the key influence on how fast we can grow and develop.

'Thamesmead is exciting. House prices are something like 40 per cent of the London average. There is huge scope to increase values there. It has twice as much open land per head as the average in London. It needs big investment. Peabody will spend £220m in the first phase alone. The total spend by us, public and private money, is going to be nearer a £1billion. This is very unusual for a Housing Association but we are absolutely up for the challenge.'

I ask Kerslake about the next iteration of the London Plan; he is wary of preempting the findings of his report

but mentions some key issues that need to be addressed, like a move to a set tariff on affordable housing, perhaps with some flexibility, particularly on the exception of size, the issue of the green belt, the question of density and the form of development in London.

'The work of the Housing Forum on density is very interesting in showing that you can get the same levels of density in mid-rise development as in a single core, very high tower, providing a much more human scale, liveable space that is potentially more sustainable in terms of energy consumption. That isn't to say you should never build high-rise towers, you need to be discriminating about where you build them and not assume it's the only way to achieve higher densities.'

Kerslake says he is looking forward

to the debate on the Housing and Planning Bill in the House of Lords. He thinks simplifying and speeding up the process on brownfield land purchase and a more effective tax regime on build-to-let are good policies. But he is concerned about the focus on home ownership at the risk of weakening new supply. Policies around the extension of right to buy and starter homes leave big issues for the local authorities and funding which haven't yet been fully worked through. Starter homes, previously seen as additional housing on brownfield sites, will now displace S106 affordable.

'There are some big issues to be explored. We will see the Bill coming to the House of Lords in the new year. There will be a very interesting debate to be had!' NL



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## **Boosting London's** retail heartland

Prospective property owner BID, the New West End Company, can mirror successes in New York in raising values - and £16m for the wider area. By Jace Tyrrell, interim chief executive, New West End Company

London's West End is a place like no other - bringing together some of the world's leading retailers, shows, restaurants, art galleries and theatres against a dramatic architectural backdrop which easily brushes off the competition from rival shopping destinations across the globe.

Its offering is well recognised - over 200 million visits are made here every year, 120 international brands have chosen to build a base in the area and 217 flagship stores line our streets.

Over the past 10 years New West End Company has helped bring together businesses to drive improvements to the retail trading environment. Pivotal to our work has been the voluntary contributions of property owners, whose investment and expertise has proven invaluable. Their collective contribution

of f.10m has been instrumental to securing the West End's position as the world's number-one retail destination - and it has been made because they believe in what is being achieved, not because they have to.

But as much as Bond Street, Oxford Street and Regent Street have evolved over the decade, so too has the legislation governing Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) – and now the framework exists to create a body to specifically cater for property owners. This advance paves the way for a new voice, a strong campaigner to focus efforts on boosting commercial returns for those investing in the bricks and mortar that makes up the retail heart of the West End.

This new generation of BIDs will allow the property owners to speak in unity - to enter debates with a combined manifesto for change, lobby for legislative re-evaluation to better support Britain's economic engine room and demand the attention which befits a group which creates 1.5 million square metres of retail space and helps bring £8.5 billion into the country's tills each year.

New West End Company has an ambitious business plan with a single vision of making the West End the world's number-one choice for shoppers, retailers and inward investment, a vision that sets out what £16m raised through the creation of our property BID means - including sustainable placemaking, global marketing efforts and building a robust business voice. The creation of our new property BID for the area will be transformational, particularly at a time when Crossrail will change the landscape of the West End forever.

#### 'The creation of our new property BID for the area will be transformational'

The benefit that property BIDs bring has been demonstrated by many of London's direct rivals already - BIDs in New York have driven increases in property values by 15 per cent more than non-BID areas. It is high time we harnessed this vehicle to make the most of the potential London's West End holds within its buildings.

New West End Company, in partnership with Westminster City Council and other influential organisations, has spent 10 years delivering substantive results for London's retail heartland and we believe we have the unrivalled expertise of working for this exceptional area and the ability to deliver outstanding results for the property owners who form a central part of what makes London's West End so very special. NL



# The Adams family

In the first of a new series on breakthrough, 'next gen' practices, David Taylor catches up with Ben Adams Architects. What's the secret of making that step up?



Many moons ago, Ben Adams' career advisor came to him with some options to consider. With maths, physics and art as his obvious talents, he said, there were vocations ahead of him in either advertising, architecture or ... philosophy. Happily for the worlds of design and contemporary thought, Adams chose the right path.

Ben Adams Architects is now a genuine 'breakthrough practice', maybe more, with its 50 staff on two levels on Southwark Street, schemes on the go including Nobu in Shoreditch (original architect: Ron Arad) and plans to open a satellite office in Los Angeles, of all places. But does he feel established? 'As a 43-year-old architect I'm only just even slightly starting to feel confident about designing buildings', he says. 'I think it's really tough and you only learn much about

architecture by designing something, building it and then reflecting on it, which takes, even for small projects, four or five years. It's a cliché that architects only start when they're 40 but there's a lot of truth in it, because it is only by then that you have tried a few things and had the results.'

Adams trained at Cambridge before 'it all got interesting', working for a construction company that aimed to build timber-framed buildings in 'an American method'. 'I didn't think so at the time but it was a really good architectural education.' One day, for example, a neighbouring stud farm objected to a crane they put up, so a 22-year-old Adams had his first brush with community consultation of sorts. 'What could we do? Was there a time when it wouldn't scare the horses? When do they go to sleep? We had this

ridiculous conversation but we didn't fall out and it introduced me to this world of consultation, neighbourliness and getting things built.'

He then worked at Michaelis Boyd, and was appointed as a green, just qualified twenty-something to be project architect on Babington House, another steep learning experience that was 'unpleasant at times but also instructive'. Then it was AHMM, when it was only around 30 strong, where Adams stayed for five years learning from their own first 10 years of tricky existence. 'It's tough to make a beginning. I saw them grow and the work diversified but I always wanted to work for myself.' Why? 'I'm quite cussed and resist direction', he admits. It was also about a creative freedom. Lots of people asked him if he was sure about this step. After all, there was a recession on; was he aware of the hardships that go with setting up? 'It all seemed a bit secondary to me. That's just life. That'll all sort itself out.'

Nevertheless, Adams chose to set up with Pippa Nissen, a university friend with a background in theatre and opera design, in 2003. They wanted as broad a reach as possible to avoid pigeonholing and to maximise the amount of work they could do. That lasted for seven years, by which time it became clear that while Adams was doing the architecture, Nissen the set design, so they went their separate ways in 2010, Adams starting afresh with six staff in Southwark but with the benefit of some experience and clients.

An early competition win was for Norwich Union on the topic of



Colourful language - the practice's reworked BFI HQ in Stephen Street



The Bryant Building - a stylish mix of offices and apartments in Shoreditch

flooding, which they were in the act of insuring. How could better homes be designed to deal with floods? The biggest problem is not normally water ingress but the displacement of communities, says Adams. But their research told them that water doesn't stay at high levels for long during flooding. So if you could design homes that allowed people to stay put for three or four days you would solve the first displacement issue. Either this would be keeping water out or allowing it in 'in an elegant way'. It meant that they were suddenly on the map for knowing about flooding, and then the RIBA asked them to feature in a guidance book and exhibition, and at towns like Littlehampton where it is an annual issue. And following that, although through serendipity rather than a direct link, a client came along who needed a new house on a site liable to annual flooding on a Thames tributary near Weybridge. The fronts of the houses in the area face the river, the backs the road, so the river appears like a suburban street. There were many restrictions here, resulting in tight parameters to design with and an open brief from a client who lived on her own and simply wanted 'a cool house'.

#### 'I think now value is only placed in real expertise, because it gives you an edge'

It does, however, emphasise the importance of research to the practice, and how unusually at Ben Adams Architects that is tested through academic peers as well as practice. 'If you were Victorian there was a value in doing lots of things, being a generalist was OK and you'd get gentleman explorers. I think now value is only placed in real expertise, because it gives you an edge in whatever field and particularly in architecture.' There is another route

to starting a practice which is to be novel, offering something new and shouting loudly, but Adams isn't wired that way, and he worries that practices that rely on this 'innovation' are stuck in three or five years when it stops being quite so novel.

The practice is more anti-fad than anti-icon, but Adams says too may icons make a city 'delirious', to coin a Rem Koolhaas phrase. This was in sharp relief on a recent visit to Los Angeles and Diller Scofidio + Renfro's slap bang next to Gehry's Walt Disney building. Is there something more coherent to do than a kind of architectural zoo? He feels an Adams building has great clarity, but is caught between being rational and irrational, allowing for a kind of playfulness. 'The way we design buildings is to allow the rigour and analysis to happen that

you need to make projects happen, but don't pretend that will automatically lead to great architecture. Running in parallel you ought to have space for ideas to flourish. There's a danger you squash the delight out of something in pursuit of that rigour.'

The kind of clients you work with is also important, says Adams. 'We need to be driven by our clients quite hard to make our best buildings', he says. 'The most difficult thing with projects is when clients change their minds. But if you know them better, those changes don't come unexpectedly.' Our buildings feel right in some way, have some sense of fit about them – but I think it's more about an instinctive reaction – does this feel right?'

Adams lives in Lewes with his teacher-turned-artist wife within the grounds of the castle, chosen for its carefree and carfree lifestyle for the kids, but has a bolthole in the capital to save on the commute. He's a keen charity cyclist, and also has a penchant for DJ'ing, shown to full effect at The Architects' Ball at Shoreditch Town Hall in October last year.

The future is partially about opening an office in America, which Ben Adams believes is having a 'cultural moment', particularly in Los Angeles, where the numbers of artists and cultural material dwarves many other cities in the world. It's also cheap - you can buy a flat in Los Angeles for under \$100,000 so it is not prohibitive for the young – and not so young – in the way that London is. 'There's also something interesting in a city that doesn't have a centre; that is a collection of towns that are linked', he goes on. It is growing from 15 million to 18 million but can't spread any more, having reached its physical limits in purely transit times. It is also surrounded by mountains and oceans, so Angelenos are looking to intensify – which is where Adams sees his expertise carrying weight, informed by London's tradition in this area. 'The whole adaptive reuse thing there is gathering steam again', he says. 'People have realised you can take old warehouses and turn them into shops, restaurants, flats, workplaces, all sorts of things. And there are tonnes of them, sitting there undervalued.'

So what's the main tip for small practices wanting to break through? One is to follow the zeitgeist and not be outmanoeuvred by events, Adams says. 'You have to stick to your guns, that allows clients to be clients. The biggest mistake is design something, offer it to the world and then refuse to change it. You need to explain the thinking and then be nimble when things change. The greatest mistake architects make is to have that preciousness about something. Architecture', Adams concludes, 'is only ever a response to something else.'

Perhaps that career in philosophy wasn't so far-fetched after all ... NL



Art beat - flexible art galleries for Phillips de Pury in Victoria

# **Coffey breaks free**

Our new series on breakthrough practices continues with Phil Coffey Architects. By David Taylor



Phil Coffey describes himself as bipolar – in that he has been to both ends of the planet, pursuing his love of travel. But this is no throwaway line, since sustainability and the threat to the icecaps and beyond is at the core of his young practice's ethos. It is also the biggest thing that architects can and should be dealing with, he contends, part of their inherited social conscience.

Coffey Architects is a breakthrough practice in a particularly bright part of its orbit. Now up to 20 staff, it has just celebrated 10 years in the business with a show at the RIBA called *Exposure* that blurs the boundaries between architecture and photography – the latter of which has been a long-running passion of Coffey's that drew from his father, taking photos towards the end of the Bosnian war and across 60

countries. It also fired him into design.

But it is environmental thinking, producing designs which avoid being overly worthy or wear their green credentials on their sleeves, which really gets him going. His designs are informed by his past at practices including Ian Ritchie, where he worked among other things on the Stirlingshortlisted Dublin Spire and Plymouth Theatre Royal, and Avery Associates, where his work included the awardwinning IMAX at Waterloo. But also by Richard Weston, from whom he learnt to put environmentalism at the heart of each scheme.

The firm has won a string of awards in its decade of design so far including Young Architect of the Year in 2012, and recognition as part of the *Faces of British Architecture* exhibition in

2011 and the 40 under 40 awards in the year it formed 2005. Aiding this process Coffey and his wife Tamsyn Curley form something of a power couple in design, with the latter's expertise in architectural recruitment, heading up Place Careers, which shares an office with Coffey in Clerkenwell. The pair also hold regular dinner soirées at the Islington house Coffey stylishly created. Indeed, rare is a party in design without either or both in attendance. But the ethos goes a little deeper.

# 'Architecture is a social discipline. It's about people, first and foremost.'

'I'm preoccupied with light' he told his audience on the RIBA show opening night, a room full of affection and including friends and names in the industry such as Simon Allford and Paul Monaghan of AHMM. An early encounter with the latter filled Coffey with pride, he said, when Monaghan said he liked a scheme Coffey designed, a library extension to an existing primary school in Kentish Town. 'He said he liked my school', Coffey joked. 'In fact I think they liked my fags.' But for all of Coffey's jokes and bonhomie, and beyond the charities he supports through bike rides to MIPIM and more, there is a serious side.

'Architecture is a social discipline', he says. 'It's about people, first and foremost.' His 'coffee-table' *Exposure* book is 'about having architecture and photography in your living room, if you're just a normal person'. (Although the ultimate irony, Coffey whispers, is that he is allergic to coffee.)

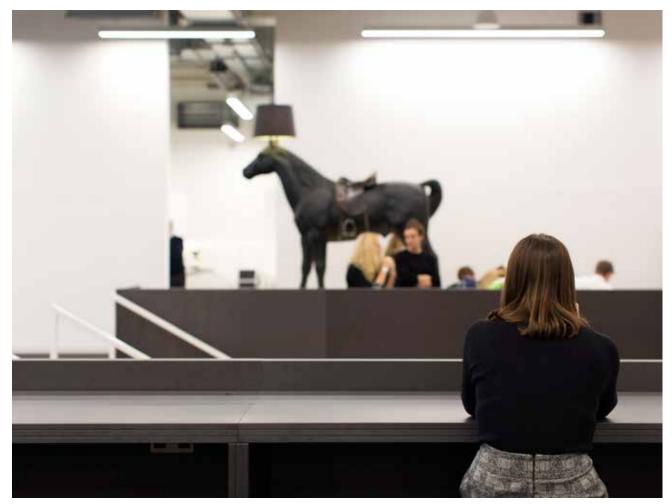
Coffey's father had a darkroom in his caravan outside his house when he was 10, so they would develop their own photos together. They went to the tail end of the Bosnian war, taking medicines in a convoy of around 10

trucks as his Dad could get them wholesale from his pharmaceuticals firm. 'It was an incredible life experience. Quite stressful as well, though.' They spent time at Mostar when the famous bridge was knocked out and rebuilt, and stay in contact with a family there. They found time to visit orphanages while they were there, and from then on, Coffey's bug for world travel was in full flow. 'But if you are an architect you have to care about people, fundamentally', he says. 'People and place. And I think actually if you're in a left of centre profession then I'm still amazed nobody talks about sustainability any more. It's

just kind of disappeared. And I think it's the only game in town, actually. If we consider ourselves to be a social discipline, then we should be talking about it.' Sure, the gap has narrowed because of things like Part L, but the language that architects use, and the discussions they have, should still be about that. And it could be an antidote to the 'empty formalism' that abounds, Coffey believes. 'We could actually be making buildings that respond to climate.'

This has been the firm's ethos, inspired by his tutor Richard Weston at the Welsh School of Architecture. It was about the elements of architecture

- always environmental from the very beginning. 'And it doesn't mean you put windmills on roofs either. I've talked to Richard a lot about this over the years, and in the end we've decided that all we're describing is just good architecture. But actually it just seems to me that good architecture has lost its voice.' There is a huge silent majority of architects who care about such matters, but when the public thinks of architects they think starchitect, Coffey suggests. And that is what Exposure is about, 'exposing that good architecture can come from simple, intelligent responses to global and local contexts'.



Horse play - Phil Coffey Architects worked with Ab Rogers on U+I's new HQ in Victoria

The practice is involved in some key schemes which include a collaboration with Abe Rogers to create a new headquarters for Cathedral and Development Securities at Howick Place, a fantastic old post-office building in Victoria. This is an exercise in bringing the two elements together, with 'gravitas and playfulness', says Coffey. 'The response is about light and the two companies coming

together.' Visitors travel up a new black MDF staircase cut through the middle of the floorplate around a ramp to a boardroom which sits above it. 'You can take them around the office without taking them into the office', he says. The job came about in an unusual manner – Coffey was invited to meet Cathedral at a 'do', at which there was an auction prize of dinner with Martyn Evans. As the price rose

steadily to £250, Coffey raised his arm and made a bid for £1,000, they had the dinner, and then Coffey met Richard Upton and the job followed shortly afterwards. He is a shrewd operator and adept at self-marketing, as he contests all architects should be. It helps that his wife is firmly in the thick of things too.

The firm has just completed Cloister, a masterplan plus 'departmental' buildings project in China. But beyond early residential schemes, one of the early breaks was for a client called Phillip Fitzpatrick, who recommended the practice for a job at St Patrick's School. They won the job to create a library, which won the Stephen Lawrence Prize, which led to the BFI and the Science Museum.

#### 'I'm still amazed nobody talks about sustainability any more. It's just kind of disappeared. And I think it's the only game in town, actually'

A football stadium is not on his immediate wish-list, despite being proficient at the game as a youngster, playing for Swansea youth alongside international player John Hartson, but perhaps a major library is, having done two smaller ones thus far. Again, it's that desire to do more in the way of public, social schemes that are about light, experience and concentration. 'As an architect, it's a beautiful thing to do'.

Presumably, then, Coffey is happy with how things are going? 'Yes', he says, 'but I'm impatient. We're starting to get the opportunity to work for people who I'm rather amazed by', referring to a practice which is truly in the big league with whom it is joining forces on a bid for LSE. So yes, things are going very well indeed. 'I'm just a normal working-class boy who made good ... All of a sudden it has felt like all the stars have aligned.' NL



On reflection - Coffey in situ at U+I



## Surfaces, light and health

Architects and designers should pay careful attention to surfaces and light to minimise discomfort to dementia sufferers and improve wellbeing. By Christopher Newton, director, Surface Design Show



The use of surfaces and light levels have important ramifications for the health and wellbeing – particularly regarding dementia – of building users.

So that is why we have chosen to make it a key component of the forthcoming Surface Design Show at London's Business Design Centre being held 9-11 February 2016. The show attracts an audience that is largely from the architectural and design community (80 per cent), exploring the latest materials for the built environment, while facilitating a network with like-minded designers, architects and suppliers. And in recent years we have have added a complementary 'Light School' event in recognition of the crucial and symbiotic connection that exists between surfaces and light. The link between the two is of particular relevance this year as a key theme will be the impact of surfaces and light, on Health + Wellbeing.

As lighting expert and former director of lighting at Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling David McNair, puts it:

'Almost everything we see is by light reflected from a surface. The eye

is important but it is the brain that constructs the images, so there are many layers of complexity to how we perceive the world around us. Many surfaces have the potential to cause a level of confusion and of course this will be more pronounced in a person with dementia.'

With this in mind, it is clear that appropriate and responsible use of light and surfaces goes way beyond pure aesthetics. The visual cortex comprises six principal areas referenced as V1 to V6 with each of V3 to V6 having a primary (but not sole) responsibility for a particular element of visual communication, for example colour formulation, perception and motion.



More than skin deep ...



... studies in light and surfaces

As humans, we are literally processing billions of communications per minute within our brains to help us make sense of the world around us.

With conditions such as dementia, the brain's ability to process information starts to fail and this can cause confusion and distress. Through recognition of the pitfalls and issues, architects and designers can seek to avoid them.

Dementia is an umbrella term and there are many types of deterioration of the brain – even within Alzheimer's there are various forms of the disease, and each individual will have a unique experience. However, there are some elements of environments that can improve quality of life and reduce risk.

#### 'Speckled surfaces can turn a person with dementia into a perpetual cleaner'

Speckled surfaces can turn a person with dementia into a perpetual cleaner; carpets with certain contrasts and patterns can be the cause of trips and difficulties in orientation. Another major danger area is the presentation of food – even a simple glass of water on a white tablecloth is likely to cause confusion to many with dementia, so the right contrast in plates and tablecloths is essential.

On Tuesday 9 February, New London Architecture will host the preview evening for the Surface Design Show's Live Debate from 6.30 to 8pm. Peter Murray will be chairing a debate on the topic of 'Architecture is more than Skin Deep'.

To further support the Health + Wellbeing focus at this year's show, the organisers have adopted Maggie's as this year's chosen Charity Partner. Maggie's provides free practical, emotional and social support to people with cancer and their family and friends. Surface Design Show will be helping to raise funds for the Maggie's Centre. ML







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# Fringe benefits

Having developed some 65 buildings – around five million square feet of offices – Helical Bar CEO in waiting Gerald Kaye is putting his efforts, and own money, into Smithfield. By David Taylor

Gerald Kaye is about as far as you can get from Victor Kiam, the legendary owner of US outfit Remington. But like Kiam in that famous TV ad, the director of Helical Bar liked his firm's latest project so much – Barts Square in Smithfield – he bought a flat there for himself.

This is all above board and declared in the usual corporate manner, he's quick to insist, and there was certainly no 'mates rates' involved. But Kaye is effusive about the potential for this forgotten backwater of London, with its winding side streets, characterful and historic Smithfield meat market, and Barts Hospital. And soon, perhaps, the Museum of London and another game-changer, Crossrail.

We meet in Helical's marketing suite for the project, a stone's throw from St Bart's and the church in which Hugh Grant did not get married in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. We're here to talk through the scheme, London, and The Bower, Helical's similarly large-scale project over on Old Street designed by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris opposite its White Collar Factory. But first, how did Kaye, a slightly cautious but friendly, old school property gent, get to where he is?

Kaye began life on the graduate training scheme at Knight Frank and Rutley in 1979 after studying at Reading. One of his clients was London and Edinburgh Trust, who he thought the 'brightest and best', so he was determined to work for them,

which he did in 1984. 'I think they thought I knew a lot more than I did', smiles Kave. 'It was a case of sink or swim.' It was a fantastic learning opportunity, looking after mainly office developments in London and the south east. Kave rose to director at 1989 before the firm was taken over by a Swedish pension fund and in 1992 he was posted in Brussels to look after its European developments for two years as chief executive of that wing. The market was tough, so there was a lot of sorting out to do, says Kaye, with daily flights to Germany, France, Spain, Austria and Holland. 'We had a good smattering of schemes over Europe.' Then, in 1994, he joined Mike Slade - who becomes non-exec chairman in July - at Helical Bar (the firm's name comes from its background selling reinforcing steel for construction, a helix). The company was effectively a shell before Slade transformed it into one of the best performing shares in the 80s.

What is the USP of Helical today? Is it in line with his character assessment by one architect as a 'decent and straight-up-and-down, but not adventurous' developer? 'We try to do what we do very well and we try to maximise our returns on equity and the money we invest', says Kaye. It works on large development schemes with partners, and the company balances its investment and development arms, with its rental income covering the costs of





running the business and the extra returns generated from development being 'the icing on the cake'. They focus almost solely on London and particularly in the EC1 area, but also on refurbishment and residential in Hammersmith. So what is it about the City fringe that makes it so attractive? 'We're opportunity-led within predetermined parameters,' Kaye offers. They acquired the site for Barts Square in 2011. 'We saw it, liked it and thought we should try and buy it. It was a very good, big chunk of land where one could do something large and interesting.'

#### 'When you're doing a residential scheme it's good that the promoter, the developer, puts his money where his mouth is'

But times then were tough and there was very limited money around. Kaye remembers presenting a number of opportunities in the City in 2010 with Baupost, a US fund based in Boston. 'I said if there was one we should buy together it was Barts. It just seemed a great opportunity where there was a lot of value that one could create through the development process. The whole area was a mess.' The red line around everything Helical Bar owns here runs to 3.2 acres, which is the kind of scale that lends itself to significant, widespread improvement, says Kave. This will be a mix of offices, residential retail and restaurants, respecting the historic streetscape and building pattern, retaining the facades of the majority of the pre-war buildings. 'This area had the most wonderful character and we've tried to retain that. It's a lovely area and a great place to live.'

Kaye himself lives in Essex, with a flat in central London, but he has bought one of the flats in the first phase at Barts. 'I think when you're doing a residential scheme it's good that the promoter, the developer, puts



AHMM-designed The Bower at Old Street includes retail, offices, restaurant and public realm



The entrance to The Bower with The Warehouse (right) and Tower (left)

his money where his mouth is', he says. 'I paid the full list price that Savills had put on it and it was all cleared by JP Morgan Cazenove, who are our sponsors.' It's not unusual, he says, since 'the Berkeley chaps' also buy flats in their schemes, but he does intend to live in the place, in line with a pleasing

amount of the buyers so far on the scheme. He recognises this issue is a problem elsewhere, saying the majority of the sales have gone through London, although the developer has also been to Hong Kong and Singapore. One thus has to be careful on this mix, says Kaye, but without investment



Helical's Barts Square aims to create 'an intimate and characterful' mixed-use



Barts Square includes One Bartholomew Close; a 211,000 sq ft office scheme by Sheppard Robson

from foreign fields, schemes like Battersea Power Station would still be in abeyance and we are very fortunate that London is attracting foreign investment as a world city. The first phase of Barts is 144 units, of which around 100 have been sold, and they will be complete in 2017. The second is 92 units, and the schemes borrow their names from famous residents of the past including Hogarth, Abernethy and Askew who were related to the medical field. Sheppard Robson has done the masterplanning, with Piercy & Co and Maccreanor Lavington doing the facades of some of the 19 different buildings and Johnson Naylor on interiors, following former City planning chief Peter Rees suggesting more variety was what was needed.

Is the essence of creating a successful place enabling this kind of rich mix? 'Yes, we're trying to provide interesting buildings where people want to work and I think the micro location is very important. We try to have public realm around our buildings, whether it is our own or which we effectively borrow.' This is in evidence at Charterhouse Square, while at Barts it is part Helical, and partly city streets. At The Bower at Old Street the firm has created its own public realm within the scheme. Both projects are effectively creating 'quarters', with the challenge at The Bower being mainly to bring people in by creating a deck and a brand new pedestrian street with retail and restaurants, opening up what was a 'landlocked' area.

In 2012 Kave was quoted as saving he felt architects needed to have more 'commerciality' about them. Still true? 'I think there are some fantastic architects around. It's one of the few professions where there is a very low barrier to entry - people can spin out of a big firm and set up around the corner and become successful very quickly. But if I think back to when I started doing development the professional team was the architect, quantity surveyor, mechanical and



Barts Square includes 236 apartments, 230,000 sq ft of office space across two buildings and 23,000 sq ft of retail/restaurant/café use

electrical engineer and structural engineer and they did the whole lot. The architect was the top dog – he was in charge and ran the show. Now there is a plethora – we had 24 consultants working on this scheme and the architects have let their role diminish over the years.' Buildings have become more technical and quality has risen, but the architects do less. Planning is also getting harder, since the days when one could draw a red line and apply for outline planning, says Kaye. 'Every time I hear the government say they are simplifying the planning process I groan because all they do is make it more complicated.' It is time-consuming and expensive to navigate, Kaye goes on, which is fine in a prosperous city like London but he wonders what sort of brake it is in areas where that is more borderline. Could more be handled at the building regulation stage, he wonders? Planning should be about land use and external appearance, not necessarily about what's happening internally on DDA access requirements and the like. 'You wonder how much this lethargic planning system is stopping muchneeded housing in London', he says. 'I think it is one of the major fault-lines.'

#### 'Every time I hear the government say they are simplifying the planning process I groan because all they do is make it more complicated'

If the government wanted to get on with it they could, he says, pointing to 'acres and acres' of land around London that could be developed. 'It's just a case of somebody getting stuck in', says Kaye, assuming there are enough people to build them, given the skills shortage. The government could be more 'forceful' about giving sites planning, and building on degraded green belt should not be out of the question, but affordability is of course



Top man - Kaye takes over as Helical Bar chief executive this July

a real problem. And yet the quality of buildings in London is far higher than 25 years ago and Kaye is excited by the changes, not least in the city skyline.

He has totted up that over his long career he has been involved in getting on for 65 major buildings – around 5 million square feet of offices. Today Helical is building 900,000 sq ft of offices along with 240-odd units of residential. His favourite is 40 Berkeley Square, though, developed with Aviva in 2004, principally because of its location, but also the quality of the 'nicely proportioned' Hamilton Associates design. But this may be displaced by Barts Square and The Bower as 'significant projects which put something back into London', he believes. Helical has investment properties outside London providing a good yield including several office buildings in Manchester and a shopping centre in Cardiff, and is seeking to grow its portfolio in London, with more of a mixed-use push with an emphasis on placemaking. 'We're very optimistic about London's future', Kave says, pointing to strong GDP growth and the capital's huge concentration of tech businesses.

What, though, could a new Mayor do to help? His message to Zac Goldsmith or Sadiq Khan is that infrastructure has to keep up, particularly on power, but Crossrail will make a difference and the sooner Crossrail 2 can start the better. And then there should be a concentration on providing more low-cost housing, but without 'over-interfering' in what developers do. Developers themselves are very bad, though, in making clear what they contribute to the community. For example, on Helical's six London schemes Section 106, CIL and other contributions comes to some £40m. 'I think we as an industry are very bad at making that point. I think the BPF should take the lead.'

Ultimately, Kaye says he never stops learning as a developer, is always armed with the view that you should avoid making the same mistake twice, and is dependent on good teams around him. 'I describe it sometimes that we are the conductor of the orchestra', he says. 'We know what piece of music we want to play; it's just a case of getting everybody to do their expert piece, in harmony.' NL



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## The only way is up

Tall buildings can help solve London's residential and commercial construction conundrum, says rebranded Perkins + Will principal lo Palma



With the capital's residential property at a premium and commercial space experiencing extraordinary demand, isn't it time we take a strategic step towards vertical living?

The whole country knows that the UK and London especially is experiencing a major housing shortage. This November, GoCompare's figures revealed that, driven by shortage of supply, the average London flat costs £,442,000. It's predicted that the UK population could rise by 10 million in the next 25 years, and the Town and Country Planning Association's recent research says we need to build 220,000 homes a year until 2031 to meet demand. A staggering 55 per cent of those should be in London and the south east.

In the commercial sector, Knight Frank declared London the fourth most expensive city in the world in which to rent an office. BNP Paribas Real Estate's latest research suggests London's available commercial space supply would last less than a year at today's rate of take-up.

Tall buildings can play a vital role in reducing demand, improving affordability and providing desperately needed new homes and commercial space. While Europe looks to London to take the lead, we can look to places like Chicago and New York for inspiration and proof that vertical living really works.

There are simple reasons to develop upwards: there's a shortage of suitable development space in the city; vertical development sidesteps the pitfalls of inefficient urban sprawl; unlike dormitory towns and suburbs, mixed-use vertical living creates diverse and integrated communities; strategically sited, such developments can be far more environmentally friendly, for example when fuelled by district heating with combined heat and power; and tall buildings offer potential for change of use, adapting as needs change over the generations.

But such projects must be undertaken truly strategically and with an understanding of what defines quality of life and efficient, productive spaces. That means factoring in all we know about human psychology and behavioural science and the effects of indoor and outdoor environment on health and wellbeing. For residential schemes, it's also about getting intimately acquainted with the numerous typical wants and needs of singles, couples and empty nesters - the likeliest residents of such buildings. It also means drawing together all the lessons we've learned about creating successful communities.

Within these buildings – and only by scrutinising local neighbourhoods will the right blend be achieved - we should create a balance of residential, commercial, leisure, retail and hospitality. Even childcare, education and health. Outside, the public realm must be equally well considered. Living walls to add colour, cleanse air and support ecosystems. Clever use of space and perspective, with sensitivity to health and happiness, local context and community. We must plan for every journey - from pedestrian to

#### 'While Europe looks to London to take the lead, we can look to places like Chicago and NewYork for inspiration'

bicycle or train or taxi - and how they start and end. Do all of this carefully, and we can create vibrant, integrated, interactive communities where people are proud to live, work and visit.

Above all, we must be mindful of sustainability, longevity and flexibility; it's our responsibility to ensure that what we build today can be affordably adapted for future generations. Doing so will also ensure that the building remains vibrant and fully integrated within the city. NL



## Faith in the future

Fletcher Priest is placing its belief in itself and London as the city goes through unprecedented change - and it has a portfolio of ongoing large-scale work to prove it. By David Taylor

Fletcher Priest is one of those practices whose tentacles extend further than you might think. They don't shout about their work, but it stretches from helping to shift London eastwards with Stratford City and the Olympics to playing some of the key notes in Piano's Central St Giles, to major London projects like Watermark Place, Silvertown and New Ludgate. And with more on their way that include major schemes at high-profile locations in the capital and new offices in the UK and elsewhere, they are at the top of their game.

And yet, says Keith Priest, the affable founder of the practice who started out at Wolff Olins, they sincerely hope they're not, as that would imply that from now on in, the only way is down. Far from it: the 100-strong practice is happy to be continuing its quiet push forwards, bolstered by London's growth, repeat business captured by forging trusting relationships with clients and a thoughtful approach that runs across - and blends - its expertise in masterplans, buildings and interiors.

Our meet-up is with Priest and a representative pair of partners from the 10 on their payroll and 10 other associates - Jonathan Kendall, who heads up urban design and was responsible for Stratford City, and Francesca Gernone, whose work on interiors includes with clients like Google and Unilever. Priest is adamant, though, that this is a team game, and that the firm is held up and taken on by so much talent and bright minds that he wonders if he'd even get an interview today. So, first, how did the practice get to where it is?

The son of a shipbuilder, Priest hails from the north east, the accent still just about evident in his voice 'I still have a bath' he jokes, as opposed to a 'barth'. He trained at the AA before interviewing at design consultancy and identity specialist Wolff Olins. They had been trying to start an architectural strand, hired Michael Fletcher, who was an associate at Farrell Grimshaw at the time, and Priest straight out of college. 'We both discovered that as you work with people and they become friends you discover how other people

perceive architects, and you might be a little sect away on your own,' says Priest. 'Talking in your own language, with your own obsessions.' Simple things like being able to manipulate objects in three dimensions. It was, he says, almost like going to another course, with its attractive side combining all the kinds of work the firm was involved with. Things like the Volkswagen badge and its brand, or forming the hoops on the Audi symbol. Wally (Olins) was a historian, very tough on intellectual discipline, while Michael, is, says Priest, still a friend, someone they work with, and 'a creative genius'. Gerry Whale, a colleague at college who is the drawing powerhouse of the firm, invited himself to join the new outfit too, but the firm lost all its work in its first week through bad luck. Psychologically, says Priest, that and his experiences at Wolff Olins have left their mark on how Fletcher Priest is run today, with its systems set up to deal with life as if it is in recession, and 'immaculate' financial reporting. 'We are incredibly conservatively run and I hope quite the opposite when it comes to the design side', Priest says,



New Ludgate - Fletcher Priest and Sauerbruch Hutton's new City quarter

'We will look at anything and explore everything.'

Happily it doesn't feel like a corporate machine, but a studio, says Gernone.

The structure is an integrated one. 'In starting the practice what we've always tried to do is find people who can lead particular areas but always try and work to try and keep particular areas together', adds Priest.

This is to develop respect for everyone's skills, with expanding pots of expertise integrating across scales and coming together on research. 'We like working with clients who really know what they're doing', Priest says. 'And who challenge us', adds Kendall. The other thing that is important, Kendall says, is that it is a nose-to-tail affair, where delivery is seen as just as important as the concepts behind their work.

What characterises a Fletcher Priest scheme? All sorts of things, says Priest. Take their work with Independent Cinema, for example - the 'Screen on ...' group of arts block venues. They had to build the cinemas on incredibly low budgets to appeal to a thinking



Up in lights - the consented Monico project for Land Securities

audience that still wanted to feel like they were going on a night out rather than to a lecture. 'Apparently Quentin Tarantino likes opening films at Screen on the Green, which cost nothing to do.' But the relationship with the client was strong, and repeated, which is a big theme. 'We tend to talk of the trusted advisor relationship', says Kendall, and the building up of

rapport. It's a way of working. 'And we try to think of the end user, these people who are living or working in the environment', says Gernone.

Nomura's headquarters at 1 Angel Lane (formerly Watermark Place) is another case in point. Fletcher Priest included beehives on the investment bank's roof, and they are also growing vegetables up there, says Priest, wideeyed. 'That was never part of the brief.' But a deep appreciation of context is also key. Designing becomes much easier with extensive research into sites - such as that unearthed on the practice's New Ludgate scheme, where

#### 'We tend to talk of the trusted advisor relationship'

it was discovered that Pocahontas came to prominence in a nearby pub when in London. Or the fact that the first time a rhinoceros was seen in this country was on that site, bizarrely. 'You would never in a million years link those two things together to this City building in Ludgate', smiles Priest. The knowledge has informed the design in that when working on the project with Sauerbruch Hutton, they designed a set-piece square in the scheme at



High watermark - Nomura's No1 Angel Lane home



Bright future - the practice's Silvertown Quays project for First Base/Chelsfield

the Pocahontas pub. 'The idea that there was this concept of a coaching inn which was a very famous centre for writing – it's an important part of Britain's history. It's real life. Offices aren't business-class airline adverts. I'm not sure those people actually exist.'

Other work on the books is wide and varied. The trio run through some edited highlights, including research on the implications of development off the grid, and early projects such as the masterplan with Arup and West 8 for Stratford City and Athletes' Village, which did so much to regenerate the east and the public's conception of the city. 'It was outside people's mental maps', says Kendall. 'This project had a whole life in a completely pre-Olympic world which was all about the transformation of east London and what the Lea Valley could become when, frankly, it was off most people's radar.' It was also about turning the place into one in which people wanted to stay, rather than move out of when

they could. It led to a direct call from Brazil, where Fletcher Priest is working with some of the landowners in Rio on the Olympics and the legacies that will follow. And back in east London it is turning to Silvertown for Stuart Lipton again with a masterplan for a new kind of community with new typologies of 'contemporary ateliers'

## 'I think we are living through a period of incredible change'

in the east of London (working with Wolff Olins again too, fittingly) to showcase innovation. 'It's dealing with use classes that don't exist in the planning system so you've got lawyers sitting scratching their heads and getting exercised', says Kendall. We are, after all, living in ways that don't correspond any more, and the use classes are trailing along five years behind, says Priest.

Elsewhere, there is a fascinating 300ha new town project north of Cambridge, at Waterbeach, which reuses a former MOD airfield site - complete with a man-made lake dug to test amphibious vehicles - in a way that is making government sit up and take notice. Perhaps this type of relatively low-risk brownfield development could be replicable elsewhere? 'This has gone right to the top of government', says Kendall of the 6,500 home scheme for Urban and Civic's Nigel Hugill. If you can't do it here, after all, where can you? And the practice is also doing much more besides. A bike factory for an inventor client 'somewhere in the Home Counties', offices in Victoria, the Monico project for Land Securities at Piccadilly Circus – a complete block behind the famous advertising hoarding - a masterplan for the Chelsfield estate, and an Oxford College with a research institute looking at the impact on pharmaceuticals research of big data. It is starting on site in January

for Derwent with its colourful North Wharf Road scheme, 250,000 sq ft in Paddington which extends the quayside into the reception, and provides column-free spaces above. This is, says Gernone, the next generation of the developer's White Collar Factory idea. It is also working on White Chapel for Derwent, a major reworking of the RBS's Aldgate Union building into what Gernone describes as a 'go-to place' and destination with Soho House-type hospitality merging with the workplace, and a huge basement stretching to three levels of concrete 'caverns'.

Then there is First Street in Manchester, a low-cost, innovative workplace scheme on a major site, joining Mecanoo's new HOME arts centre, across the road from where the old Hacienda nightclub once was.

The construction process here is of note, and leads Priest to comment that people's perceptions of the building industry are very different to the 'phenomenal' reality. Are architects similarly misunderstood? 'I don't think they realise we do quite as much as we do from beginning to end, from conceptualisation right through to how people operate in buildings', he says. 'I mean, these people are very bright!' Then again, the public's knowledge of world-famous architects (he hates the term 'starchitects') makes life easier for the Fletcher Priests of this world because they get things on the agenda and have a voice.

So what of the future? It looks rosy, with new offices for the practice potentially on the horizon here and 'a long way abroad' to join those already in London, Cologne and Riga, the last of which Hanseatic cities it has created a city plan for. Rosy too, for the market Fletcher Priest operates in in UK and the capital.

'I think we are living through a period of incredible change', says Priest, 'something bigger than the Industrial Revolution. Everything seems up for grabs – whether the grid exists, how manufacturing works, how pharmaceuticals work, how health and education work.' And because of our education system, young population, and immigration ('a blessing'), he believes the UK is in a position to quickly move on from the 'pain' of recent years. 'I think we're incredibly well-equipped to capitalise. I might be hopelessly optimistic' Priest grins, 'but I think it is all in place to do that.' NL



Model housing - Fletcher Priest's masterplan for Waterbeach, a new town on former MOD airfield site north of Cambridge



## London responds to housing 'emergency'

How are the capital's brightest and best responding to the housing crisis?

London's housing crisis has turned into an 'emergency', with an even more pressing need for new tools to be found to speed up delivery.

That was one of the findings of an NLA half-day conference as part of its season interrogating the issue and kicked off by deputy mayor Richard Blakeway, who revealed a worrying element of the now-familiar population growth figures – 8.6m-10m by the end of the next decade. This is that there is a net outflow of every age group apart from those in their 20s, he said, and London is experiencing tenure change, with a reduction in owner occupation. Furthermore, the capital offers a stark contrast to the

#### 'The 'pivotal shift' from rent to home ownership is a problem in putting all eggs in one basket'

US where those who spend a third of their income on rent are defined as 'rent-burdened': Londoners spend half of their net income on rent. It was striking, too, said Blakeway, that there are some 260,000 units with planning permission, but London is only building 27,000 per annum. Closing that gap will require 'radical thinking', and more boroughs emulating Tower Hamlets, which is building more than any other – a third of its stock having been built in the last decade. The GLA is responding with more of a spatial approach to its funding programme exemplified by Housing Zones. 'But we need to focus again on how we get land to the market', said Blakeway.

GLA executive director of housing and land David Lunts said we need to get up to 49,000 homes per year to play catch-up and that the only time that was achieved was in the inter-war years; since then constraints have emerged in the planning system. And with 22 per cent of London given over to green-belt land and 15 per cent to Conservation Areas there is '37 per cent of London we really cannot build on any more'. Another shift is that building on smaller sites less than 0.25ha is responsible for 17 per cent of London's homebuilding, when at the beginning of the Millennium it was 40 per cent, while some boroughs such as Kensington and Chelsea are seriously lagging at 1 per cent growth. The pipeline will be broadly east, and the GLA expects more high-rise, with more homes coming through the London Land Commission and intensification.

The 'pivotal shift' from rent to home ownership is a problem in putting all eggs in one basket, said L&O chief executive David Montague, but government moves in the sector are creating 'massive challenges' to housing associations, and many are simply fleeing the capital. 'I think this crisis is becoming an emergency and we desperately need to do something about it', he said. Barriers include materials and skills shortages, said LSE emeritus professor of housing economics Christine Whitehead, as well as a longer term problem of 'a really, really bad building industry' with 'God awful productivity'. Potential answers include more powers for the Mayor and a close look at the green belt, Whitehead

suggested, as well as the Greater South East looking 'a little healthier'.

The conference also heard from Igloo chief executive Chris Brown, who suggested more custom build – seen as 'normal' elsewhere – might be a worthy antidote to the 'evilness' of the underperforming volume housebuilders. New approaches of the kind shown by Ivan Harbour of Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners in Y:Cube, the practice's 36 unit modular housing project for the YMCA in Merton, could also aid speed to site, while the land-



The LSE's Christine Whitehead



Deputy mayor Richard Blakeway

NLA's Insight Study 'New Ideas for Housing' was supported by Programme Sponsors AECOM, Argent, Barratt London, Carter Jonas, Conran + Partners, GL Hearn, L&Q, Pinnacle Group and WSP.

Sponsors were Barton Willmore, CGL, Landscape Institute and Stitch.

hungry suburbs could take greater incremental intensification and transformation, said HTA partner Riëtte Oosthuizen and Pollard Thomas Edwards senior partner Andrew Beharrell. A greater use of innovative materials such as crosslaminated timber could also help the housing push in offering a sustainable, speedy and stylish approach, said

dRMM Architects' Sadie Morgan, as has been adopted by Lend Lease at Elephant and Castle.

All of which, allied to the NLA exhibition, offer timely ideas to chew over by the new London Mayoral candidates, said Lunts. 'This is the first election where unambiguously, housing is the big political issue', he said. NL



Intensifying the suburbs - HTA's Supurbia concept envisages homeowners gradually taking up development opportunities

## Reinventing the mansion block

Perhaps the mansion block could provide one solution to London's burgeoning need for housing at higher densities?



Maccreanor Lavington's modern take on the mansion block idea

London could turn to the mansion block as one answer to its housing crisis, with modern variants on the typology created to provide high density homes in both the centre and potentially revitalised suburbs.

That was one of the sentiments to emerge from a packed breakfast talk at the NLA, kicked off by Claire Bennie and her look at the lessons 1930s mansion blocks could provide. Those

schemes include the one Bennie herself lives in - Ruskin Park House in Camberwell, an Art Deco scheme of 241 flats in two blocks. Its success is in part due to its communal gardens - 'a great community condenser', pub, and other facilities, with densities of 111 dwellings per hectare.

Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands director Alex Lifschutz said that with economics and demographics changing,

flexibility is key, and the 'long life, loose fit' principle should be applied to buildings so that they can flex to different uses. 'We have to assume we don't know much about what's happening at the moment and certainly not in future', said Lifschutz. The practice is designing two towers at East Village which allow for this flexibility with their central core allowing the designer to be 'nimble' and adapt for different configurations. This includes a new market of shared living, where a larger living space is required, and is handled by balcony space that has been 'encouraged' into the living rooms.

East Village is certainly adopting a principle applied by the Great Estates and the mansion blocks they built, said Get Living London chairman Stuart Corbyn, in that they offer an investment in the long-term, despite the 'endless challenges' thrown up by politicians. 'What we're trying to do is build up a community by having all the facilities that people might feel they need to live', he said. And certainly the mansion block offers an urban scale with an attractive and convenient density, said consultant Rosemarie MacQueen. They also have 'this amazing quality of combining urban frontage with signifier of domesticity', said Alison Brooks, creative director of Alison Brooks Architects, who is working with LDS on six and seven-storey blocks for 229 new dwellings and, importantly, frequent ground entrances, in South Kilburn. Or perhaps, said Maccreanor Lavington founding director Richard Lavington, with over 600,000 semidetached homes in London, the suburbs could be where the focus should lie. His practice's 'multidetached' idea seeks to intensify the suburbs on a plot-by-plot basis. If five per cent of the semis in outer London could be replaced with four-storey detached mansion blocks, some 81,000 new 'multi-detached' homes could be created, facilitated by local development orders, said Lavington. NL

## **NY-LON: Making housing affordable**

What does 'affordable' mean in housing today? That was the question posed to, and addressed by, speakers from New York and London in NLA's latest NY-LON live video link up, held at the offices of KPF on both sides of the Atlantic



London calling - the NY-LON link up

The seminar, organised in association with New York's Forum + Institute for Urban Design, was introduced by KPF principal Jill Lerner, who outlined the firm's work with New York City Housing Association and creation of mixeduse neighbourhoods for New York's needy.

Centre for London director Ben Rogers outlined London's historical position on housing that has led to large areas becoming 'simply unaffordable' to Londoners and a decline in ownership, with 48 per cent of people in their 20s now renting privately. There was a 'huge agenda' now around new infrastructure and using transport infrastructure to unlock land, added Rogers, and London at least has a good story to tell in that between 2000 and 2020 London's rail capacity will have increased by 20 per cent. But there is still more to do, with the NHS, the boroughs, TfL, and Network Rail all holding significant amounts of land that could help the housing crisis.

Brenda Rosen, president and CEO of Common Ground showed how her organisation helps to create housing for low income and special needs individuals in NY, with 3,000 units now under its belt. The company operates an integrated model, with no differentiation between the housing it provides for people from the streets or those in work. 'Living side by side and learning from each other is one of the reasons we succeed in providing help to as many people as possible', said Rosen.

Back in London, Pocket founder and CEO Marc Vlessing said that

if we have a housing crisis it is one for the squeezed middle, with the term 'intermediate housing' not even making an appearance in the National Planning Framework. 'There is a real mismatch between policy and socioeconomic reality in these big world cities,' said Vlessing. Pocket is now building 200 homes in 12 months, 400 in the 12 months after that and 600 in two-three years, making it the fifth largest housebuilder in London. 'Crazy!', said Vlessing. Single people are leaving London, which is becoming



Pocket's Marc Vlessing - the crisis is hitting the squeezed middle

an issue for firms like Vodafone and their recruitment strategies, and shared ownership is anyway a 'clunky way of fixing the problem', and certainly not the answer for families. Pocket's model offers 25-40 homes on plots which it can price at a discount of at least 20 per cent because it is tied to income restriction codified annually by the Mayor. And crucially the units are kept 'in the gene pool' if they are sold on because resellers need a certificate saying that the new buyer is also eligible. The product is designed 'to within an inch of its life' and ahead of the market in terms of policy, added Vlessing. 'These global hubs are only going to work if we innovate, stretch policy and work with each other', he said.

#### 'There is a real mismatch between policy and socioeconomic reality in these big world cities'

The conference also heard from speakers including New York's deputy commissioner for neighbourhood strategies, housing preservation and development, Daniel Hernandez, on the city's five year, 10 borough plan to build 200,000 units of high quality affordable housing. Finally, from the UK, Islington Council's service director planning and development Karen Sullivan said her borough was at the extreme end of the affordability challenge but has a 'remarkable record' in delivering new homes, with 9,500 built over the last five years. The authority owns 'huge swathes of valuable land in central London' which it is developing with little public subsidy to deliver new affordable homes. The strategy is to deliver homes ordinary people need; include community facilities such as schools and play spaces and focus on good design. 'Exceptional architecture buys acceptance', she said. NL

### **Postcard from Europe**

Claire Bennie spent two months travelling around Europe looking at the best examples of new housing. What did she learn?



It's official: London is another planet. And it's a very hot one, with a frenzied atmosphere, fertile soil, friendly inhabitants and a strong gravitational pull. But is it now on an eccentric orbit, spiralling very quickly into the sun? My recent two-month rail trip around northern Europe's major cities looking at new housing revealed two contrasting phenomena. First, all of these cities are undergoing the same 0.5-1 per cent yearly increase in population as London, and they are reinventing their former industrial areas at a rapid pace to accommodate this change. But second, there is a



Canal dreams - detachable, floatable 'balconies' in Copenhagen



Going Dutch - 'good ordinary' in Amsterdam

level of property speculation in the UK capital which simply does not exist elsewhere. I had assumed that the Dutch and Swedes might lean toward a more socially egalitarian model of urban regeneration, but when other city officials including in France and Germany confirmed that 'the city sets the land price' and that developers are chosen for city sites on quality alone, London's model suddenly appeared to be at the far end of a spectrum. Comparisons can be odious, and also dangerous of course: London's size, Mayoral powers (and hence income), tiers of governance and low public land ownership set it apart from its mainland cousins. But when those cousins are regularly achieving 50 per cent affordable housing (including resident-led schemes), some high quality design, rapid delivery and a better level of public engagement, don't we need to question our policies and approach?

## 'Perhaps London's liveability USP is its green rather than its blue assets'

Several cities have compelling waterfront locations which are now being transformed to combine pared-down dock activity with new higher-tech industry and housing: Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Stockholm all enable memorable inner city waterside living experiences. A few days staying in a canalside apartment with a detachable motorised balcony was an unforgettable experience, including an ad hoc trip with other balcony owners out into Copenhagen harbour for a swim. London does not benefit from its 'playable' waterfront amenity, nor does it make visible its industrial activity which all happens out of sight at the mouth of the river. Perhaps London's liveability USP is its green rather than its blue assets: its parks, trees and gardens and not

its river. Greenery, whether public, communal or private, is where we need to focus more investment in London's new housing schemes. Planning is often weak in respect of landscape design, which can get watered down as projects complete: do we need more champions of open space in planning departments? The chances appear slim as council budgets are cut to the quick, so it is developers who will have to care more.

Self-starting, eco-driven schemes are commonplace across the water. Meeting entrepreneurial residents in Brussels and also seeing large-scale public sector land-led schemes in Utrecht and Amsterdam which have successfully integrated resident-led housing has forced me to wake up to the potential of this tenure, both in terms of self-determination and affordability. London's land prices make co-housing schemes here

Prefabs sprout - 'Brutopia' self-build in Brussels

difficult, but maybe public land release will facilitate it for the many people who wish to innovate in this way. Freiburg's Vauban district feels like the most successful of these schemes (its high street was alive and thriving), with others (Spreefeld, Ginko Eco, Bottière) needing more time or help and probably a revisit in a few years. Cars and parking still dominate many discussions about, and designs for, housing (even green communities), which is a shame but a reality. Vauban managed to attract enough residents who either did not own a car or were prepared to pay a premium to park it some way from their home. Could this ever work in London?

#### 'Self-starting, eco-driven schemes are commonplace across the water'

Balconies, awnings and signage were details which particularly caught my eve on the Continent. But there is a wider issue of quality with which I must conclude. The Netherlands' substantial new build housing output is simply outstanding compared with London's: Niall McLaughlin's Darbishire Place for Peabody would look ordinary (in a good way) in Holland. Housing is not all about the individual resident. It is not all about the landlords and their preoccupations. It is about both of those, but also about what these buildings offer their city, and what they say about the aspirations and values of that city. I am frankly not surprised that UK citizens are turning more and more to NIMBYism when what they see going up and then what they have to look at every day for the rest of their lives is not only unaffordable but also ugly and totally without craft - can there be a worse combination? Solutions on a return postcard please! NL

Claire's blog is at www.bennieontheloose.com



#### **Homes for all**

Homelessness in London needs a joined-up approach for it to be tackled, and allowing charities to use meanwhile spaces could be a good place to start, argue Levitt Bernstein architects Hanna Benihoud and Zohra Chiheb

Over the last five years, the number of people sleeping rough in London has more than doubled. Against a backdrop of increasing development across the capital, the housing crisis continues to intensify and more and more people are finding themselves homeless.

For last year's London Festival of Architecture we took the opportunity to understand more about homelessness within the capital and its connection to architecture. Our *City of Stories* installation created a platform for people to better understand homelessness, by talking to those with experience of living rough and those working for homelessness charities. It became a forum for promoting debate and conversation on a difficult topic – one that needs a joined-up approach if any progress is going to be made.

We collaborated with Kairos on *City* of *Stories*, and hearing of their humble beginnings over 20 years ago, it struck us that local authorities could learn

from what they and other charities have done to support those who need their help. Starting off by providing food to the homeless, Kairos quickly realised that it was not enough to make a real difference – shelter was desperately needed. Slowly, properties were adapted and transformed to provide essential housing and facilities for the charity, which now has a detox hostel, rehab care home, move-on houses, day programme and aftercare programme. The importance of being in a safe and comfortable environment while going through the rehabilitation process is obvious, but equally important is the need for the charity to have space from which to operate and administer care.

Organisations such as Kairos, CRASH, St Mungo's Broadway, Centrepoint, Crisis and Shelter are doing incredible things with very little funding and in very little space. We think there is an opportunity for meanwhile-spaces to be made available for these charities to carry out their vital work by replicating Kairos's very simple model.

Local authorities could audit their assets and identify suitable vacant buildings; whether they are awaiting development, between tenants or just generally underused, they could provide essential space for charities to operate from.

#### 'There is an opportunity for local authorities to learn from charities and utilise their assets to help the most vulnerable'

Sites would need to be examined to understand exactly what they are appropriate for, and it is important to note that not every space will be suitable for accommodation. The spaces, whether homes for people or bases for charities, need to be of high quality to reflect the importance of the work that goes on within them. Meanwhile-spaces could be donated by councils, designed by architects, delivered by charities like CRASH and run by charities like Kairos, collectively creating muchneeded support for the homeless.

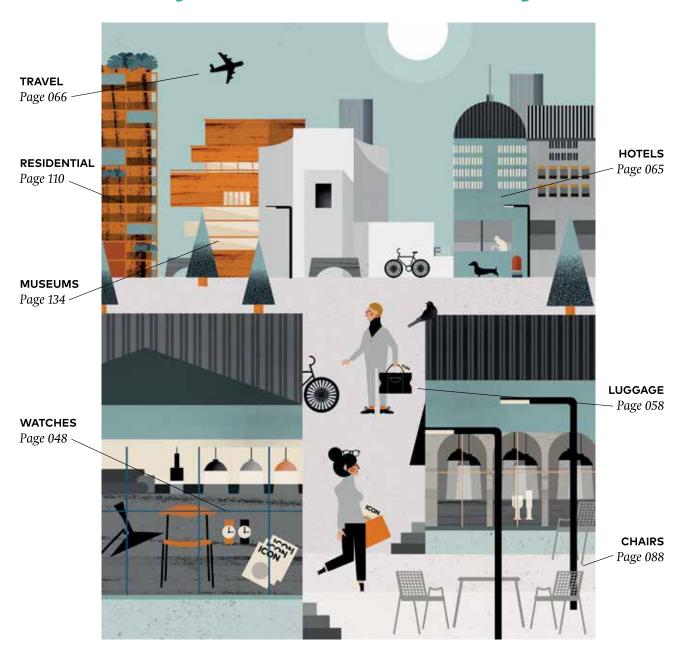
As homelessness continues to rise, it is clear that there is no easy solution to this problem, but there is an opportunity for local authorities to learn from charities and to utilise their assets to help the most vulnerable within their boroughs. It's about making the most of what's available in the light of damaging cuts to this sector to continue to help those who so desperately need it. ML



Making a difference - Levitt Bernstein creating 'City of Stories'

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Design worth knowing

## A spur for regeneration

Haringey Council leader Cllr Claire Kober spells out why she thinks the authority's new Development Vehicle could unlock the future for Tottenham and beyond



All change - proposals to revamp Tottenham Hale station

London will lose its claim to be one of the world's greatest cities unless the people who live and work here can afford to take advantage of all it has to offer – irrespective of their income or circumstances.

Research by the Centre for London demonstrates this isn't the case for a fifth of the capital's population, and it's vital we address this imbalance to make sure everyone has access to opportunities they feel are currently out of reach.

As earnings flat-line and living costs like transport, childcare – and most crucially – housing keep soaring, too

many people find themselves working hard to stand still, and for most, home ownership is at best a dream – and social housing is under sustained attack by government policy.

Despite the financial and bureaucratic straitjacket the government has placed on local authorities' housing ambitions, it's long been our priority in Haringey to build a range of modern, high-quality homes that also support long-term economic growth.

Whether its Premier League football at Spurs, the stunning waters of the Lee Valley – London's largest open space –

or an industrial heritage that continues to flourish through independent manufacturing, Tottenham has a strong history to build on.

Our exciting regeneration plans will shape Tottenham's next chapter, making it one of London's best places to live and work. Together with Wood Green, we'll build more than 15,000 new homes and create up to 10,000 new jobs in the next decade.

Change is already under way. We've recently seen the award-winning restoration of the old Town Hall, hundreds of new homes and education facilities in north Tottenham and a boom in artisan food businesses coming to Haringey.

## 'We must consider innovative ways that public land can contribute to space for new homes in our city'

But how can councils lead this change as budgets are slashed and national housing policy like the Right to Buy extension and council rent cut rapidly erode social housing stock and the money we need to invest in new homes?

We've built a strong partnership with the Greater London Authority, government and the private sector that shows what can be achieved through



Cllr Claire Kober: Haringey is the future



New homes at Lawrence Road, Tottenham

pooling resources and commitment. The new Housing Zone developed through that partnership at Tottenham Hale will deliver almost 2,000 new homes with a substantial number of these being for affordable rent or sale.

We've also set up our own shared ownership register and established a not-for-profit lettings agency to offer more protection from rogue landlords and reduce excessive fees for private tenants - who make up more than a third of Haringey's population.

But if low- and middle-income earners are to find an affordable place to live, we must also consider innovative ways that public land can contribute to space for new homes in our city.

Too often, councils simply sell off land to developers, losing control of the quality of development and then facing invidious choices through the planning process. Similarly, we'd need to borrow an impossible £1.4billion to build the homes we need ourselves.

Our new Development Vehicle is a fresh approach.

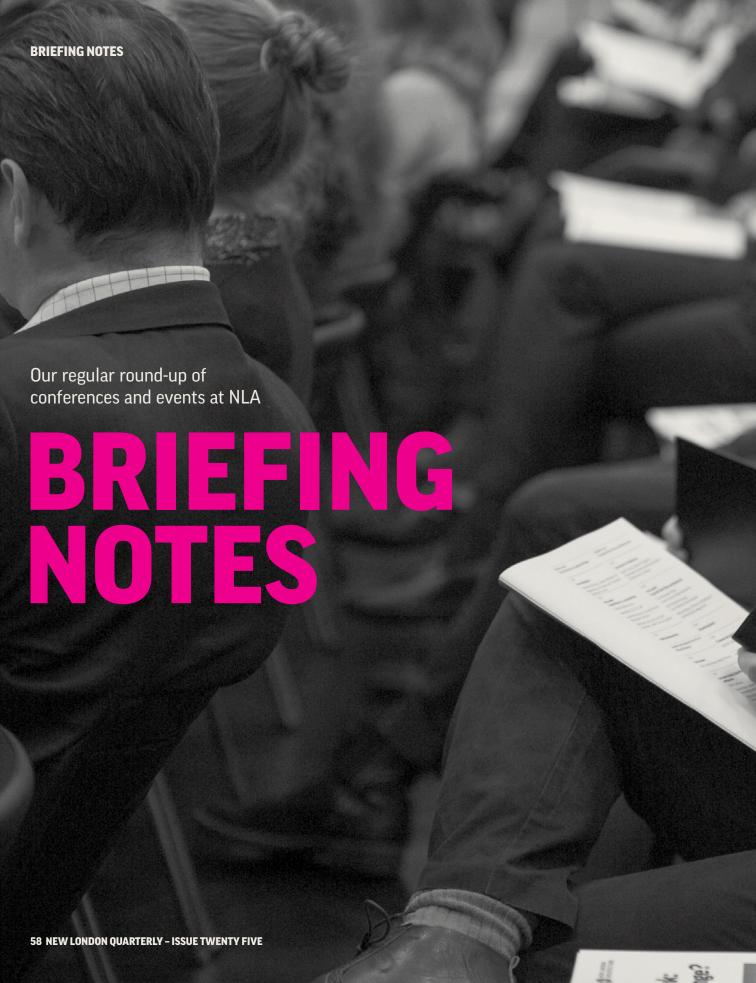
Rather than handing our land to private firms, we'll set up a new company to manage development on council land - whether housing estates, commercial land or office space – owned half by us and half by a private-sector partner.

This will bring the funding and expertise of specialists, while keeping a long-term stake in any development - giving us control over the design and pace of new buildings and a share of profits to reinvest into new affordable homes and facilities.

No council has tried a collaboration on this scale before, and this month, we're launching a major procurement process to find the right partner to help us lead long-term change. Haringey is the future of London. NL



The High Road West development in north Tottenham will include a new residential neighbourhood and 'Peacock Park'





#### **ON LOCATION**

## Croydon gears up for 'snowball effect'

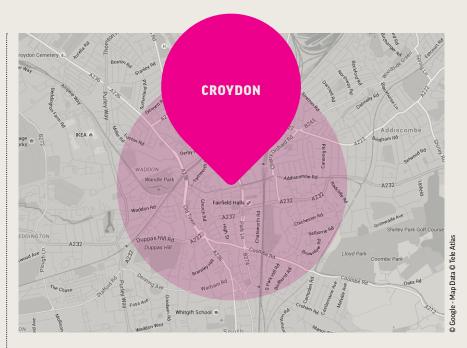
Sponsored by GL Hearn and in association with LB Croydon

Croydon is starting to reap the benefits of the kind of approach taken at Stratford and the Olympics with a series of residential, retail and commercial projects taking shape. And as London is faced with the prospect of a million more people by 2030, the area is busy creating the right infrastructure and facilities to cope, while maintaining its heart and focus as a liveable community. The result is a 'snowballing effect' as developers and investors witness real change happening on the ground.

Those were some of the many principles espoused at the NLA On



Aiming high - The Tower at Saffron Square



Location conference held in East Croydon, just across the road from where the new Boxpark is taking shape, and where the 2 million square foot of offices, residential and retail that makes up Ruskin Square is now on course.

Croydon deputy leader cllr Alison Butler said that the place was blessed with 'absolute gems' and that the private sector was now buying into its regeneration potential, with the highest rate of office take-up in 10 years and a 49 per cent spike in tech sector firms since 2011. Housing starts are significantly above the Mayor's target, added Butler, and Croydon also aims to rejuvenate its cultural offer while talking to universities and education providers about their plans for the area. But it was also crucial, she said, to cater for the existing community. 'You won't find better people than those coming from Croydon.'

For LB Croydon's executive director of place, Jo Negrini, the key is to create a 'liveable place where people want to dwell', with 'the right kind of growth' aided by having the right infrastructure in place, both social and physical. To this end, the area

needs £500m of infrastructure and the council is pitching to central government to provide on a TIF model to provide borrowing costs. But public realm improvements are also key, as is creating an arts quarter where people 'can hang out at night'. 'There are too many examples in London where development has happened and the place has been left behind', said Negrini.

## 'There are too many examples in London where development has happened and the place has been left behind'

Arup's director of planning Jerome Frost said there were similarities in Croydon's rapid rise with that of the Olympics, and that city leaders in the north working on the so-called Northern Powerhouse were all asking how Croydon was doing it. But most important to success and the certainty, said Frost, was the beginning of change, and the 'snowballing effect' that comes from seeing progress on



Coming soon - Boxpark opens its Ruskin Square outpost later this year



All change - Croydon aims to become a 'liveable place'

key schemes on the ground. Arup has helped in this by creating a 'dashboard' or shared platform to let all stakeholders see progress made on schemes so far, in real time.

The conference also heard from speakers including Bob Alllies of Allies and Morrison on the work his practice is doing on the Whitgift and Centrale

shopping centres and his 'urban acupuncture' work in the old town. Allies also reflected on the notion that on tall buildings people tend to pay far more attention to the 'hats' - their silhouettes - than their 'shoes' - how they hit the ground.

A panel discussion included Westfield development director

Steve Yewman expressing his delight at last week's confirmation of the CPO, allowing work on the centre to begin; GL Hearn's planning director James Cook commending the 'prodevelopment council' and responsive planning department doing so much to facilitate regeneration, and GLA's executive director (development and environment) Fiona Fletcher-Smith saying that Croydon could have the capacity and appetite to help with a 50,000 housing-units target London is getting nowhere near.

Finally, a series of speedtalks from Croydon practitioners included Boxpark CEO Roger Wade on progress on his scheme, which aims to provide the 'glue' for why people want to live and work in Croydon, featuring 20,000sq ft of event space inspired by Covent Garden. Rick Mather Architects partner Stuart Cade detailed the conservation-led regeneration of the Fairfield Halls, which aims to improve connectivity and tie together cultural assets in Croydon, while François Mazoudier, managing partner of Tech Leaders, showed how the place has become a powerhouse for tech: 'If they start here, they are going to stay and hire here', he said. RISE Gallery CEO Kevin Zuchowski-Morrison showed how his commercial gallery - with a social agenda - had helped to lift footfall in the area, increase occupancy by 60 per cent, and draw more media attention than any other Crovdon initiative.

And while Studio Weave founder Maria Smith took the audience on a story of Croydon's optimism and excitement, Studio Jump director and co-founder Simon Jordan showed a little of the inspiration his practice aims to provide on Exchange Square and a 1851 water pumping station with a tour of projects including Campus Madrid for Google. 'The idea is to create a destination', said Jordan. That could be latter-day Croydon's motif too.

#### **ON LOCATION**

# The South Bank show - London's cultural powerhouse grows up

Sponsored by CBRE, Charles Russell Speechlys and Futurecity

The South Bank has now firmly established itself as a viable location for business, residential and retail, catalysed initially by the Jubilee Line Extension and cheaper rents, and latterly by its own critical mass. Now it is working to pull its reputation as a cultural powerhouse further into the boroughs and along the river with a new 'Waterline' concept in a bid to create destinations and aid better placemaking.

Those were some of the headline thoughts to emerge from a fascinating NLA On Location conference held at Rambert's headquarters building on Upper Ground.

News UK director of communications and corporate affairs Guto Harri kicked off, saying that 'the big advantage of this neck of the woods is that aesthetically it is just so beautiful'. But it was its accessibility that helped News UK decide to relocate to the 'Baby Shard', where newspapers are each on their own floors, and where a corporate



Jude Kelly: placemaking is the spirit of place



transformation has taken place, aided by design and better facilities and blessed by attractions for staff out of the office that include Borough Market. Indeed, The Shard is itself another viable and iconic landmark to 'anchor' the area, said Harri, and was clearly a draw to other illustrious tenants. 'The Shangri-La would never come to London before because they needed a cloud-capped peak', he said.

With 24 million tourists hitting the South Bank each year, this is an exciting time for the 'vibrant' area, said CBRE chairman of residential Mark Collins, with Southwark outperforming the market and 64 schemes in the pipeline. 'The British buyers are back', he said. Offices are similarly buoyant, said CBRE senior director Dan Hanmer, with alignment with the rest of London being the key theme, a move begun by the opening of the JLE in 1999. South Bank attracts a diverse central London worker, said Hanmer, with rents now 90 per cent of those in the City and expected to hit 95 per cent in the near future, albeit with a lack of office stock coming through.

Futurecity founder Mark Davy said the area could mirror some of the success of the High Line in New York, which had changed from a cultural line to an economic one, generating huge investment. The 'Waterline' is the case for a new cultural line between The Shard and Battersea Power Station with the idea of the South Bank as the beating heart, with its cultural energy driving ideas.

#### 'It is the personality of the place that makes people want to live on the South Bank'

It is the 'personality' of the place that makes people want to live on the South Bank, said Southbank Centre's artistic director Jude Kelly, with placemaking about the spirit of a place. Perhaps the infrastructure is not there in Vauxhall right now, said DSDHA director Deborah Saunt, but the joining up of conversations between commerce, planning, transport and culture is very new and welcome, said Covent Garden Market Authority chair Pam Alexander.

The conference also heard from speakers including Southwark's cllr Mark Williams, who said his borough



National pride - the South Bank's cultural powerhouse makes it a key draw



On the 'Waterline' - the case for a cultural line from The Shard to Battersea

had delivered the second most affordable homes in the country and Allies and Morrison's Artur Carulla, who argued that the most critical change factor for the South Bank is its proximity and connectivity to Elephant & Castle. 'It will change the perception of the South Bank and stop people thinking of the South Bank in a linear way', he said.

Battersea Power Station Development Company head of design and placemaking David Twohig said the development had a 'leg up' over everything else owing to its special identity and character, and had sought to create a mixed-use district from the start. Placemaking was a concept that is taken so lightly and thrown around, said Twohig, and is more than just static sculptures in open spaces. But forming relationships between private companies and cultural institutions will be one of the keys to creating places going forward.

#### **ON LOCATION**

## 'Futureproofing' the City

Sponsored by Berwin Leighton Paisner and in association with the City of London Corporation

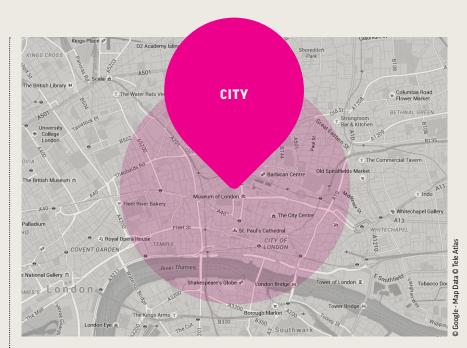
The City of London can 'futureproof' itself by continuing its push to become less of a financial services monoculture and more of a heterogeneous, 'soft' environment with a mix of businesses, retail and improved public realm. But it will be helped in that journey by politicians making quick and clear decisions over Europe, visas, regulation and airport capacity.

Those were some of the main points to emerge from an NLA On Location

## 'The City has space – it's just a lot of it is called pavement'

event held at the Guildhall, which was kicked off by the City of London Corporation chairman of the policy and resources committee Mark Boleat.

Boleat said there were big issues affecting the UK, London and the City that included a decision on whether to leave Europe in two years' time, with uncertainty on that already affecting businesses in their decisions to relocate, grow or extend their leases. Another impact is from regulation. 'There is no point having the safest financial regulation in the world if we don't have any financial institutions', said Boleat. And London was losing out to other parts of the world on the too-restrictive visa situation, said Boleat. But of massive importance was the need for





Guildhall gathering - the City conference in full flow

government to be held to its promise of making a decision on airport capacity by the end of the year.

For Harry Badham, UK head of development at AXA Real Estate, buildings can be future-proofed by making them adaptable to the fast-changing business world, and by recognising that people are at the heart of them. But the City must become a world exemplar on transport, said Badham, and technology allows us

to consolidate deliveries in a way we couldn't 10 years ago. 'The City has space – it's just a lot of it is called pavement.' It also needs to capitalise on its uniquely 'joined up' local authority, and embrace diversity in its environment. 'I think we have reached peak Pret', he said.

Future-proofing the City will also be aided by infrastructure moves such as Crossrail, a Bank station upgrade – both inside and shortly with the road junction outside - and attending to an electricity requirement that is equivalent to a 'small town', said the City of London's policy and performance director Paul Beckett. And improving IT, connectivity and adapting the street network to cater for more walking and cycling will also be important to improve the public realm.

Culture, meanwhile, is a key part of the City of tomorrow, said Barbican Centre managing director Sir Nicholas Kenyon, citing the Museum of London's proposed move to Smithfield.

But London's success as a 'magnet' in a business sense is down to its freedom to succeed, said Pringle Brandon Perkins + Will managing director Jack Pringle. This is putting pressure on the City, but companies are recognising that in a fierce fight for talent, recreation is now part of working life, as a quid pro

quo for checking their emails first thing in the morning and work extending throughout the day. 'So companies are changing their environments to chase the talent', he said. 'Apologies to Derwent but the City of London is London's white collar factory.'

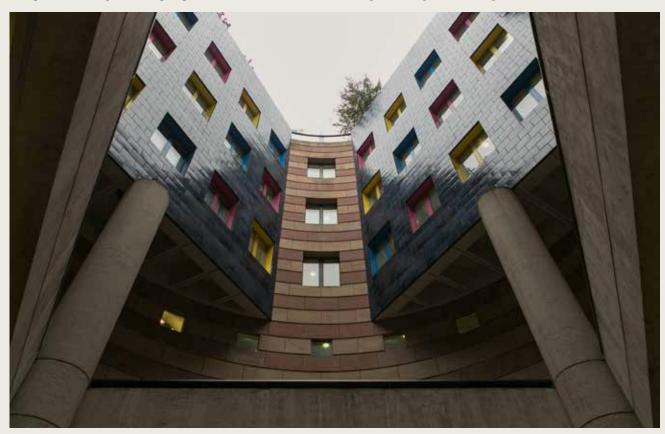
Transforming Workplace's Despina Katsikakis said that where organisations 30 years ago looked on themselves as 'corporate islands', now they are much more 'open networks', with a need to change the old model of power and control to newer models around culture and community. 'But a really important word in that is authentic', said Katsikakis.

For Rohan Silva, co-founder of Second Home, this authenticity means ditching the football tables, bean bags and table-tennis tables in the office and instead, as Google is doing,



Pringle - companies battling for talent with design

bringing nature into the building. This is particularly important in active design, said Katsikakis, with the big game changer set to be Well Building Certification, concentrating on people rather than buildings. 'We're going to see that as a behavioural change driver', said Katsikakis. 'I think it's coming from all different directions.'



Shipshape - James Stirling's No. 1 Poultry was completed in 1997 but turned down for listing late last year

#### **OFFICES**

## Offices 'seismic shift' under way to attract talent

Sponsored by RTKL and The International Quarter

Office design is in the middle of a 'sea change' and 'seismic shift' as companies across the capital use architecture to try to win the battle for talent.

That was one of the headline views to emerge from NLA's half-day conference 'Retaining London's talent: how well-designed workplace can help'. Held fittingly at the top floor of Nabarro's City offices, itself used by the law firm to entice graduates and other new recruits, the event was introduced by Nabarro partner Marie Scott, who said that real estate was 'in the very fabric of the firm'. The company's new offices at London Wall, which it moved to a year ago,

never fail to lift the mood and morale of its staff, said Scott, and its views, daylight and layout still cause 'a buzz' for its staff and are a relevant factor when trying to recruit new talent.

The Financial Conduct Authority's property and estates manager Peter Hewitt-Penfold said that the office of today is 'part of the total value proposition', and its new Rogers Stirk Harbour-designed building at Stratford's International Quarter needs to be accommodation fit for four generations of staff. Younger staff were looking for café culture, while the FCA is also 'empowering' its staff to work away from the office, not just at home. The public realm has a 'massive' impact on retaining staff, so what better place could there be than the gateway to the Olympic Park, asked Hewitt-Penfold. Another big driver is wellbeing, with a gym, doctors and occupational physiotherapy on site, as well as quiet spaces for intensive work like a library and collaborative spaces. 'I am absolutely convinced that pride in a building equals productivity', said Hewitt-Penfold.

Talent, said Lendlease head of offices Kevin Chapman, is a crucial ingredient for business success, and providing a variety of workspaces is the key to attracting it. Stratford's offer is as 'London's feel-good workplace', with The International Quarter featuring buildings with '100 per cent fresh air' in a bid to eliminate sick building syndrome and keep people alert, as well as staggered atria, terraces and staircases emphasised to encourage mobility.

But it is in the area of co-working, said The Office Group's CEO Charlie Green, that the most marked changes are happening. 'I have a problem with the term 'growing trend' because it implies a slow, steady incline towards something, and actually what we are seeing is a profound, radical shift in the way we work', he said. One example of this is Henry Wood House, said Green, in which the firm has created 'an ecosystem for how people work'. With rents in London 'going nuts' and people working longer and harder, we are becoming more

## 'What we are seeing is a profound, radical shift in the way we work'

demanding about our workspace, more discerning, and today's is much more of a sharing culture. 'We feel that offices are a forgotten sector. We feel we are in the hospitality service ... I don't think it is overstating it to say that there is a revolution happening in the way we work.'

The conference also heard from Matt Yeoman of Henry Wood House architect Buckley Grey Yeoman, who declared that the days of TMT are now 'absolutely gone' – 'it is generational specific', with occupiers' penchants turning to authenticity, character and the cool and clever. This was easy in existing, but more of a challenge in new buildings. 'This generation has changed office design and we won't go back to tick boxes,' he said. And while RTKL director Paul Dunn said the modern workplace



The Office Group's Charlie Green presents Henry Wood House - an 'ecosystem for how people work'

had to deal with stress as much as physical fitness, and AKT II director Steve Toon showed the role of the engineer in workplace, Cordless Consultants' Tracy Badau showed how in Australia it is the banks that are leading the way in creating offices to support a more diverse workforce. Finally, BNP Paribas director Nick Rock said the market could broadly be split into 'new school' and 'old school', with media tech continuing to grow and footloose occupiers looking to new areas of the city and the current pipeline unlikely to meet demand. 'If you build it they will come', said Rock, 'as long as it's the right spec and near to good transport.'

#### **EDUCATION**

## Schools learn lessons for 35,000 places shortfall

Sponsored by Tobermore

London is facing a shortfall of almost 35,000 secondary school places by 2020, a significant drop in capital funding and mounting pressures caused by 'bolting on' forms of entry to existing establishments - not to mention staff accommodation problems bubbling away in the background.

So, how are schools responding to ease the crisis? A half-day conference held at NLA sought to find out, kicked off by Creative Wit owner Dr Sharon Wright, who branded the scale of the problem 'challenging' and 'quite overwhelming'.

Adding bulge classes and forms of entry, said Wright, has a considerable impact on the community and expanding too fast can result in



Mixed classes - King's Cross's school plus residential model at the Plimsoll Building

standards dropping. Free schools face issues of integration into an area authorities need to be strategic, not political about working with sponsors to open new free schools in the right places, while there should also be better national and regional planning. 'A proper funding model is needed that reflects the scale of the problem', but schools could better use external spaces and offsite resources or adopt new trends such as mixeduse developments.

Good design has made a palpable difference to William Perkin High School in Greenford, Middlesex, said its associate head teacher Keir Smith, whose key advice was for teams to 'think nimbly'. The brief was to achieve an architectural solution which took 'awe and wonder' alongside a sense of calm, said Smith, with an emphasis on light, achieved with a £19m scheme that uses cross-laminated timber. 'The pride and care and respect

the children have for the building is definitely one of the reasons we achieved an outstanding OFSTED', said Smith. This ethos is borne out in the findings shown by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios researcher Joe Jack Williams. New school buildings show their communities a glimpse

#### 'A proper funding model is needed that reflects the scale of the problem'

of the future and can be the 'catalyst for change', although a potentially demoralising problem for schools is that we know that we are heading for overcapacity. The practice's managing partner Ian Taylor had a number of suggestions, including wide consultation, building where there is demographic need, and designing for flexibllity, increased numbers and with generous circulation.

The conference also heard from speakers including Ealing's executive director of housing and regeneration Pat Hayes, who said one of the key tensions for planning had been the switch in the educational programme, and with densification generating educational demand. Ramboll director Gavin White extolled the virtues of using CRT, which can help on airtightness, cut waste and save up to 15 per cent on the programme. Haverstock partner Claire Barton looked at the Board Schools, over 400 of which were built in a 10-year period but only 39 still exist as schools. Working to adapt and improve them today, however, is beneficial. 'Every single one of them has its uniqueness and it is those things that really allow us to offer character to these spaces', she said. 'This is what we're lacking with the new-builds. And finally, WSP's associate director Ross Harvey showed what could be a part of things to come on these shores, beyond the

Plimsoll mixed-use building at King's Cross, with New York's Beekman Tower including a 600-pupil school and 25,000sq ft hospital in its base.

#### **PLANNING**

## Making a city in the east

The GLA took a significant step in helping east London ease the capital's housing woes when it launched its City in the East masterplan and London Riverside OAPF.

Speaking at NLA, chief of staff and deputy mayor, policy and planning at the authority Sir Edward Lister said that while it might have been OK in the Abercrombie Plan to view the east as 'fundamentally Essex' and 'another place entirely' it was now time to give it

full recognition with a plan that might see 200,000 homes, 250,000 jobs and 600,000 people come to the wider area.

A major thrust of this will be to try to secure a switch from land given over to industrial uses, currently 'pepper-potted' across the area, to residential or at least mixed-use. And where once this area was thought to have enough capacity to become another 'Clacton', it will now be of the order of a Glasgow and, perhaps by the next iteration, a Scotland, said Lister. 'It is real – this isn't just what might happen', he added. 'A lot of it is under way.' That includes Ontario Point at Canada Water, Convoys Wharf and Greenwich Peninsula, the last of which is evidence of clear change on the ground. Other major schemes included Silvertown Quays, Royal Wharf and the 'important ingredient' of Barking Riverside, where housing is going up that is 'at least more affordable than in much of London'. But during questions



'The secret London never knew it had' - Barking

Lister challenged the construction industry to adopt new ways of working including more prefabrication in the general push to build more housing: 'Guys, you have got to start thinking about alternative ways of building', he said.

LB Barking and Dagenham leader councillor Darren Rodwell said with London moving eastward, his patch would be the 'centre of London at some point'. 'We are the secret you never knew you had,' he said. While the area has the biggest landholdings of industrial land in the capital, we need to have a new concept about what industrial is, he said, but with projects like the 10,500-home Barking Riverside under way, there is the political will to bring more in addition to Home Zone areas like Barking town centre. The riverside section needs culture and the arts as well as other infrastructure, however, as well as places for recreation, he said. 'We must have green spaces', said Rodwell, 'I don't believe in concrete jungles.'

#### Lister: 'Guys, you have got to start thinking about alternative ways of building'

LB Havering's head of regulatory services Patrick Keyes said a similar transformation was under way in his area, with the Rainham and Beam Park Housing Zone putting it on the map and the plan giving developers confidence. And TfL's director of borough planning Alex Williams said with the scale of growth hitting London – six new residents every hour, a car load every 40 minutes, two buses' worth every day or two Tube trains full every week – transport too needed to keep pace with change and unlock more growth. Plans are afoot to look at increasing the number of river crossings in the east as well as a Crossrail 1 extension east of Abbey Wood and eastern spur to Crossrail 2.

#### **CULTURE**

## Culture club - keeping London ahead

London should strive to maintain its position at the top of the world's league table of cultural offerings if it is to keep its attractiveness as a world city in the face of unprecedented growth.

That was the headline message to emerge from a fascinating seminar held at City Hall as planners and developers gathered to discuss key issues and welcome the launch of a new planning guide on the subject: 'An A-Z of Planning and Culture'.

'We often say in the Mayor's office that culture is London's USP', said deputy mayor for education and culture Munira Mirza. 'It is one of the key factors in our success.'

The culture and creative industries together are worth £35bn, she added, and account for one in six jobs, being a 'massive driver for tourists' in the most visited city in the world. It is also important for our quality of life,

and a draw for workers to the 'vibrant and culturally diverse landscape'. Even the new Bond film *Spectre* was shot in London, including a scene in City Hall, and London is now the third busiest film city in the world. But challenges include the loss of 35 per cent of music venues over the last eight years and the fact that the city is set to lose up to 30 per cent of artists studios in the next five years. The new guide helps spread the word on all the planning tools at the disposal of cultural organisations to use in order to beat that flight.

Policy and planning deputy mayor Sir Edward Lister added that he takes potential investors to the top of The Shard to show them what a 'green and pleasant look and feel the city has', enhanced by the theatres, restaurants and so on. 'It's a place you want to live in, and because you want to live in it you want to make those funding decisions which are so important for the city', he said. London needs £1.6 trillion spent between now and 2050 if we are to continue current growth. 'You must ensure we aren't just creating rows of housing', he added, and that within that growth is 'the placemaking piece'. 'This is about building and baking culture into what we do.'



'We often say in the Mayor's office that culture is London's USP' - Munira Mirza



Deputy mayor Edward Lister emphasised the importance of the creative community to London

There is an argument for making more theatres in London, said London Theatre Company chief executive Nick Starr, but also for theatres that are more in line with the needs of the 21st century than those in the West End. London's theatre is booming, however, up 25 per cent in attendance over the last 14 years, with almost half in subsidised and not-for-profit theatres, aided by the Lottery. Organisations like Bow Arts, said its chief executive Marcel Baettig, are aiming to support the arts with its provision of affordable creative workspace for artists, with 12 sites at the moment and three in

development this year. And the Mill Co Project, said its director Nick Hartwright, is doing its bit with schemes such as its Haringey hotel acting as an important networking facility for those in the arts.

Other highlights from the event included Barking and Dagenham director of regeneration Jeremy Grint, showing the meanwhile spaces and affordable workspaces for artists that are happening in his patch, catalysed by strong political commitment. Argent head of asset management Anna Strongman said that culture has been 'fantastic' for King's Cross

but was driven by a clear belief that it drives up rents and residential values. Finally, GLA head of cultural strategy Justine Simons said culture is never neat, should not be overcontrolled and is crucial for London's liveability. It requires 'a new form of civic leadership in the city if it is to be protected', she said.

#### HOTELS

## **New breed of** hotels embrace 'experience'

New London hotels are upping the ante in the fight against threats to their takings from enterprises like Airbnb by concentrating less on mere bedrooms alone and more on events and public spaces that create an 'experience'.

That was one of the key takeaways from a fascinating breakfast conference at NLA. Sponsored by Arup, the 'five star' event looked at a series of case studies on hotel projects and how they are aiming to capitalise on the record 18.8 million foreign visitors to London last year, within a rapidly developing sector.







The NLA held a Pecha Kucha on housing - as seen by HTA partner Sandy Morrison



Sea Containers House - home to the Tom Dixon-designed Mondrian



Crosstree's King's Cross scheme for the first Standard Hotel outside the US

First up was Martin Potter, design director of hotels and leisure for EPR Architects, who took the audience through his practice's conversion of the Sea Containers building on the South Bank. Built originally as a hotel, the scheme had been converted into an office before the loss of a major tenant in 2010. EPR focused on how the existing building could be retained - demolition was too expensive and modified to create bars and restaurants, new hotel accommodation and offices, inspired by the kind of 'lifestyle' offer in places like The Hoxton, Rosewood and St Martins Lane Hotel. The practice worked with

Tom Dixon on creating a 'destination' hotel themed loosely as an ocean liner on the Thames, with rooftop bar, a spa, gym, meeting rooms and screening rooms adding to the revenue creating areas and including bespoke Tom Dixon furniture in the rooms.

Arup's global hotels and leisure business leader Martin Radley presented a number of projects including a conversion of the Camden Town Hall annexe opposite St Pancras into a Standard Hotel for Crosstree. The 270-key scheme is designed by ORMS, has been 'brought to life' with three additional floors and aims to be a 'buzzy' attraction. 'This will be a

destination and a place everybody will talk about', he said. However, some hotels needed 'forensic' treatment, with horror stories including smoke extract systems held up by coat hangers and bedrooms above nightclubs with little in the way of acoustic barriers. 'Well thought-out engineering is worth the money because you are stuck with it for a long time.'

### 'People want to be somewhere and experience it'

Sheppard Robson's Dan Burr presented 66-86 Farringdon Road, a mixed hotel and offices scheme now in for planning which aims to revitalise what is a rather 'forlorn' section of the road, animating the ground floor with 'life back into the street'. The scheme aims to replace an NCP car park and the hotel sits between the chain of Holiday Inn further down towards King's Cross and boutique nature of, say, The Zetter round the corner in Clerkenwell. But during discussion Burr suggested that planning policy around hotels is unsophisticated and was not keeping pace with the need for compact hotels in urban sites.

Finally, Nick Hartwright, director of the Mill Co Project, showed The Green Rooms, a plan to create the UK's first social enterprise hotel, an inexpensive place to stay in Wood Green for artists and theatre groups. The scheme is a joint venture with Haringey Council, a sympathetic restoration of a 1925 building where double rooms will go for £50 and will include a new range of homeware in the rooms designed by fashion company Folk. Already institutions like the Royal Court theatre have signed up, since their foreign writers programme people are staying in 'isolating' digs elsewhere. 'It's not only about price, but the experience people have,' said Hartwright. 'People want to be somewhere and experience it.'

#### **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

### **Keeping the rich mix**

Co-hosted by Sheppard Robson

Character. Distinctiveness. Diversity. How do we preserve the rich mix of London as it encounters major population growth and change and avoid killing off what makes the city what it is?

That was the broad subject grappled with by a group of architects, developers, local authority officials and other consultants as they gathered at host Sheppard Robson's offices in Camden, an area that is itself going through many of the same issues.

Sheppard Robson partner Martin Sagar kicked off with a look at the firm's work for Camden Town Unlimited as the area explored initially how to react to the threats of HS2. But even after the main threat of widespread demolitions was dropped from the bill, said Sagar, they realised that, since 'none of' board member and Proud Gallery owner Alex Proud's staff could

afford to live in Camden any more, something had to be done. 'We began to realise that we were losing something precious', said Sagar. 'This sense of living and working in the same place.' They revealed their collective love of the 'eccentricity of the place' and the kind of spirit they wished to keep, with the work including suggestions to how some of the retail stores could better utilise the spaces above and at the backs of their premises, driving into each plot to make something unique and create external courtyard spaces.

One of the instigators of the modern Camden, Urban Space Management founding director Eric Reynolds said that the key problem was ownerships – one could not prevent an ageing owner of a shoe shop, say, from selling up in search of his pension, and too much greed and 'me too' prevails. 'Success kills good things',



Locking in character - keeping Camden's 'Camden-ness'

he said, which was a far cry from the early days of the market when Reynolds had to buy newspapers for stall owners to keep them there long enough for the public to arrive. But perhaps one answer could be zoning. 'I think you should discuss a way in which we can do zoning that doesn't stop change but creates space for change; otherwise we will all be the same.'

It is interesting how the business community is coming together on this issue, said Camden Town Unlimited's Simon Pitkeathley, and how we can keep the elements that keep Camden interesting from a collective point of view. From his perspective, things like workspace add a great deal of value for an area. 'If 100 startups employ one more person, the value to the local economy is great', he said. 'The value to an individual owner, not so much.' This justifies a different type of intervention.

And yet, said PTE's Andrew Beharrell, we should acknowledge that the problems of success are better than those of decline. But we have been treating employment space 'as inexhaustible stock, a bit like North Sea cod'. And permitted development (PD) rights have brought this into sharp relief. We are short of affordable workspace, and so rents are rising steeply in Camden – even by 50 per cent on PTE's patch in Islington over the last two or three years. And while some work the architect is doing to create affordable workspace in Hackney Wick, helped by a local authority that prioritises the sector through a strict no net loss policy, there is little in the way of funding for artists studios to survive, said Futurecity director Mark Davy. 'If we're saying culture and placemaking is a big driver for cities, we need to look at what Section 106s and CILs are supposed to be doing.'

A long-term attitude also helps, said Sheppard Robson's Dan Burr. This is clearly in evidence with the work the practice is doing opposite Hackney Wick on the Eastwick and Sweetwater masterplans, where how long-term quality can be created that will drive value was part of the LLDC brief, rather than piling as much as possible onto the site.

But if London really is a collection of villages, said Davy, with each having their own identity, these are blurring now and it is almost easier to start from scratch, as at places such as Canada Water or Nine Elms. It can be harder, agreed Burr, in places like Camden, where it is more 'granular' and where multiple ownerships are the norm. Culture is, however, a way of defining 'Camden-ness', said Davy.

With the 'understandable march for housing numbers' in the face of London's largest ever population, said GLA assistant director for regeneration Debbie Jackson, one impact is on affordable employment space for London's SMEs. And while the enlightened planning policies employed by Hackney and others are to be welcomed, one of the challenges is the developers who don't retain a long-term stake and therefore ground-floor and employment spaces often lack proper consideration. The contrast with affordable housing is a stark one though, in so far as sophisticated thinking is concerned. 'I feel like we're almost at the beginning of the curve on employment space,' said

Jackson. The GLA is undertaking work on what is a finer grain understanding of what employment space means so we're better equipped to deliver affordable employment space alongside housing to deliver places people want to live and work. Cities are like an ecology, said Maccreanor Lavington's Kevin Logan. And as with most ecologies, if you tinker with it, you generally unbalance it. There is a need to re-establish value mechanisms, and talk about a blend and a breadth on affordability. Getting developers to be more enlightened and long-term can be very

### 'I think you should discuss a way in which we can do zoning that doesn't stop change but creates space for change'

hard, said James Murray, executive member for housing & development, LB Islington, especially with residential values as they are. But having a plan for a local area and a plan-led system is vital to that, especially given the reforms to PD that

are making that trickier still in placemaking terms. In Archway, for example, the authority was developing a mixed-use plan for empty towers before PD came along and it instantly became private residential.

For Charlie Green, CEO of The Office Group, his firm provides a different answer, with examples including a West End address on offer to businesses for £350/month or similar in Shoreditch for £220/month. This can be done through selling space 2 or 2.5 times over and then managing the process. But what is affordable? asked Nick Hartwright, director, the Mill Co Project. 'I've got a lot of people moving out of Hackney Wick into some of my spaces that are cheaper.' And we need to find the incentives and evidence to help developers value creating mixed communities, said British Land's Eleanor Wright.

But PD is stymying ambition somewhat, said LB Croydon regeneration manager James Collier. 'We've lost well over a million square feet of office space already', he said, with the development potential of some major urban blocks now heavily constrained by PD developments either side in Croydon. 'I don't think it can be underestimated how negative an impact that will have in terms of creating balanced communities', he said. One of the inevitabilities is a 'hollowing out' of London, said Jackson. But perhaps Camden's loss is Walthamstow's gain, suggested Beharrell. Change is both inevitable but also good, he said, and perhaps the good news story is how previously downat-heel places are receiving more investment and attracting new residents and workers. Perhaps, suggested Sagar, London is just going through another of its major changes and artists studios and the like will simply up sticks to outer London, Hastings or even Berlin. How much can we control this 'seismic' shift anyway? A 'pause mechanism' is perhaps also required, suggested Reynolds, as well as the avoidance of 'giantism'. 'We need enough of a pause mechanism for some of the tide to lose a bit of force. So then it will allow the balance.'

#### THINK TANK

### **Shaping the future of Mayfair**

Co-hosted by the Royal Academy

How can Mayfair maintain its character and position as a leading arts and luxury retail quarter for London as it deals with population growth and rising values – and seeks to capitalise on the benefits the new Bond Street Crossrail link will bring?

That was one of the key questions grappled with by a select group of figures involved with the great estates, luxury retail, arts institutions and art market and those charged with taking forward plans for the area.

The event was introduced by Charles Saumarez Smith, secretary and chief executive of the Royal Academy of Arts, who said he had become interested in the surrounding neighbourhoods and the complexities of local planning following his initiation of the David Chipperfield-designed project to revitalise the RA. There is a 'historic opportunity' to develop the whole neighbourhood, said Saumarez Smith, building on Crossrail to improve and better integrate areas including Cork Street, Savile Row and Bond Street.

Publica director Lucy Musgrave said her firm has been looking at the connectedness of the area and its potential to link with the 'radical change' happening outside Mayfair. This includes major projects such as the removal of the Aldwych, Tottenham Court Road and Baker Street gyratories, the Crown Estate's 'extraordinary' £1bn investment in Regent Street, the restoration of Hanover Square as a new front door to Mayfair and the West End, the wider work of Grosvenor and the change that is coming with regards to how we use our highway and road space. But Bond Street is at a critical point, where its beautiful architecture is obscured by clutter, traffic and parking. 'You can't see the beauty of Bond Street, and it's not functioning how it should', said Musgrave, emphasising how in its new manifestation it must work for both pedestrians as well as vehicles, with better consolidation of servicing to avoid conflict with the utilities companies and others.

Daniel Johnson, central London programme manager at Transport for London, said TfL is 'hugely interested' in supporting Mayfair because London is in competition with other world cities and Mayfair can contribute to sustaining London's international appeal for tourism and inward investment. Johnson also outlined anticipated changes, including the arrival of Crossrail, review of bus services and delivery of Central London Cycle Grid routes through Mayfair; and indicated that longer term aspirations of partners, such as improving Hyde Park's connection with Mayfair across Park Lane, might take time to develop.

Such partnerships will be key to the future of this area, said New West End Company chief executive Richard Dickinson, with 50 property owners and 60 occupiers contributing to Bond Street's concept design as a 'spine' of Mayfair for other projects to hang off. On Crossrail's potential impact NWEC surveyed 3,000 shoppers and found that the majority said they wanted more pedestrian friendly streets and catering friendly environments. Plans for Hanover Square and Bond Street take that on board, with a 20 per cent increase in shopper numbers expected resulting from the new stations, along with a 'helpful' decrease at Oxford Circus. But Crossrail will also extend the retail catchment of the West End by 27.5 per cent, driving a spend from £8.8bn to £11.25bn by 2020. 'So you can see that projection which is clearly helpful as long as the management

### Would the makers of Monopoly put Mayfair at the top of the board today?'

is right', said Dickinson. More challenging in the management of place will be the background of cuts including a £1bn cut to a £3.2bn police budget for London. But

rising rents are also an issue with business rates for retailers rising steeply, presenting particular difficulties for independent boutiques in Bond Street.

David Shaw, head of Regent Street portfolio at the Crown Estate, said that with the kind of shopping environment and proliferation of galleries and tailors in the area, people's expectations are high and that delivery consolidation is therefore critical. At Regent Street 40 retailers have cut their vehicle movements by 80 per cent thanks to a scheme which lets them use two electric lorries. 'The point at which our office customers particularly think that the bits between the buildings are not safe, suitable, or giving them the value that they are expecting, they will go elsewhere and leave Mayfair and the West End.' Shaw said it would also be instructive to get a more detailed study on what numbers might really be arising from Crossrail. Underutilised car parks in the area could also contribute to creating better public spaces by ridding them of vehicles, he said. But Cork Street should remain 'the foremost street for modern and contemporary art in the UK, end of story', said Shaw, with public realm working in a way that is attractive to galleries and their customers. 'We need to put Cork Street back onto

Alan Cristea Gallery founder Alan Cristea said that as the years have gone by the quality of some galleries on Cork Street has not improved, and the smaller independent entities are struggling with increased rents or have already left for other areas. 'I am not nostalgic, but if it's taken over by large corporations, I'm not sure that's a good thing.'

Some 10 new galleries are being developed on Cork Street with completion in 2017, said senior partner, Deloitte Real Estate, Julian Stocks. A lot of the US galleries are looking for space in London and it would be hugely beneficial to both London and the Royal Academy if some took space in Cork Street to retain a sense of a cultural neighbourhood', said Saumarez Smith. 'But to me it would be a retrograde step if it just became somehow an annexe of Bond Street. We need to design the public realm in Burlington Gardens as a fitting setting for all this to support connections with the developing cultural quarter around us.'

But companies like Louis Vuitton are engaged in supporting the 'diversity and signature' of Mayfair, said managing director of its Ireland and South Africa wings Tom Meggle, with its independent galleries, even with the 'massive investment' in fashion houses to have their showcases in places like Bond Street. But there is a long-term threat that even the luxury retailers will be forced out due to the cost of trading, he said.

The RA has a relative weakness in its back entrance, said author Charles Landry on his work with the institution. This will be aided by the design's new front door to Burlington Gardens, Cork Street and Bond Street.

'Our core idea was this sense of seamlessness – trying to create this sense of Royal Academy-ness spinning out through those side streets', said Landry. What is a cluster and how dense that cluster should be becomes key he added. Has the area got real diversity?

There is a danger that this cultural quarter conversation becomes parochial around the RA and this part of Mayfair, said Grosvenor's director of placemaking, Will Bax. An emerging cultural footfall runs throughout the area from the north west to south east and is an important part of the competitiveness of the West End, and thus of London. But macro challenges are many: 'How do we create jobs and new floorspace encouraging economic growth while maintaining the character and personality that Mayfair is famous for?' he asked. But it is the cultural component that singles Mayfair out as a special distinct part of London. 'How we allow that to flourish as opposed to price it out is a great question.' One answer is to create high-quality public realm to 'magnetise people' and create a 'gravitational effect', but also to be innovative about tenures to support galleries and cultural uses.

Would the makers of Monopoly put Mayfair at the top of the board today, asked City of Westminster director of planning John Walker? 'I think they would think twice, because Mayfair has been the jewel that sadly has been sitting and living on its past reputation.'Yes, it has art galleries, and public realm, but it also has a lot more than that in its DNA, he said, with some of the best clubs and best hotels in the world. Not a lot has changed as other areas in the West End have moved on, however 'It has been underperforming, but all of that is about to change', he said, with public realm the 'glue' that sticks it all together. The US Embassy will be an opportunity site as the tenants move out in 15 months' time and it becomes a hotel; the Park Lane Hilton is set to unveil new plans, but Mayfair must also work for its strong residential community, said Walker.

Ultimately, said Musgrave, the beauty of Mayfair lies in its authenticity and its layers offering 'a complete metabolism'. But leadership is crucial to get everything delivered to retain it.



Old masters - the think tank met at the General Assembly Room at Burlington House, Royal Academy

#### THINK TANK

### A 3D model for London

How could a 3D model for London work? And what might the barriers to its formulation be?

The proposal, mooted by NLA in 2014 as a reaction to the spate of tall buildings being proposed for the capital, was the subject of a think tank kicked off by City of London assistant director, development design Gwyn Richards.

The City cluster is the centre for the City's focus on this issue, and the potential to consolidate it into a more coherent, single identifiable urban form, said Richards. I think we are very sensitive to the criticism in the past that we may have approached tall buildings in a haphazard manner with knee-jerk reactions to individual applications – which may or may not be a fair comment.' The work on the cluster is to do with existing policies and constraints to see how they and forthcoming consented schemes interact. It is only through a 3D model that we can understand that in a holistic way', he said. One of the debates the City wanted to have was to do with 20 Fenchurch Street and whether infilling the gap between it and the cluster could make it less 'assertive'. It also wanted to look at street level and the extent to which daylight and wind patterns might be affected by building heights around the cluster and proposed new schemes, as well as what might be needed by the quantum of new workers coming into the area.

Professor Andrew Hudson-Smith, director and deputy chair, Bartlett Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis, wondered how the technology required could be put up online in a secure way that is usable by both the public at large and by private firms. His department looks at what happens on the 15th floor and the 30th floor for example, on the movement of crowds, of traffic and merging GIS data with BIM to create a complete London system. Over the last six months various companies had moved into this area, aiming at architects, planners, the Mayor's office. 'I'm interested in how we stop all trying to do the same thing', he said. 'It only needs one.' There is lots of data out there, but it needs to be linked up. 'We should have a single system that is London-wide that we can all just check into and out of', he said. 'But things have moved on. I think we're at the edge of finally making it work.'

For Millerhare partner John Hare, the idea of a single model that could ever be 'complete' was a difficult one to imagine in a city as complex as London. The issues that need to be addressed are many – although data capture is not one of those, with London blessed in that department. One site has 203 models, for example. But Millerhare's model gets denser and more interesting where change is happening. Key to the area is roofline profile, said Hare. 'I think at the moment London is ahead of lots of other cities because our curious

planning system and now our property selling system have forced London's 3D community to develop very sophisticated applications. And the good thing is that there is competition, so if we don't get it right one of our competitors will find us out.' It is very good that there is more than one data supplier, but it doesn't come cheap. Millerhare spends over £100,000 a year in non-returnable investment in this area.

Zmapping director Raju Pookottil developed a planning tool for the GLA's Thames Gateway model, and latterly Vauxhall Nine Elms, modelling tall buildings, said GLA strategic planning manager ColinWilson. But could there be a standard requirement to architects and developers, and could it all be put online, managed around licensing and other technical requirements? 'I think we're interested in the model explaining the story of London', said Wilson, 'what does the City cluster look like next to the Blackfriars cluster, next to the Isle of Dogs cluster, next to what's happening in King's Cross?' This should be for decision-makers and developers as well as the public, he added.

One of the things that Rupert Green, smart design lead at WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff, has noticed in his work in London at Old Oak Common and Park Royal is a need for an overview on cumulative impact and to allow various parties access to that data to enable developers and design teams to do modelling. Tying in effectively with the utilities with their data in appropriate formats is also optimal, he added, although communication with providers has improved since the establishment of the Infrastructure Commission, said Wilson. Ultimately, such models help good decision-making but are not decision-making in themselves.

Data from Ordnance Survey is simply a representation of its core data, said its senior product manager for detailed content & 3D Rollo Home. It is possible to represent that data in different ways, including to an extent, in 3D. But the issue of 3D modelling is not limited to London, but must cover Brighton, Reading, the M4 corridor and all Great Britain. 'We can't be too narrow in our thinking in developing a solution just for London', he said. 'It could be that what we're talking about here is various stakeholders defining their bit of the problem and what data they can make available', said Hare.

All of this is being explored by Old Oak & Park Royal Development Corporation, said its principal planning officer Peter Farnham, with an app produced which shows high-level massing with basic rendering and virtual reality.

How might a model be funded? Might the GLA ask developers to pay? Could it be a requirement for developers to provide information on utilities? The answers to all of these questions are yet to be fully established. But it is clear that a fully formed 3D model for London is edging ever closer.

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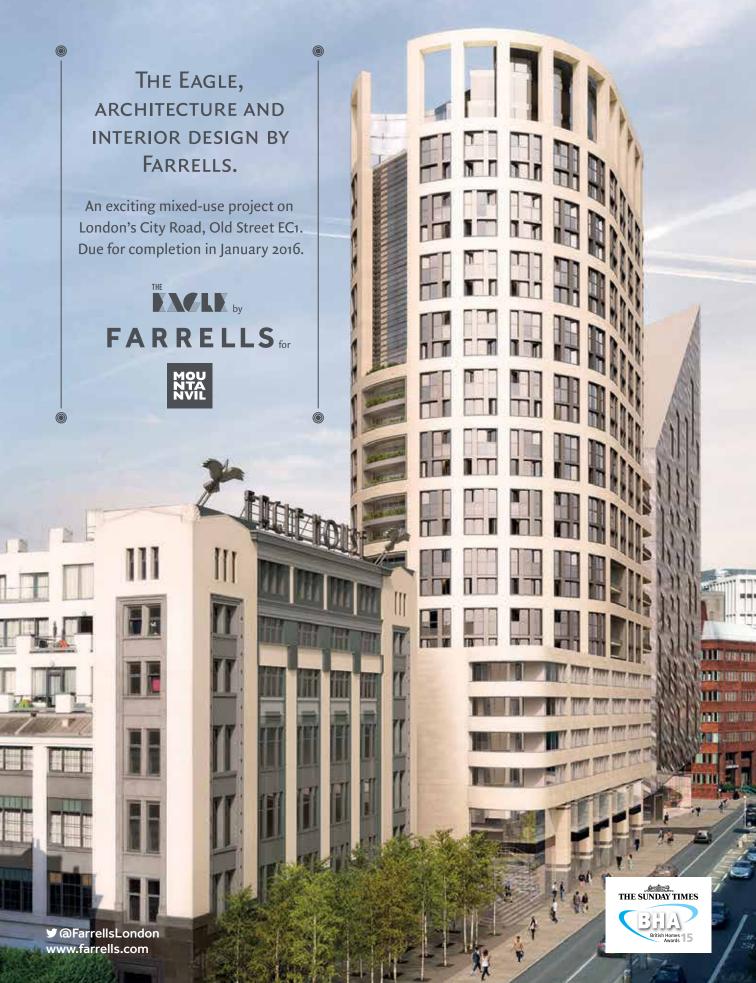


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## Coffee break with Joanna Averley

Bilfinger GVA's Director, Planning Development & Regeneration

### What is your proudest achievement and why?

There are certain places I can visit and know that I played a part in helping shape their transformation and success. There aren't many people who in their careers get to shape and name a street, building and public space. I am also very proud of all the wonderful people I have recruited during my career and the amazing things they are achieving. Oh yes, and abseiling down Broadgate Tower for LandAid – now that was facing my fears!

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

I would have studied law – badly! But if I had my time again I would love to have done an Art Foundation Course and seen where that took me.

#### What is your favourite film?

The Bourne Identity

#### Tell us a secret

I once spent the night sleeping in Green Park (I missed the last bus back to Oxford after seeing The Cure in concert at Wembley – second row and yes, it was amazing). At one point there was a Ferrari racing around the Park. It was all very 1989!

#### What is your favourite restaurant?

Le Grand Colbert in Paris, just north of Le Palais Royal, for a quintessentially French experience.

#### Which is the worst building in London?

My long career has taught me never to put into print the buildings you think of as blunders, but we all know which ones they are.

#### Which is the best?

Tate Modern for being the game changer for the South Bank; a wonderful window on The City; London's most democratic space; a place full of wonder, inspiration, reinterpretation and reinvention.

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

There are far too many people to mention. But there is something they all represent. I have had the advantage of starting and continuing my career working with creative thinkers who feel passionately about the world around them. I have been lucky to work in very meritocratic teams from the age of 21, where everyone's opinion is valid. A great example was working with Sir Peter Hall and Martin Crookston on 'Four World Cities: A Comparison Study of London, Paris, New York and Tokyo' in 1993/4 with the dynamic team who designed and delivered the regeneration of Manchester City Centre after the bomb in 1996; and of course the fantastic hard-working and creative teams at CABE, the Olympic Delivery Authority, Centre for Cities, LandAid and now Bilfinger GVA. I try to engender this open and creative dialogue in all my roles.

### What would your advice be to those starting out in your profession?

Be a curious sponge! Take in as much as you can about method and thinking; but also be confident in seeing planning, urban design and regeneration as a creative process and finding time to have a dialogue about how the urban fabric is changing and the economic, social, commercial, political and community forces at work in the process and enjoy the people and places around you.

### What is the biggest challenge facing planning and regeneration in London?

The rate and scale of change is unprecedented in my career. This brings amazing opportunities to positively invest in different parts of the city; but this needs to be delivered with quality and social investment in mind.

### What single thing would improve the development process?

More resources for the important work that local authorities do. A rethinking of use classes to better reflect the changing nature of how we use the city: how we transact, live and work.

### How can London best ease its housing crisis?

Continue to pursue thinking about the role of the Zone 3, 4 and 5 town centres and boroughs to deliver new homes connected into public transport.

### How optimistic are you about London over the next five years - and why?

I am very optimistic. The clever money in London is increasingly looking at off-centre investments and in new mixes and forms of development. We should be aiming for this investment to bring real and lasting benefits to communities and places which have not seen significant change in previous property cycles.

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

Set up 'Travel Off-Peak Week' – where we can test whether changing commuting habits could take the strain off London's public transport and support the reinvention of the workplace which is under way.





### The developer's account

### By Jessica Marsden-Smedley, project director (retail), Argent



The German Gymnasium was constructed in 1865 for the German Gymnastics Society, designed by Edward Gruning and purpose-built for the first National Olympics in London in 1866. In 1908, it became an

administration building for the Great Northern Railway and was subsequently altered over a period of years. The Gym sits splendidly opposed as the smallest building in a collection of tall modern new-build offices in the southern tip of King's Cross. As a structure, the Gym is of significant interest, and as a developer and placemaker its repurposing and reopening was of key importance for us.

Since the 1960s there have been many schemes proposed for King's Cross. They shared an aspiration for the Gym to sit front and centre of this gateway space, gloriously restored to ensure the

future longevity of the building and enable it to be enjoyed by members of the public. It is a building with deeply personal interest to many members of the community, and its refurbishment has been met with delighted interest.

In 2011 the King's Cross development partnership engaged with the restaurant world, reaching out to find an exceptional restaurateur who could take on a space that was as equally exciting to execute as it was challenging. We wanted a remarkable culinary experience and an outstanding fit-out design befitting the architecture and



Making an entrance - the German Gymnasium's cleaned brickwork facade

history. Through a process of selection we picked D&D London as the tenant, recognising that it could deliver an exceptional offer with its interior architects Conran and Partners.

In 2013 preparatory works began to restore the fabric, and with planning permission gained with Allies and Morrison in 2014, the base-build shell works commenced, with the structural design by Arup and contractors BAM Construction. In 2015 we completed the works and handed over to D&D for the fit-out. We worked in partnership with the tenant, their design team, Camden Council and our base-build design and construction team from early conception, as far back as 2012,

which was crucial to getting the design scheme right.

The biggest test was the technical requirements of accommodating the extensive plant and equipment required for two kitchens and such a large restaurant. As a listed structure, four-sided pavilion with a pitched roof, bounded by stations to the south and west and by office buildings to the east and immediately to the north, this was a challenge. The proposed design solution was very clever: by externalising part of the internal space, the team was able to find creative and unobtrusive ways to include the necessary plant space.

### 'The arched volume of space can now be fully appreciated as it once was more than 100 years ago'

The Gym now sits proud in its setting, with a cleaned brickwork facade, new sympathetic metal windows, new slate roof and structural ties to prevent any further building movement. We have been able to bring the fabric up to a high standard of sustainability and building performance, which in itself is a feat for older buildings. However, probably most critical of all, it is through the reinstatement of the first-floor void and balconies that the extent of the refurbishment work can be understood. The arched volume of space can now be fully appreciated as it once was more than 100 years ago by members of the public. NL



Early users going through their paces



Period detail



Banqueting banquettes

### The design team's account (1)

### By Robert Maxwell, partner, Allies and Morrison



The German Gymnasium was first used to promote gymnastics for men and women based on physical strength: boxing, wrestling, fencing, weightlifting, using equipment such as ropes, vaulting horses and rings. This was in contrast to the alternative popular form promoted at that time

by the Scandinavian countries through more balletic body movement and dance. Both strands were harmonised under the more generic banner of modern gymnastics.

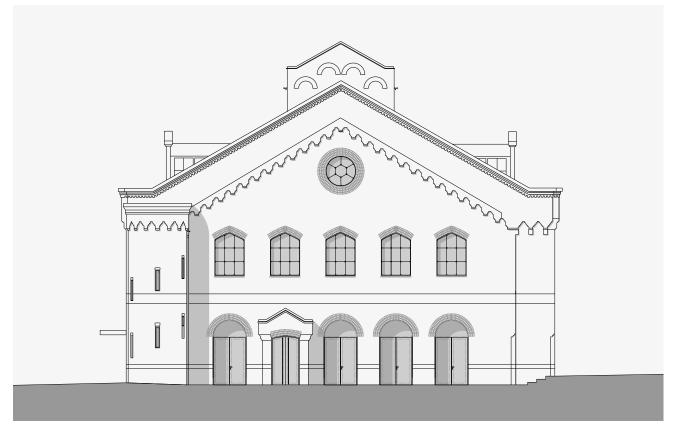
After the First World War, the building was taken over by the Great Northern Railway and converted into offices for their own use. The building was subdivided into cellular offices by inserting first floor, staircase and internal partitions, which divided up the overall single volume. The building was seen to have no historical significance although some legal protection was afforded when it was finally listed Grade 2 in 1976. The

building remained in ownership of the railway operators under its various acronyms until it was drawn into the overall masterplan for King's Cross.

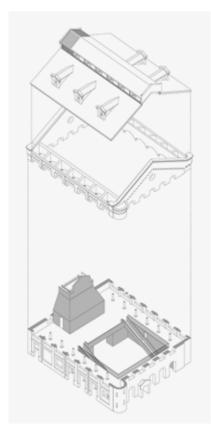
Allies and Morrison was commissioned by Argent in 2013 to restore and repair the fabric of the building to a shell and core finish

#### 'The building has become both a way-finding landmark and now a destination in its own right'

to enable a subsequent fit-out by a restaurant operator. Our analysis was intended to set the design criteria and parameters for the interventions, and also to define the possible extent of the intervention. We were also involved in the selection of the



'The German Gymnasium was constructed in 1865 for the German Gymnastics Society, designed by Edward Gruning'



Under one roof - exploded diagram

final team and worked closely with D&D and Conran and Partners throughout the restoration and construction stages.

The earlier demolition of buildings around the gymnasium and the emerging context have allowed the public realm around the building to become a more dynamic space: the south, west and east elevations forming a place of arrival from both King's Cross and St Pancras stations. The building has become both a way-finding landmark and now a destination in its own right.

We have relished being part of the process of bringing this remarkable old building back in from the cold so that now the scale of the original volume and exquisite roof structure can be enjoyed by the public in the milieu of a fabulous new restaurant. NL

### The design team's account (2)

### By Tina Norden, project director, Conran and Partners



As project director, my top priority is to ensure that I come up with creative and unexpected solutions that not only meet the client's brief and objectives, but also exceed them. I've been fortunate to lead on the design of several D&D London restaurants (formerly Conran Restaurants), many of which have involved the repurposing of beautiful historic and heritage buildings. The German Gymnasium is certainly the most significant of these. With the German Gymnasium, I felt an added responsibility, both because this is an important heritage building that has

had other 'lives', and because I have a German background.

The historic fabric of the building provided our starting point, particularly the lofty, triple-height ceiling with its magnificent timber roof and iron girders. We were able to open this up, restoring it to its original state, and introduced a new mezzanine floor in place of narrow viewing balconies.

The mirror-clad volume that anchors the bar and the kitchen also provides functional plant and back-of-house



The theme is 'glamorous and contemporary'



The Grand Café and Bar, viewed from the building's extensive balcony

space, and the new grand staircases, clad in black steel, surrounding the open kitchen and bar emphasise the newly revealed volume.

We have retained some of the building's original fixtures such as the climbing hooks in the ceiling space.

### 'The materials used were inspired by our research into classic middle European grand cafés'

We have also played with references to the building's role as host to the first ever indoor events of the 1866 Olympic Games, for example by incorporating gold mesh screens inspired by Victorian fencing masks, and the bespoke wallpaper in the washrooms which features Victorian gymnasts. The industrial style and design of the German Gymnasium encouraged us to introduce some bold features, such as the staircases and the bar in the upper level restaurant, which sits over the main dining area and is clad with a huge bronze mirror, which can be seen from the ground-floor café space.

The materials used were inspired by our research into classic middle European grand cafés, in line with our brief, interpreting these in a contemporary way. The black powder coat, combined with the pink and burgundy highlights as well as the grey marble, give a contemporary skew.

We were developing the design concept during the period when the exhibition of Alexander McQueen's work at the Victoria and Albert Museum was breaking all records, and this and its theme of 'savage beauty'



Pulling power – original climbing hooks have been retained

really made an impact on the design team. We looked at the raw grandeur of the German Gymnasium and wanted to create interiors that were glamorous and contemporary but also celebrated beauty found in unexpected places, in the same way as the work of Alexander McQueen did. ML



The original timber ceiling, new gold mesh balcony and ground floor entrance



Time for design - Riesling o'clock?

#### The tenant's account

### By Des Gunewardena, chairman and CEO, D&D London



When I first saw the German Gymnasium stripped out in 2013 revealing the interior with its 57-ft floor-to-ceiling heights, I had the same spine-tingling feeling I had when I first saw Quaglino's as a hole in the ground 25 years ago. We love this building and its history.

We've watched and admired the King's Cross rebirth in recent years and are very excited to give the German Gymnasium a new, exciting life in the 21st century.

We got the keys to the building in January 2015, and after extensive planning, restoration, design and construction we were able to open as scheduled in mid-November. It was certainly the highlight of an incredibly exciting year for the group.

The primary focus of any D&D restaurant is on outstanding food, wine and service; but also of paramount importance is the building. The classic D&D restaurant, such

as Bluebird on the King's Road or German Gymnasium, takes its inspiration from the original building and its interiors are developed with leading designers, to create iconic dining spaces.

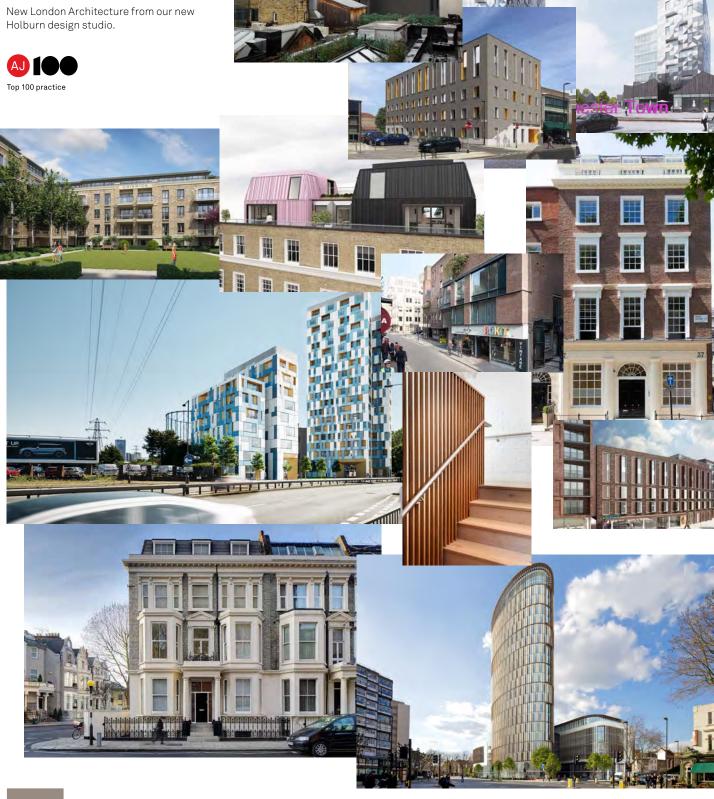
As a restaurant space, the venue is huge, covering 13,000 sq ft with over 440 covers, making it one of the largest in the D&D portfolio. German Gymnasium has an international feel and style, as befits its location between King's Cross and St Pancras International stations.

We hope that we have created a space that evokes the German heritage of this London landmark. The decor is a contemporary take on the grand cafés and brasseries of central Europe and so is the menu, featuring some classic Mittel-European dishes as a nod to the site's past. ML



The German Gymnasium restaurant also features semi-private spaces among its 440 covers

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### **Shoreditch**

### By Barry Jessup, director, First Base

It was curiosity that drew me to buy an apartment in Shoreditch 10 years ago.

This pocket of East London had always intrigued me, and I wanted to immerse myself in what felt like 'real London', with the city's industrial heritage writ large in its rough brickwork.

Even then, before the area's well-documented renaissance, Shoreditch felt individual, even rebellious. People looked different. They wore different clothes and did different things. It was hard to believe it was just minutes from the City of London, which at the time felt like the twitchy neighbour, peering through the curtains.

There was a real sense of community. There was something reassuring about the local pub, the cafés and shops – all independently owned and part of Shoreditch's fabric.

'The migration of artists to the area embedded a culture of collaboration, creativity and flair, which is still apparent in today's millennial workforce'

I was, and still am, drawn to places like the Boundary Estate and Truman Brewery. These are part of Shoreditch's heritage, but have not stood still. Today, they are reinvigorated by pop-up retail and other uses, which is a reminder that successful places will be reinterpreted and re-purposed by each generation.

It has been fascinating and occasionally disconcerting to observe the gentrification of the area over the past decade, and how new has

assimilated with old. The successful reinvention of Spitalfields Market was a watershed moment and a sign of things to come, and we continue to see that tension between heritage and development in the area. We need to understand and embrace this tension, as often the collision between new and old is what drives innovation.

The migration of artists to the area embedded a culture of collaboration, creativity and flair, which is still apparent in today's millennial workforce. The lines between work, live and play have blurred, and traditional buildings and spaces are used in non-traditional ways and at different times. Sit at a café outside a station on the 'Ginger Line' on the 'Creative Crescent' and you will realise that rush hour is at 10am rather than 8am, but that

work doesn't end when the offices empty; it carries on in the street, the cafés and the pubs. Technology has been a disruptive force in all of our lives, but Shoreditch has been at the epicentre of London's technological revolution. Witnessing this change first-hand has provided some important insight into what we need to be building into our future developments.

When we first embarked on the regeneration of Silvertown, it was crucial that we adopted the mindset of a millennial. In the same way that the modern Londoner does not differentiate between work and play, we as developers must not be limited by conventional uses of space. Place must be agile and adaptable, and as I have seen in Shoreditch we must be cognisant of the fact that these spaces will be interpreted by one generation, and then reinterpreted by the next. Parts will be retained and parts will be discarded. Creating a sustainable place is not about restricting change; it is about encouraging it. People make places, but places also make people. NL











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