

Thank you very much.

It was an unexpected surprise when I first got the news and a great honour to be receiving this award.

But...it feels very strange...as all of the work that I have done in London has largely been on behalf of others, many of whom are here this afternoon.

Whether it is:

the Local Authorities: Camden, Hackney, Haringey, Enfield, Southwark, Lambeth, Brent, Tower Hamlets, Newham;

the developers: Argent, Lipton Rogers, Quintain, Lendlease, Grosvenor

or my brilliant colleagues at the **GLA, Olympic Delivery Authority** and of course **Arup**...

It is these people that have truly shaped London for the better and **they** have given me the opportunity to play a small part in their achievements.

Both of my parents died recently, causing us as a family to reflect on our origins and heritage ... Both of my parents were 18 when they came to London.

My mother was an Irish nurse who came in the 1950s to work in the Royal Northern - now the Whittington Hospital - which for those of you who don't know is the hidden jewel of hospitals in London !

My father came back to Enfield after a childhood in Hong Kong, China, and India. *In fact, he had done so much travelling that in later life he got a DNA test to prove that he was of more exotic stock than his parents suggested - it came back telling him he was 100 percent pure Enfield !*

So, as a family we asked: “*are we English or Irish or something more exotic*” ?

Our conclusion was ***that we were Londoners...*** we are from a place where you can proudly be both Irish, British and anything else you want to be.

I’m sure many others with mixed heritage feel the same way, because London’s great joy is that it celebrates the ***diversity*** of its population, diversity of thinking and ideas, and diversity of design and architecture... ***like almost no other city in the world.***

And yet, this wasn't and still isn't always the case...

My mother trained herself to develop a plummy English accent to avoid the racist abuse she got when she first arrived.

Others have had much worse experiences.

And I think this is something that we as a planning, design and development community must ***keep reminding ourselves*** - we can never take London's great strengths for granted. We need to continuously strive to make sure that the places we design and build create spaces that encompass new ideas and are welcoming for everybody.

While I have had the privilege of being involved in lots of brilliant projects that have shaped London, I have perhaps **most benefited** from being able to export London's achievements and ideas all over the world.

Through Arup, I have been able to take London ideas to China, India, Middle East...Germany, New York, Peru...Chile, Singapore, Tokyo and, most recently...Brisbane.

In doing so, I have been merely emulating our founder the Danish, British...**Londoner** Sir Ove Arup

Our company was founded on Ove's importation of Walter Gropius idea of **Total Architecture**. **Ove gave the philosophy a more pragmatic London spin and re-exported it across the world.** Ove argued that to achieve the best outcomes in design you needed a diverse team of people and disciplines working together in equal harmony.

In addition, in post-war Britain, he argued every project should look **beyond the red line** and strive for a **socially useful outcome** beyond its core brief, whilst achieving **reasonable prosperity** for its owners, **and** those that delivered it.

To me, this philosophy underlines some of the best attributes of what has made London a great city and has shaped many of its best projects.

Importantly, it is these attributes that have also been the reason why London is still the most powerful exporter of design and built environment ideas and services.

Today in Arup we call it Total Design, but you could just as well call it the London way and we in Arup continue to export the philosophy across the globe. In fact, you could argue that in these times it has as much relevance as it did post-war.

London is a city founded on import and export.

As Londoners, we welcome ideas, investment and people from across the globe...we give them a London spin and adopt them in developing our city...and then we re-export them across the world.

But each time we are not simply exporting shiny glass towers of the City, landscapes and venues of the Olympic Park, stations and tunnels of the Elizabeth Line or the streets, shops and homes of King's Cross.

We are exporting London's unique grasp of the importance of diversity, social usefulness, reasonable prosperity that underpins the mix. This philosophy of curiosity, collaboration and challenge leads to the outcomes of beauty, dynamism and energy of the places created.

Those outcomes are what my clients across the world want to emulate, not just the architecture. As we used to say on the Olympics...it is not just the look, but the feel of the place that makes it thrive.

As a community that has benefitted from London's past, I feel we are collectively charged with ensuring London remains a great place for the future.

Today, with the wealth divide greater than ever; housing affordability worse than ever; health and education services groaning under the weight of demand and many communities of our city really hurting...

I feel we are duty bound more than ever to come together, to invite new ideas, challenge ourselves, bring together the huge diversity of disciplines across the built environment and collaborate to solve the problems the city faces.

My clients from across the globe tell me London is still one of the best places to invest in in the world...but that it is also one of the slowest and most expensive places to develop.

This is holding us back.

As a community in this room, we have the power to collectively address our industry's pain points, to capture that investment and direct our attentions to tackling the city's socio-economic challenges. In doing so we will build our city's future and secure the future export value of our industry.

The NLA Agenda is seeking to do that and I for one am fully on board.

I'm so proud to be a Londoner and so grateful to all my family, friends and colleagues in this room for their support in enabling my career here in London.

Thank you so much for this award, it's an honour to play a role in shaping London along with you and the many other people who make this city so great.