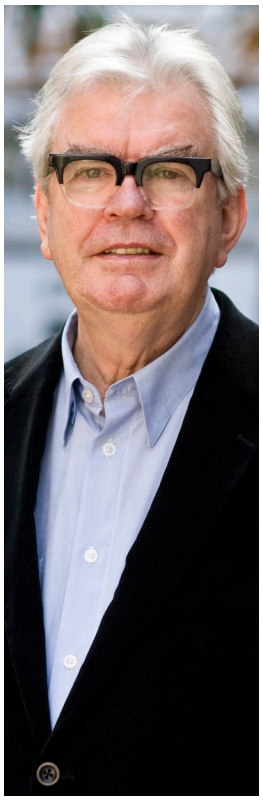
"My work these last 50 or so years has been heavily involved in creating a kinder, less doctrinaire world than that of the previous era of high modernism. It has been about layering, learning from the past and regenerating with communities' involvement from the bottom up."

Sir Terry Farrell CBE awarded the RTPI Gold Medal



Portrait by Richard Gleed

The award is in recognition of his outstanding achievements as one of the world's most influential architects, planners and urban designers. The Royal Town Planning Institute Gold Medal is open to all classes of membership internationally and has only been awarded 14 times. Past recipients have included such luminaries as Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Lewis Mumford, Sir Colin Buchanan CBE and Sir Peter Hall.

This award is in recognition of Sir Terry's outstanding contribution towards developing thinking in urban design, his championing of urban planning and contribution to policy shaping at a national level, and his outstanding impact on place making through his professional career as an architect planner and urban designer.

Stephen Wilkinson, RTPI President, said: "Sir Terry has a deep passion and understanding for places and people and has successfully demonstrated that in his work throughout his career. He is one of the few top practitioners who has truly embraced architecture, urban design and planning in a holistic vision and so vitally helped to advance integrated thinking among these disciplines. Through his belief in place and people he has been instrumental in creating a culture where communities become more involved in the quality of their neighbourhoods.

"The RTPI Gold Medal is the Institute's greatest accolade. I am delighted that we are recognising his enormous contribution to place-making and the planning profession, and the way he has transformed some of our cities and made them better places."

Sir Terry has said: "I am very honoured by the recognition that this awards represents, particularly as it reflects the growing awareness that planning is a highly creative and pro-active endeavour that has the potential to transform places and communities. My work these last 50 or so years has been heavily involved in creating a kinder, less doctrinaire world than that of the previous era of high modernism. It has been about layering, learning from the past and regenerating with communities' involvement from the bottom up.

"The 21st century is the Century of global city making, which must be more sophisticated, joined up, sustainable and human centred going forward. Creative planning must lead future city making."

A Life in Planning

Sir Terry Farrell

These are exciting times to be a planner. City making is the biggest business of the 21st Century across the globe and urban planning has a critical role to play. There is a huge demand for the very particular skill sets required, and in particular for creative, collaborative and proactive planning led by visionary people who want to make things happen.

In my view we are not yet rising to the challenge. As Nick Raynsford said at the launch of his review of housing and planning: "More than ever we need a planning system which commands the confidence of the public and delivers outcomes of which we can feel proud. After too many years of piecemeal changes and tinkering with the system, we need to go back to first principles and seek to develop a practical blueprint for the future of planning in England."

So why have we been defensive and reactive in recent times, at the expense of properly creative spatial and physical planning? Is this more to do with the way the public sector and arguably the RTPI sees themselves and the role they have to play? Being awarded the RTPI Gold Medal has made me stop

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>>> and reflect on the state of our profession and the journey we have been on.

If you rewind fifty years then creative planning was absolutely central with entire new towns being planned and built, the green belt being institutionalised, bombed towns like Hull, Plymouth and London being rebuilt and entire road systems laid out. Peter Hall said that Abercrombie was the last of the visionary architect planners, but that way of doing things was flawed and it was too top down. Like Robert Moses in New York decisions were made without consultation that had a massive impact on the generations to follow and the way we have lived our lives in urban areas.

There was of course a reaction to this and other gold medallists wrote important books like City in History by Lewis Mumford and Traffic in Towns by Colin Buchanan and in New York Jane Jacobs was the antidote to this centralist and often destructive approach to urban planning which prioritised cars over people, zoning over mixed use and new build over retrofit. The reaction was acutely felt here in London when large swathes of Covent Garden were due to be demolished and that was the period when I became an urban activist and joined the voluntary sector in calling for a different way of doing things.

The disaggregation of the public, private and voluntary sectors in the face of this complexity had the most enduring impact and is largely responsible for the state we are in today. They set themselves up in opposition to each other, as poacher and gamekeeper, with the Town and Country Planning Act providing the rules of engagement. I have spent most of my life trying to bridge these enemy camps, to bring them together with a shared understanding of the best way forward rather than increasingly entrenched positions amplified by architects arguing for modernism or conservationists arguing for protection with equally evangelical arguments. The world we live in is a complex one and these binary arguments are not fit for purpose.

We are facing huge challenges like population growth, climate change, food security and a crisis of affordability in our cities which need creative and collaborative planning and joint leadership from public, private and voluntary sectors. Mayors are proving to be effective leaders as cities become the drivers for change and local authorities are beginning to rise to the challenge and do more than just reactive, policy-led planning. Some of the most rewarding projects I have worked on in my career were initiated by me voluntarily, like the masterplan for the Thames Estuary, vision for London's airport connectivity and Old Oak Common as a major hub. I would encourage everyone involved in urban planning to get into the ideas business and become urban activists.

City making is huge and the UK has an unparalleled reputation for post-industrial regeneration, so my clarion call for planners everywhere is to stick their heads above the parapet, don't hide in comfort zones or fear the consequences of taking the initiative and promoting ways forward. Become leaders again like Abercrombie, Buchanan, Mumford and Hall!





LEFT:

Brindley Place, Birmingham

Brindley Place is about mending the city. It is a masterplan that seeks to undo the over-simplistic planning solutions of the 1950s and breathe new life and prosperity into a half-moribund section of the city. The site lies immediately next to Birmingham's National Indoor Arena and International Conference Centre. It is central to the city's strategic plan to expand the centre westwards and raise the city's national and international profile.

The 1991 Farrell masterplan gave Brindley Place a strong sense of character and historical continuity. The main principle behind Farrells work was the creation of a complete pedestrian network, articulated by a series of urban spaces on three axes that knitted into the city beyond. A new square provided a heart for the area; a high-level route linked to offices and shops; and a bridge connected to a leisure area. The canal edge was linked to the rest of the city by existing and proposed pedestrian bridges. The industrial relics of the area were integrated into the masterplan and three listed buildings were retained as focal points in the scheme.

ABOVE:

Newcastle Quayside, Newcastle

The Quayside offers an identity and character – unique to Newcastle – created by a sequence of landscaped squares and urban spaces along the river. The development provides an exceptional office environment and an exciting retail, leisure and public focus for the new Quarter; the layout and detail of the scheme forges links to all surrounding developments and neighbourhoods.

The Masterplan for Newcastle Quayside provides a framework of urban spaces, pedestrian activity, vehicular and service circulation, services and other civil engineering infrastructure, together with urban design guidelines for the development of individual buildings which have been built over a period of time to conform with this framework.

The Masterplan provides clear and legible pedestrian links throughout the site as well as enhancing the route along the river's edge. It also affords a permeable pedestrian network outside the site, thereby knitting itself in as an integral part of the city.

At the centre of the scheme, a major landscaped civic square provides a heart to the new Quarter and links retail and parking elements to the pedestrian route along the river. This pedestrian route passes through the whole of the scheme, intersecting several secondary urban spaces. This project won the Civic Trust Urban Design Award and RTPI Spaces Award in 1998 and was recently awarded the 1999 British Urban Regeneration Award for Best Practice.

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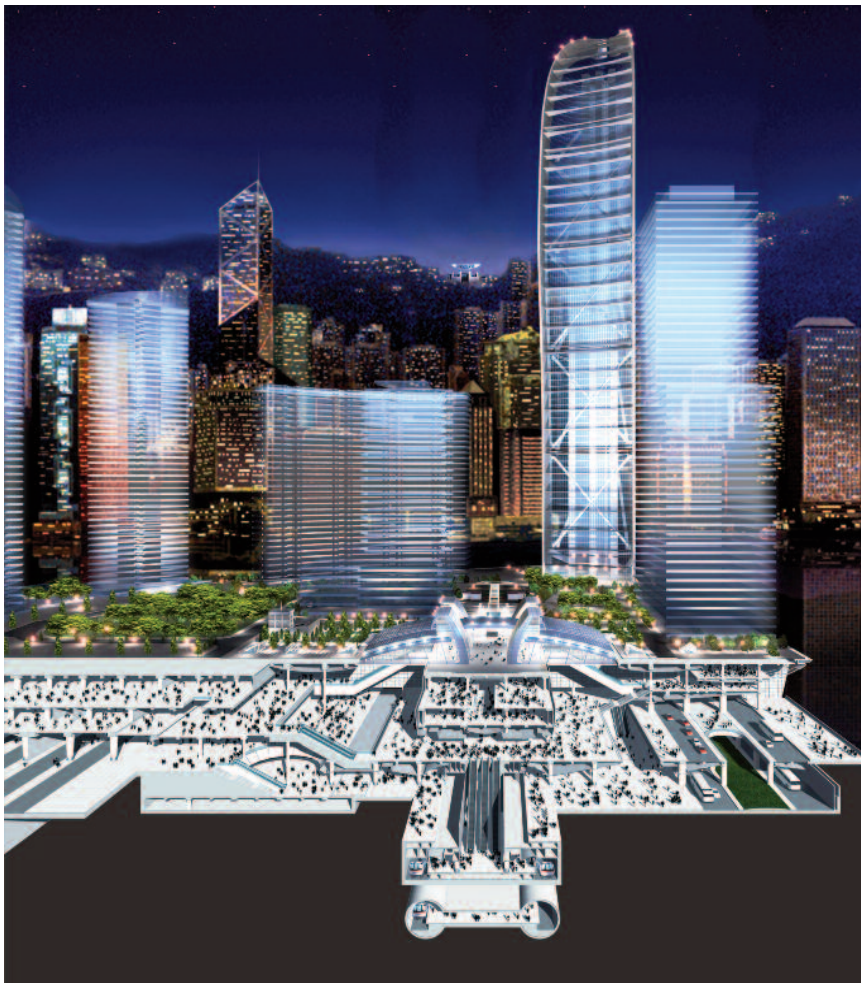
RIGHT & BELOW:

Kowloon Station Development

When Hong Kong resolved to close its congested airport at Kai Tak, the construction of its replacement broke all records for scale, speed, and innovation. Part of the largest infrastructure project in Hong Kong's history, the Lantau Airport Railway was conceived to provide a high-speed link between the city and the new airport on the remote island of Chek Lap Kok.

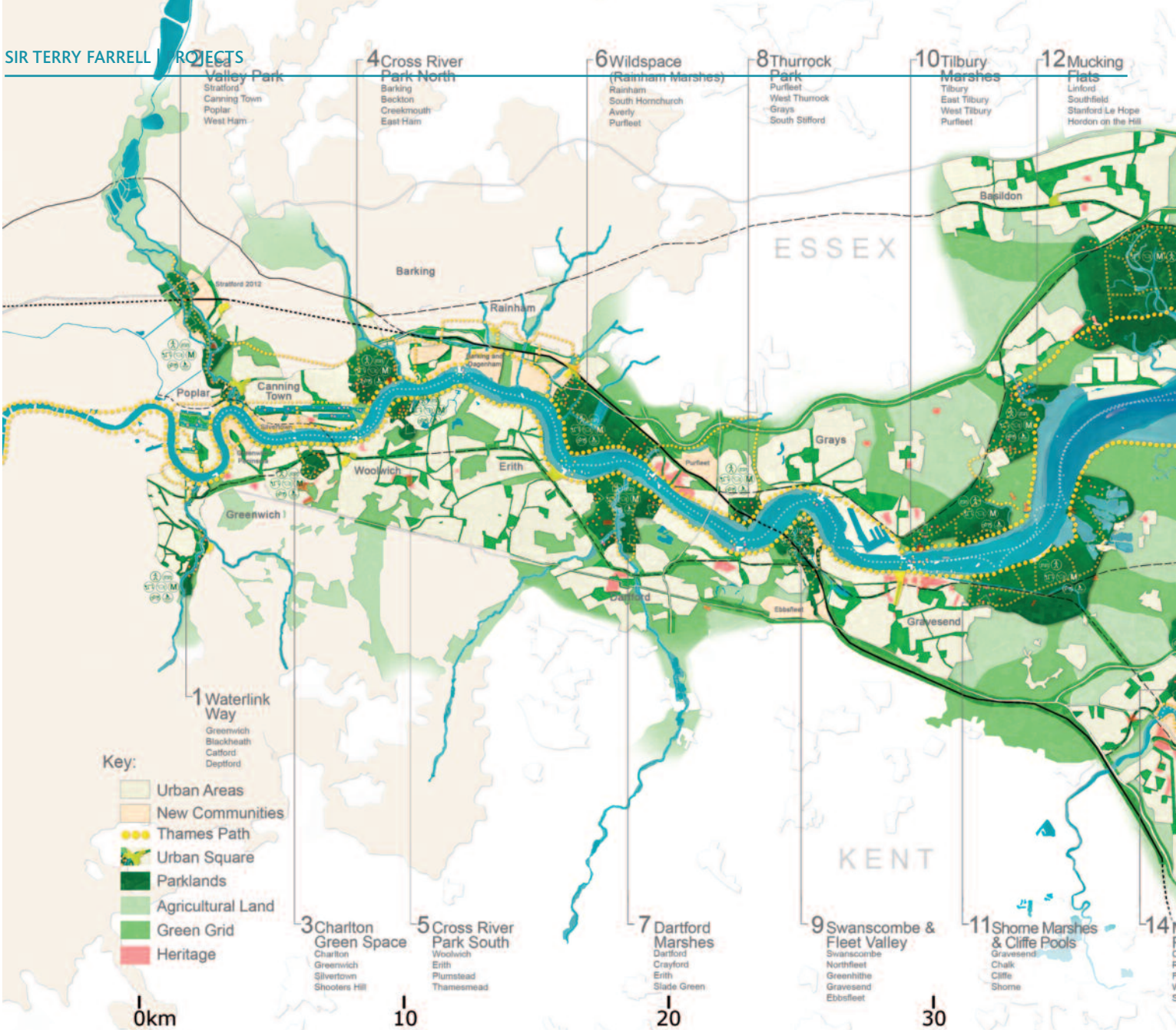
Farrells designed the largest stop on the line, Kowloon Station, which serves both the Tung Chung Line and the Airport Express. It resembles an airport terminal more than a conventional metro station, incorporating in-town check-in counters, baggage handling and screening systems, as well as programmatically complex facilities for interchange to franchised buses, minibuses, taxis, and private coaches. Above the station we developed a masterplan for a high-density, three-dimensional transit-oriented urban quarter. The seven development packages comprise one of the world's largest station air rights developments, grossing over one million square metres of space for hotel, office, retail and residential accommodation arranged around a central square with easy access to the station below. The final development package is home to the 118-storey International Commerce Centre, Hong Kong's tallest building.

The Kowloon Station Development made provision for pedestrian links, at the first storey, with the unrealised Kowloon Point vision. It overlooks the West Kowloon Cultural District, home to the M+ Museum for Visual Culture and the Kowloon Ventilation Building.








2 Lea Valley Park
Stratford
Canning Town
Poplar
West Ham
4 Cross River Park North
Barking
Beckton
Creekmouth
East Ham
6 Wildspace (Rainham Marshes)
Rainham
South Hornchurch
Averly
Purfleet
8 Thurrock Park
Purfleet
West Thurrock
Grays
South Stifford
10 Tilbury Marshes
Tilbury
East Tilbury
West Tilbury
Purfleet
12 Mucking Flats
Linford
Southfield
Stanford Le Hope
Hordon on the Hill
Basildon
ESSEX
Barking
Rainham
Stratford 2012
Poplar
Canning Town
Woolwich
Erith
Grays
Greenwich
Dartford
Gravesend
1 Waterlink Way
Greenwich
Blackheath
Catford
Deptford
Key:
Urban Areas
New Communities
Thames Path
Urban Square
Parklands
Agricultural Land
Green Grid
Heritage
KENT
3 Charlton Green Space
Charlton
Greenwich
Silvertown
Shooters Hill
5 Cross River Park South
Woolwich
Erith
Plumstead
Thamesmead
7 Dartford Marshes
Dartford
Crayford
Erith
Slade Green
9 Swanscombe & Fleet Valley
Swanscombe
Northfleet
Greenhithe
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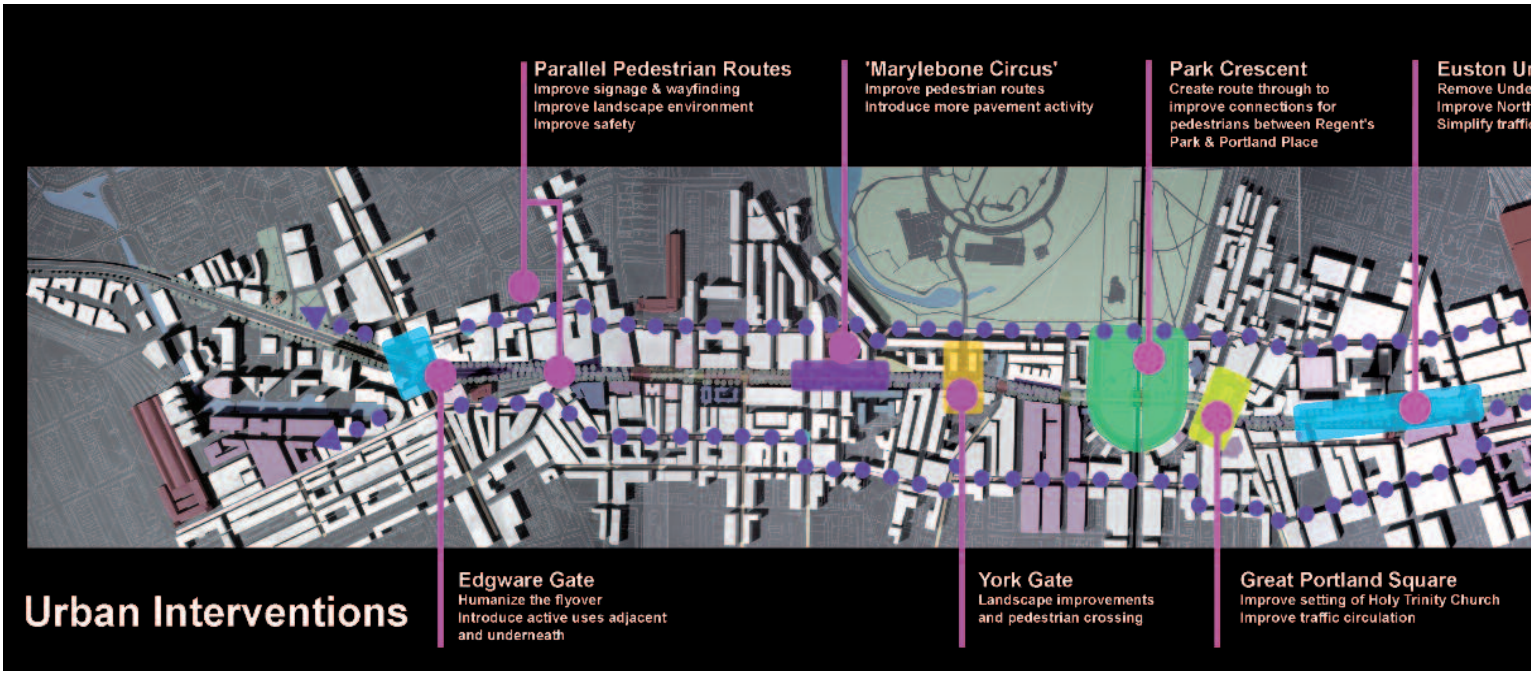
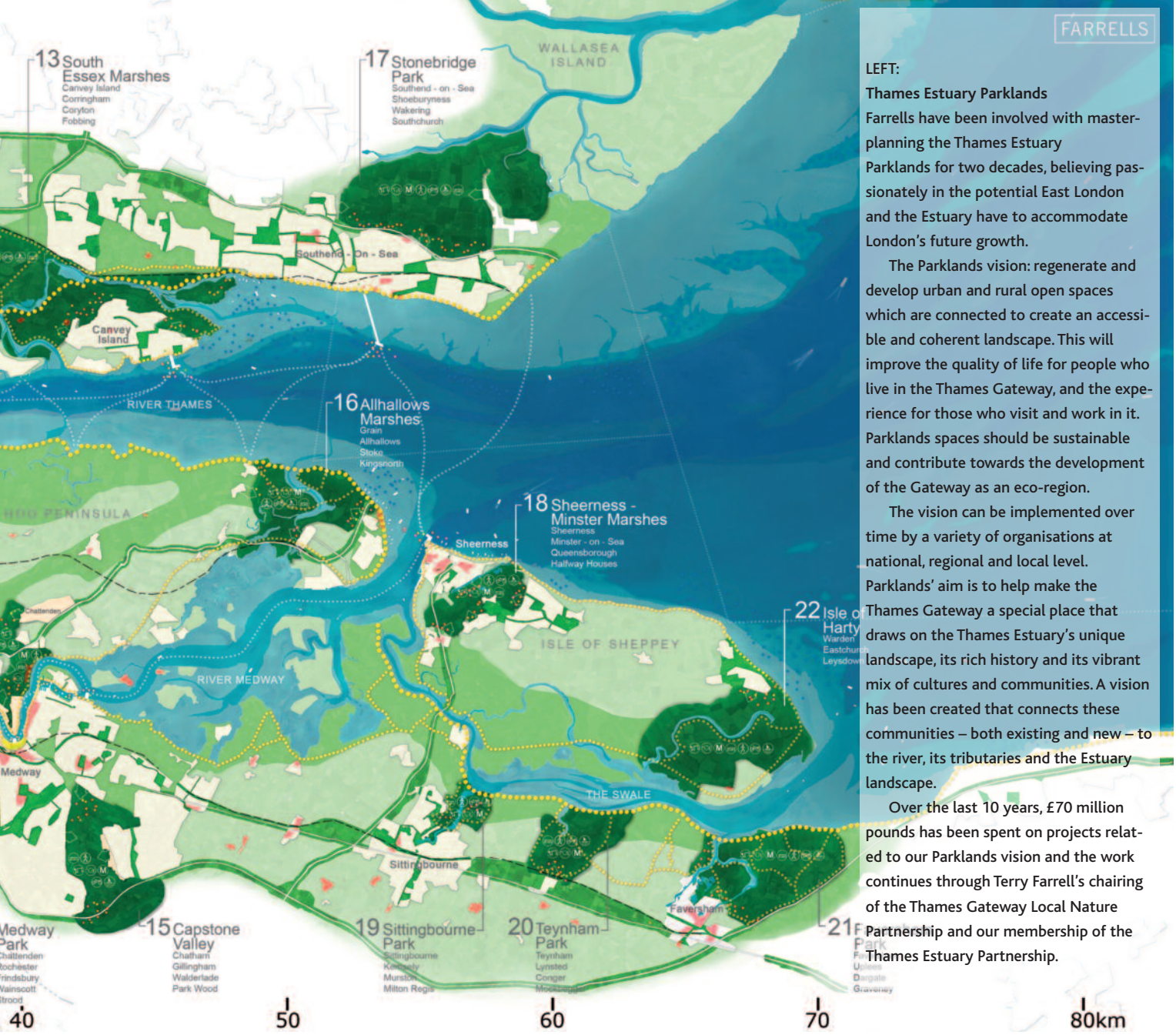

Parallel Pedestrian Routes
Improve signage & wayfinding
Improve landscape environment
Improve safety
'Marylebone Circus'
Improve pedestrian routes
Introduce more pavement activity
Park Crescent
Create route through to improve connections for pedestrians between Regent's Park & Portland Place
Euston U
Remove Unde
Improve North
Simplify traffi
Urban Interventions
Edgware Gate
Humanize the flyover
Introduce active uses adjacent and underneath
York Gate
Landscape improvements and pedestrian crossing
Great Portland Square
Improve setting of Holy Trinity Church
Improve traffic circulation



LEFT:

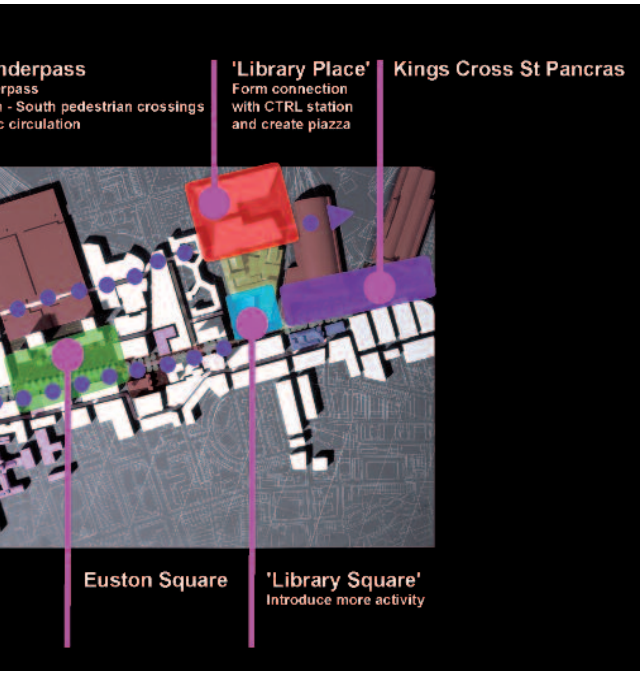
Thames Estuary Parklands

Farrells have been involved with master-planning the Thames Estuary Parklands for two decades, believing passionately in the potential East London and the Estuary have to accommodate London's future growth.

The Parklands vision: regenerate and develop urban and rural open spaces which are connected to create an accessible and coherent landscape. This will improve the quality of life for people who live in the Thames Gateway, and the experience for those who visit and work in it. Parklands spaces should be sustainable and contribute towards the development of the Gateway as an eco-region.

The vision can be implemented over time by a variety of organisations at national, regional and local level. Parklands' aim is to help make the Thames Gateway a special place that draws on the Thames Estuary's unique landscape, its rich history and its vibrant mix of cultures and communities. A vision has been created that connects these communities – both existing and new – to the river, its tributaries and the Estuary landscape.

Over the last 10 years, £70 million pounds has been spent on projects related to our Parklands vision and the work continues through Terry Farrell's chairing of the Thames Gateway Local Nature Partnership and our membership of the Thames Estuary Partnership.



LEFT:

Marylebone-Euston Road, London

The Marylebone-Euston Road is a key east-west artery in London. It has the potential to be transformed into one of London's greatest assets with street life, attractive landscaping, major squares and green spaces. Our studies have focused on major transport infrastructure, interchanges, pedestrian flows, commercial addresses, office precincts and landscape improvement. Much of its enormous potential stems from the close proximity of a number of mainline stations; it is a significant arrival/departure point for mainland travel as well as having direct access to Europe via the Eurostar at Kings Cross St Pancras.

Our intellectual framework has acted as a catalyst for change. A pedestrian crossing has since been installed under the flyover at Edgware Road, beginning to transform this car-dominated area into a more pedestrian-friendly zone. At Euston Circus, our proposals to integrate pedestrians and traffic have been built out and have brought a huge improvement to the pedestrian movement across Euston Road.

Similarly, our Regent's Place masterplan transformed this part of London from a disconnected commercial enclave into a liveable and attractive part of the city; all demonstrating the benefit of taking as our starting point that the 'place' as the client.









Aerial Images by Andrew Holt, Sept 2017

Lots Road, London

Located on Lots Road, London SW10, Chelsea Waterfront is a residential led mixed use development. It is the only major development site of its size on the north side of the river, west of Canary Wharf and includes the iconic Lots Road Power Station which is to be carefully refurbished. The scheme includes two towers of 37 and 25 storeys and low rise apartments situated on the river's edge surrounded by landscaped gardens which are publicly accessible, opening up 400m of waterfront to the public.

Farrells are providing full architectural services and interior design for this development, as well as the masterplan for the site. We are also designing the Entrance Pavilion, an elegant structure which forms an integrated part of the landscaped entrance to the Chelsea Waterfront development. It is an open and welcoming pavilion for visitors which also provides a soft security presence.