Mark Hunter
mhunter@wandsworth.gov.uk
020 8871 8418

Head of Forward Planning and Transportation
John Stone
jstone@wandsworth.gov.uk
020 8871 6628

City of Westminster

City Of Westminster
Westminster City Hall
64 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6QP

020 7641 6500
www.westminster.gov.uk

Chief Executive
Stuart Love
slove@westminster.gov.uk
020 7641 3091

Director of Planning
020 7641 2519

Head of City Policy and Strategy
Barry Smith
bsmith@westminster.gov.uk
020 7641 3052

Please notify any changes immediately by e-mail to planninginlondon@mac.com with the subject 'planning in london directory'.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

020 7983 4000
www.london.gov.uk

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
mayor@london.gov.uk
020 7983 4000

Greater London Authority
Executive Director, Good Growth
Philip Graham

Assistant Director, Planning (GLA) and City Planning (TfL)
Lucinda Turner

Head of Development Management
John Finlayson

Head of the London Plan and Growth Strategies
Lisa Fairmaner
lisa.fairmaner@london.gov.uk

Planning Change Manager
Peter Kemp

Urban Design London
Palestra
197 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8AA
020 7593 9000
www.urbandesignlondon.com

Planning Officers Society
The Croft,
81 Walton Road,
Aylesbury HP21 7SN
tel: 01296 422161

Design For London
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA

info@designforlondon.gov.uk
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

020 7944 4400

enquiries.br@communities.gsi.gov.uk
planning.policies@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Joanna Averley, director, chief planner

Simon Gallagher, director, planning

Magazine of the Year (non-weekly) WINNER 2007 & finalist 2006 – 2012 & 2016 & 2018 International Building Press

Keep taking your *PiL*!

Please complete and mail the form below with cheque for £99.00 or click SUBSCRIBE at www.planninginlondon.com and pay with PayPal or credit card

Avalon Planning, L B Barnet, Gilmartinley, Harvard College Library, London Wharf PLC, L B Islington, L B Greenwich, Sport England, Entec UK, Berkeley Group, Workspace Group, LB Bexley, RBK&C, RTPI, LB Bromley, PRP Architects, Durrants, British Land Company, L B Islington, CBE, GL Hearn, Holistic Group, White Young Green, Dentons, i-Document Solutions, Trowers & Hamlins, British Land, Montagu Evans, Hayes Davidson, Precise Media, NLP, L B Merton, Cluttons Planning, Speechly Bircham, TP Bennett, The London Society, Ebsco, Brockton Capital, Turley Associates, Munkenbeck & Partners, Terence O'Rourke, Assael Architecture, Metropolitan Workshop, PRP, Urban Research, AMEC, GLA, LCR Stations and Property, Terence O'Rourke, Rolfe Judd Planning, Southbank University, Lurot Brand, Slaughter and May, Alliance Planning, Cluttons, DPP, Savills, Henley Business School, Grosvenor, Sainsbury's, Hamptons International, Barratt Homes, National Grid, Network Rail, Foster + Partners, Gorkana Group, London & Continental Railways, London Communications Agency, Cardiff University, Womble Bond Dickinson, L B Ealing, MHCLG, Transport for London, LSE Library, Deloitte Real Estate, London Councils, Circle 33 Housing Trust, P&O Estates Ltd, Greenwich University, Steer Davies Gleave, City of Westminster, British Architectural Library, CBRE, Delancy, PDP London, Bellway Homes, Jestico & Whiles, London & Quadrant, Ecology Consultancy Ltd, Tesco Plc, Ramboll, Dominion Properties, WSP Indigo, Slaughter and May, LSE library ...

... Just some of the firms and organisations who have taken their *Planning in London* subscription. ONE YEAR FOR JUST £99

To subscribe: click on www.planninginlondon.com or please return this form. A subscription is a licence for 5 copies emailed in PDF format. Please supply up to 5 email addresses to planninginlondon@mac.com

Go to planninginlondon.com > Subscribe and pay online with

PayPal

VISA MasterCard Maestro AMERICAN EXPRESS DIRECT debit

☐ I would like to subscribe from:
☐ last issue 181 July 2021
☐ this issue 119 October 2021
☐ next issue 120 January 2022
☐ I enclose a cheque for £99.00 (no VAT, payable to Planning in London)
☐ I am interested in advertising in the Advice directory (£300 for one year)

Please debit my card £106 (£99+£6.00 for credit card administration, no VAT payable)

Card type: *VISA* ☐ *MASTERCARD* ☐

Card number: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Expiry date: ☐☐☐☐ security no: ☐☐☐

Signature: *Tel:*

Name on card: *Up to 5 Email addresses:*

Firm:

Card billing address:

Delivery address if different:

Post cheque to: Planning in London, Studio Petersham, Gorshott, 181 Petersham Road TW10 7AW for the attention of Natalie Barratt

Let's talk about design codes

To deliver design codes successfully, many voices need to be heard, and their inputs brought together into a cohesive proposal, says Matias Piazza



RIGHT: Industrial character with rich textures and colours in Hatcham Road



Matias Piazza is Senior Urban Designer at Farrells

Design Codes are not something new and have been used in the built environment for quite a while. Most recently, the launch of the National Model Design Code (NMDC) programme and creation of the Office for Place (following the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission Living with Beauty report and Planning White Paper),added some flame to the debate of its role in the planning system and in driving 'beauty' in the built environment.

For us at Farrells, having developed many large-scale masterplans over the years, including one of the recent NMDC pilots, this has been a good opportunity to re-think and restructure our approach to developing Design Codes. Working alongside Local Authorities and local communities, in both emerging and regenerating areas, has allowed us to establish a design process which captures the character of the place into a set of guidelines, aiming to enable development that is rich and aligned with its environment. This article explores some of the lessons learnt over the years and highlights some of the benefits of adopting Design Codes.

Defining identity and character (and beauty?)

The BBBBC Living with Beauty report encourages Local Authorities and communities to embed 'requirements for beauty and placemaking' in the core of the design process, ensuring future development is coherent and site-specific rather than predominantly generic and replicable architecture. The identification of the local character and the (potentially subjective) definition of what is beautiful should be translated into a set of guidelines, a toolbox, enabling appropriate debate between different stakeholders involved in future projects such >>>





ABOVE LEFT:
Ormside Street Currently

RIGHT:
User perspective of intented character of Ormside Street of tomorrow

>>> as Local Authorities, businesses, developers, and, of course, residents.

But the core task - the definition of what is character and identity - and how this can be translated into design rules capable of enabling (and not restricting!) good development proves to be quite complex. In 2020, Farrells were commissioned by Folkestone and Hythe District Council to produce a study of local Kent landscapes, geography and built form. While the primary goal of the study was intended to inform the future Otterpool Park development, the scope has the broader objective of capturing many local identities and specific characteristics of the surrounding area. Following socio-spatial research of the wider area (consisting of many site visits, interviews, and conversations, supported by desktop review) we have created a set of 10 principles, which we believe are key defining character elements to consider when designing new buildings. The principles included an array of local characteristics, ranging from the patchwork of the landscape, the dynamic street sections, and the roof forms, to the details around building edges, windows, contextual colour pallets, and reflectivity.

Whilst in more rural areas, such as Kent, character is clearly identifiable, in more complex urban areas it is far more challenging to define. Earlier this year, Southwark Council appointed Farrells, Gbolade Design Studio and Exterior Architecture as a team of multi-disciplinary consultants to prepare a Design Code for the area around Hatcham and Ilderton Road, on Old Kent Road, as part of the government's NMDC pilot - the only one of its kind trialled in London. In an area which is predominantly industrial, often described as characterless, we took the first step in determining the identity of the place which relies in its history: the origin of its urban grain, the reminiscent architecture of the pre-war era and the 1950's industrial typologies. But, apart from the physical elements which are tangible to the built environment, the most characteristic elements are the ones experienced, instead of seen. The area is strongly defined by its diverse light industrial uses, its network of makers, emerging creative community, and concentration of faith groups.

Throughout the project, the design team was constantly surprised by discovering a new place, experiencing new happenings, sounds, chants, choirs, smells (often not so pleasant), and so on, on each site visit. In a fast-changing area, such a mix of activities create a rich and unique environment, which should be captured and translated as key design principles for the Design Code, guiding future development of potential mixed use, residential and industrial schemes, while ensuring that schemes are locally led, coherent and with an appropriate rather than a generic design solution.

BELOW:
Large-scale physical model and set of boards used at the exhibition events



Perhaps beautiful, definitely accessible

Whilst the physical outcomes and influence Design Codes will have in shaping / preserving the character and identity of areas, they will have to be tested through time and will have to be constantly updated, one significant and immediate benefit of the design process has been accessibility. By adopting language that escapes jargon and graphics that avoid the abstraction of masterplans and planning drawings – aided by some large-scale models – the debate with residents and businesses can focus on the look and feel of proposals, enabling an honest discussion about design elements such as massing, heights, land uses, landscape, parking, servicing, and so many others. Rather than enforcing rules, Design Codes can enable a healthy and constructive communication tool between multiple stakeholders.

As part of the Southwark commission, we have undertaken a public consultation event, building upon previous Old Kent Road AAP (Area Action Plan) consultation events. In addition to regular site visits and one-to-one interviews with local businesses and landowners, the design team held an online webinar and two exhibition events at the local Penarth Centre, with great attendance by residents, local businesses, representatives of faith groups, amongst others. Design and language accessibility was a key driver of the events. Proposals were supported by clear 'user perspective' collages and diagrams – instead of the commonly confusing and technical plans – and a large-scale physical model of the masterplan. As a result, the clear visual presentation encouraged a greater level of engagement as the proposals become more tangible and specific for a wide variety of people.

Building on the success of the consultation, the final Design Codes produced – limited to no more than a 30-page concise document - will be translated into a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the AAP, to be adopted in 2022. The codes and parameters will also be digitalised in an online platform, such as VuCity, easing the access to the key design principles and parameters that will be expected to be followed by developers seeking to gain planning permission. Again, this is not intended to be prescriptive, but future development will be expected to be aligned with key principles of the Design Codes and will surely be referenced by residents and local businesses throughout all stages of consultation.

Co-design! – the role of community, artists and workshops

For Hatcham and Ilderton Road we used a themed 'pattern workshop' day, including an artist residency, for engaging with for the local school, communities and church groups. The methodology involved asking local people to contribute photographs and pattern designs that have meaning to them, either relating to the area or reminding them of home. The concept was entitled "Brought and Found" naturally telling its own story. The material generated during this event will be collated into a sourcebook that can be referenced in the masterplan and codes for future design guidance.

To successfully deliver Design Codes, many voices need to be heard, and their inputs brought together into a cohesive proposal. Taking on board the accessible nature of codes and the exciting task of defining character and identity of place, the design process offers a special opportunity of collaborating with local stakeholders through time, ensuring proposals are truly connected to their individual locations. ■







TOP:
Image 4 - Model successfully used to communicate massing principles to residents and local businesses

ABOVE AND LEFT
Llderton Road