



Courtesy: Shauna Bradley, Glenn Howells Architects

Introduction to Urban Design

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- **Urban design is a framework of principles that can help us to create well-designed and well-built places that benefit people and communities, making places that work, feel safe, comfortable and are inclusive.** The focus of urban design is on people and places, looking at high quality destinations but also good, attractive and enjoyable routes to get there. It responds to the needs of a wide range of groups at different times of day and all stages of life. It is a way of thinking rather than a fixed set of rules - judgement is always required!
- **The practice of urban design developed from the 1960's onwards, combatting the top-down and car-focussed ways of planning which developed after the war.** Development has increasingly been seen as a 'mending tool' rather than something that blows places apart. Urban design principles have remained remarkably consistent in policy documents, and are most recently set out in key policy documents such as the National Design Guide.
- **Urban design can be viewed from three key aspects:** the wider urban form, looking at context, identity, nature, urban grain, built form and public space; movement - looking at accessibility, liveable streets, user hierarchy and junctions; and buildings - including mixed and integrated uses and the importance of healthy and sustainable design. But before you start considering development you need to understand where things have come from and what has influenced them, experiencing places and talking to the people who live, work and play there.
- **When we are looking at movement, we need to invert old hierarchies, putting the car at the top and instead focussing on pedestrians, then cyclists, then public transport users and only then consider other vehicles.** We can design local streets to ensure vehicles come into them as a 'guest'. Streets are places to *be* in, as well as move around in and this needs to include creativity and elements of fun – think of outside areas as being our collective living room.
- **Buildings in urban design create opportunities for good relationships between inside and outside,** using social spaces along access decks, balconies, circulation areas, courtyards and frontages. The buildings need to act as 'good neighbours', adding positive qualities to the context and knitting the wider urban fabric together, both visually and with mixed and integrated uses.
- **Another dimension to urban design is time** – design should adapt for new needs and be flexible to allow for change, allowing us to be 'keepers of the framework' rather than holders of the masterplan, holding the different parts together and inspiring creativity.



Speakers:

Attendees: 80

Hilary Satchwell - Tibbalds

Deborah Saunt - DSDHA

Chris Martin - Urban Movement

Jane Hakes - Dacorum and Public Practice Associate

Amanda Reynolds - AR Urbanism

Shauna Bradley - Glenn Howells Architects

Lisa Woo - LB Enfield