LONDON – PLANNING INTEGRATED COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

The term 'regeneration' has become ubiquitous in urban planning and is often used loosely to describe many urban interventions, including those of a purely commercial nature that renew (and often destroy) urban fabric purely for private profit. There is nothing inherently wrong with development for profit, but regeneration should imply something subtler, complex and multi-faceted. If, as urban practitioners, we ignore the social dimension of urban change and fail to redress existing imbalances then we are complicit in perpetuating social inequalities. Urban regeneration should be driven by an agenda to improve social wellbeing. As practitioners we have a moral imperative to address inequalities and develop design strategies to remove barriers to social integration, real or perceived.

On the surface, London appears to be a multi-cultural city without the political or stark socio-spatial divisions that are seen, for example, in the *banlieues* of Paris. There are wealthier and poorer neighbourhoods of course but, due to its history and post war planning policies, most neighbourhoods are socially mixed. The divisions in London, however, are subtler and fine grained. The city is open (and indeed there are few, if any areas that are too dangerous to enter) but perceived barriers exist – invisible lines that divide the city, isolate some of its inhabitants and inhibit social mobility. This paper will look at the conditions that create divisions in London and will examine strategies that can break down the physical and psychological barriers within cities. It will use the Kings Cross regeneration scheme as a central case study.

Keywords: Regeneration, social inequalities, divided cities, Kings Cross neighbourhood, barriers in the city

RESUMEN

El término "regeneración" se ha convertido en algo omnipresente en la planificación urbana y a menudo se utiliza de forma imprecisa para describir muchas intervenciones urbanas, incluidas las de carácter puramente comercial que renuevan (y a menudo destruyen) el tejido urbano con fines puramente lucrativos. No hay nada malo en el desarrollo con fines de lucro, pero la regeneración debería implicar algo más sutil, complejo y multifacético. Si, como profesionales del urbanismo, ignoramos la dimensión social del cambio urbano y no corregimos los desequilibrios existentes, seremos cómplices de la perpetuación de las desigualdades sociales. La regeneración urbana debe estar impulsada por un programa de mejora del bienestar social. Como profesionales, tenemos el imperativo moral de abordar las desigualdades y desarrollar estrategias de diseño para eliminar las barreras a la integración social, reales o percibidas.

A primera vista, Londres parece una ciudad multicultural sin las divisiones políticas o socioespaciales tan marcadas que se observan, por ejemplo, en las *banlieues* de París. Hay barrios más ricos y más pobres, por supuesto, pero, debido a su historia y a las políticas de planificación de la posguerra, la mayoría de los barrios son socialmente mixtos. Las divisiones en Londres, sin embargo, son más sutiles y finas. La ciudad es abierta (y de hecho hay pocas zonas, si es que hay alguna, en las que sea demasiado peligroso entrar), pero existen barreras percibidas, líneas invisibles que dividen la ciudad, aíslan a algunos de sus habitantes e inhiben la movilidad social. Este documento analizará las condiciones que crean divisiones en Londres y examinará las estrategias que pueden romper las barreras físicas y psicológicas dentro de las ciudades. Utilizará el plan de regeneración de Kings Cross como estudio de caso central.

Palabras clave: Regeneración, desigualdades sociales, ciudades divididas, barrio de Kings Cross, barreras en la ciudad.

RESUMO

O termo "regeneração" tornou-se onipresente no planejamento urbano e é frequentemente usado de forma imprecisa para descrever diversas intervenções urbanas, incluindo aquelas de natureza puramente comercial que renovam (e muitas vezes destroem) o tecido urbano, visando apenas o lucro privado. Não há nada de inerentemente errado no desenvolvimento para o lucro, mas intervenções urbanas de regeneração devem implicar em algo mais sutil, complexo e multifacetado. Se, como praticantes urbanos, ignoramos a dimensão social da mudança urbana e não almejamos corrigir os desequilíbrios existentes, então, seremos cúmplices da perpetuação de inequidades sociais. Propostas de regeneração urbana devem ser impulsionadas por uma agenda de um melhor bem-estar social. Como praticantes, temos um imperativo moral para enfrentar as inequidades e desenvolver estratégias projetuais para a remoção de barreiras à integração social, reais ou percebidas.

Na superfície, Londres parece ser uma cidade multicultural, sem as divisões políticas ou sócio espaciais gritantes que são vistas, por exemplo, nos *banlieues* de Paris. Há bairros mais ricos e mais pobres, é claro, mas, devido a sua história e políticas de planejamento pós-gue-

rra, a maioria dos bairros são socialmente miscigenados. Entretanto, as divisões em Londres são mais sutis e de maior granulação. A cidade é aberta, acessível - na verdade são poucas áreas, se é que existe alguma, demasiado perigosa para se entrar -, mas existem barreiras perceptíveis - linhas invisíveis que dividem a cidade, isolam alguns de seus habitantes e inibem a mobilidade social. Este artigo analisará as condições que criam essas divisões em Londres e examinará estratégias que possam quebrar barreiras internas as cidades, físicas e psicológicas. Para tanto, terá como estudo de caso central o esquema de regeneração em Kings Cross.

INTRODUCTION

Barriers exist in the city in many forms. They may be physical separations caused by railways, rivers, motorways and the chance nature of geography and may purely delineate neighbourhoods and reinforce a sense of identity and community. Or, they may produce conditions of exclusion. Even without physical barriers cities can still be divided along sectarian or racial lines. The 'wrong side of the tracks' can be a short way from the ghetto.

Most cities which operate under any form of market economy will become divided by income and social class into richer and poorer areas.[1] Whether this is seen as a problem, is a matter of social policy and whether the political will exists to address it. For architects and planners working at the city or neighbourhood level, the questions are how to reduce the im-

pact of barriers, how to foster physical mobility and how to break down psychological barriers that prevent citizens from fully participating in civic life. Can urban design strategies facilitate greater social integration and, if so, how?

This paper starts with a brief review of the arguments for social and economic mix in neighbourhoods, as proposed by urban theorists. It then examines the conditions that can create physical and psychological barriers within cities. The third section considers the social divides in London and some of the policies and strategies that seek to break these down. It concludes with a case study outlining some of the design approaches adopted in the Kings Cross regeneration scheme to foster greater social inclusion.

Palavras-chave: Regeneração, desigualdades sociais, cidades divididas, bairro Kings Cross, barreiras na cidade.

THEORY

The importance of mixed-use neighbourhoods and the primary position of the street as civic space is an idea that stretches back to Jane Jacobs in the 1960s (although this was of course the condition of the pre-industrial city). Copenhagen, under the influence of architect Jan Gehl, was already being transformed from a car-based to a pedestrian and cycle-orientated city. His first major publication, *Life Between Buildings – Using Public Space*, 1971 (Gehl 1987 [1971]) was in many ways a reaction to modernism's emphasis on the city as a machine. Here, the citizen had become subservient to the large-scale intervention of the architect,

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1 It is accepted that this is a broad statement, and there are examples where attempts have been made to plan totally egalitarian cities, both utopian and repressive.

planner and traffic engineer (and the subsequent domination of the automobile). Gehl's theories and approach explicitly reference the influence of Jane Jacobs and represent an important train of urban thinking that focuses on the relationships between urban form and human behaviour. Gehl's work subsequently influenced many cities including New York and Melbourne. But perhaps it was the 1986 International Building Exhibition (IBA Berlin) that was the seminal moment where a new generation of architects and urban thinkers who had been influenced by Paul Kleihues (Kleihues and Klotz 1986)[2] refashioned an urbanism based on the inclusive principles of the European city – the street, the perimeter block and the public space. In London these influences were central to the design and public space programmes of Design for London.[3]

The concept of mixed zones is now well established in UK and European planning. Single use zones might be efficient in terms of industrial style economies of scale but are ill suited to the new economy which is based on intense exchange of ideas. Here, proximity and interconnectivity are the keys. The idea of an urban paradigm based on synergies and a degree of tolerated disorder, sits comfortably with the *everyday urbanism* introduced by Margaret Crawford, John Chase and John Kaliski in 1999 (Chase, Crawford and Kaliski 1999). Inherent to this approach is an appreciation of the fine grain of the city. Everyday spaces –the city's public spaces, markets and streets become part of the building blocks for design inter-

ventions– these places that may be 'messy' but they can become a rich bricolage through which the everyday lives of citizens may be refashioned. This approach helped to develop thinking about the temporal nature of the city, where changes such as the appropriation of space for different activities and by different groups, are part of the urban dynamic. This in turn, opens the door to new forms of more democratic urbanism, arising from activism to embrace a shift in power towards active community participation. Here the architect becomes part of a team and works with other disciplines. By becoming a 'player', the architect ceases to be a detached technician, and design moves beyond mere speculation on form to involvement in the realization, curation and management of urban space. Urban design has multiple clients and multiple impacts on people's lives. The designer cannot hide behind a false professional neutrality but instead has to expand his or her brief to embrace social outcomes. This tactical approach to urbanism views process as being as important as outcomes. The city can be viewed as a series of constantly overlapping temporary events and this can bring a new sensitivity to urban planning and design –a perspective that extends urban thinking further into the field of experience. This is explored by Bishop and Williams in their book *The Temporary City (*Bishop and Williams 2012).

BARRIERS IN THE CITY

Cities can be divided due to many factors. These may be geopolitical, in the case of Berlin (1961-89) and Nicosia (1974-present). Here the barriers are physical and are controlled;

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2 Including Aldo Rossi, Leon Krier and James Stirling

3 Design for London was the Mayor's architecture unit (2006-2013)

behind them different social and economic systems might develop. The barriers might be sectarian as in the case of Belfast, or racial as in apartheid-era South Africa. Here the 'peace walls' and townships are physical manifestations reflecting (and reinforcing) religious, political and social divisions that have long and complex histories. These are acute examples of the divisions that are present in many cities in the world. Social and economic divisions might be extreme enough to create 'ghettos' or 'no go areas' (actual or perceived), where the sense of personal threat is sufficient to create tangible barriers based on a strong sense of 'otherness'.

Far more common are communities that are isolated from their neighbours due to disparities in income, education, health and opportunity. These areas might be physically separate, but often are not. If the borders are psychological, that does not mean that they are not real. The proverbial 'wrong side of the tracks' is acknowledged throughout the daily lives of residents, and behind these perceived barriers behavioural attitudes develop that can further reinforce a sense of detachment from the broader life of the city. These barriers can be reinforced by gating, security systems, cleaning and maintenance regimes, or through more subtle design elements that emphasise the difference between areas of the city, between the rich and the poor.

Security regimes can work against social integration and exacerbate divides. For example, the gating of residential areas (appearing in London and prevalent in many Asian cities), represents an insidious encroachment on the rights of movement in the city. It is essentially anti-urban and anti-civic and represents a withdrawal by (small) sections of society. Too often planners cave in to arguments around 'security' that are not backed by hard evidence. There is evidence however, that active streets have lower levels of crime[4].

The 'corporatisation' of space also leads to the removal of parts of the urban fabric from democratic control. An interesting test of the rights of the individual in the city arose in an incident at Canary Wharf in 2004.[5] A group of office cleaners wished to demonstrate against being dismissed by their employers, but placards around the area warned: "if you are here for this event [the demonstration] you must leave Canary Wharf immediately. You are not permitted to march, demonstrate, loiter or remain on any of the common areas of Canary Wharf in connection with this event" (Tempest 2004). Street signs in the estate prohibit entry to people wearing inappropriate clothing, prohibit parking bicycles, skateboarding, etc. Apart from such petty restrictions being annoying, the management and private policing of such corporate estates, sends out strong messages about who is unwelcome in parts of the city.

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4 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259545598_ The_Social_Ecology_of_Public_Space_Active_Streets_ and_Violent_Crime_in_Urban_Neighborhoods; Browning, C.R., Jackson, A,.L The Social Ecology of Public Space: Active Streets and Violent Crime in Urban Neighborhoods. 1 November 2013, https://www. semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Social-Ecology-of-Public-Space%3A-Active-Streets-Browning-Jackson/5f-8988666c4a5734dce82269dc04a509c216afc6

5 Canary Wharf is London's second financial district that was constructed on the then derelict docks in east London. Developed by Olympia and York designed by SOM it is an office plaza, the freehold of the estate (including the roads and open spaces is privately owned.

LONDON THE UNIQUE CITY

Although London shares many of the characteristics of other European cities – neighbourhoods, parks, civic buildings and the street as both public space and public thoroughfare, it has some important differences. It is generally less compact than many European cities.[6] It has always been a city focused on trade and commerce; it is cosmopolitan and generally open to new ideas and people. London has also been fortunate in that, throughout much of its history, power has never been concentrated into the hands of an individual or small ruling clique but has instead been dispersed and shared between public and private corporations, businesses and individuals. The early introduction of freeholds produced a class of landowners and a model of growth and development that was reliant on private capital, and a regulatory system to protect the rights of the individual landowner. London was also able to dismantle its city walls much earlier than other European cities and thus could expand outwards, 'capturing' existing settlements. This has given it a less dense urban morphology and remarkable physical diversity in its neighbourhoods.

London's physical diversity is matched by its social diversity. Although it is fair to say that the east of the city is generally poorer than the west, London had no inner belt of heavy industry and neighbourhoods are often socially mixed –the rich and poor living close to each other. This social diversity has been hard wired into the fabric of the city. Post-war reconstruction often followed the pattern of bombing. Displaced populations were rehoused in public housing near to where they had lived. In the 1960s and 1970s, many local authorities acquired 18th and 19th century street terraces for public housing. These areas later became gentrified, but the diversity of tenure, and therefore social class remains and has consolidated the social mix of neighbourhoods, particularly in the central areas. However, social proximity does not in itself foster integrated communities. The city has not only physical barriers, but also psychological barriers. These are exacerbated where social housing is within distinct public sector estates, especially where these are divorced from the street network and become introspective enclaves.

Despite London's social diversity there are still intense pockets of deprivation. Local neighbourhoods are often fragmented into a mosaic of enclaves that reflect social class and income. Due to London's history and to post war planning policies, most boroughs are socially mixed[7] and in many areas of central London there is significant disparity of wealth within single streets. There are ten stations on the London Underground from Westminster, the seat of Government, to Stratford in the east, where the 2012 London Olympics were staged. Between these two contrasting neighbourhoods there is a ten-year difference in both male and female life expectancy, or to put it prosaically, you lose one year of life for every station you

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6 For example, population density per square mile for European cities shows Paris 54,415; Brussels 19,640; Amsterdam 13,300. London at 7,700 is not in the top 50 cities. World population review 2019– accessed November 2021.

7 The London Local Government Act reorganised the borough councils into larger units of government. Implicit in drawing up the boundaries was an attempt to combine wealthier central boroughs with poorer neighbourhoods on their periphery.

travel on the line[8]. This shocking statistic shows one of the many impacts of poverty and deprivation in the city; it should not be acceptable in a city, within a country with the 5th largest GDP in the world,[9] with universal state funded education and health care systems, and one of the most comprehensive public transport systems in the world. Although there is unemployment, there is also a labour shortage in the city[10], and average salaries are higher than the UK average. In the case of London, social divides are not the result of physical barriers, but of socio-economic conditions. For complex reasons, some individuals are excluded from the city that they inhabit. At the local level, deprivation is often concentrated into small pockets, situated near to wealthier areas and employment opportunities. London's barriers are often also psychological and reflect feelings of, 'this is not for us' and 'we do not feel comfortable entering these places'. Despite this, there are few, if any areas that are too dangerous to enter. Yet perceived barriers remain –invisible lines that divide the city, isolate some of its inhabitants and inhibit social mobility.

POLICY

The term 'regeneration' has become ubiquitous in urban planning. The term is used loosely to describe many different urban interventions, including those of a purely commercial nature that renew (and often destroy) urban fabric purely for private profit. There is nothing inherently wrong with development for profit, but regeneration should be more than a real estate exercise. It *should* imply something more subtle, complex and multi-faceted. If, as urban practitioners, we ignore the social dimension of urban change and fail to redress existing imbalances then we are complicit in perpetuating them. Regeneration should be driven by an agenda to improve social wellbeing. It therefore has a moral imperative to address inequalities, where possible by removing barriers to social integration –real or perceived.

The term 'gentrification' was first used in a study of social change in Islington (London) (Glass 1964) and, over the past 57 years, strong forces of social change have been at work in the UK. Central Government policies such as Right to Buy, have allowed wealthier tenants to buy their council-owned properties at a discount and often sell on, thus eroding the quality and quantity of the social housing stock. More recently, Government changes to housing benefits have forced some occupants of social housing out of central areas. The planning system's ability to require developers to provide a percentage of social housing in new developments has also been diluted by successive Governments.

Over the past 25 years, Government funding of social housing has declined, and the provision of affordable units has increasingly been left to the planning system to negotiate in the form of development agreements. A seminal research report by the Three Dragons Consultancy[11] demonstrated that it would be viable

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8 London is not unique in this respect. This is common in most cities in the world and in some the range between wealthy and poor neighbourhoods is far greater.

9 International Monetary Fund 2021

10 There are over 37,000 unfilled vacancies in London (London Councils September 2021)

11 Delivering Affordable Housing through Planning Policy, ENTEC, Three Dragons, Nottingham Trent University

for developers to provide 'up to 50% affordable housing in any new development, and this target was incorporated into the first London Plan (Greater London Authority 2004). This policy target has fluctuated under different Mayors from 35% to 50%, but the achievement on the ground has generally been disappointing. Planners often lack the skill or determination to negotiate with developers, accepting arguments that any affordable housing provision would be unviable, or accepting cash in lieu of provision for affordable housing on sites in the suburbs. Exiling the poorer sections of society to isolated areas (often with poor public transport or jobs) completely defeats the purpose of a policy designed to improve social integration. By failing to achieve socially mixed communities, planning has become complicit in perpetuating social barriers in the city.

More recently, the mixing of tenures in some developments –intended to provide much needed social housing and integrated neighbourhoods– has had unintended and divisive consequences. In 2019, developer Henley Homes blocked social housing residents from using shared play spaces at its Baylis Old School complex in Lambeth, south London. The development was consented for a mix of market and social rented units, where common areas were open to all the residents. However, the designs were altered after planning permission was granted to block the social housing tenants from accessing the communal play areas[12]. This illustrates the problem of 'poor doors' where the entrances to private and social housing blocks were of different standards, so potentially stigmatising those living in social housing. Sadly,

these are not isolated events. The cumulative erosion of movement and rights within the city is a one-way ratchet.

KINGS CROSS

The Kings Cross site lies immediately adjacent to two of the busiest mainline stations in central London. Despite its location on the edge of the central business district, the 27ha site had been derelict for over 25 years (Bishop and Williams 2016). It was uninhabited, isolated, largely forgotten and had blighted the surrounding area. The immediate environs were seedy, run down and a focus for drug dealing and street prostitution. Immediately to the south was one of the most prosperous city sub-regions in Europe. To the north were poor neighbourhoods –predominantly social housing–, with high levels of unemployment, poor educational achievement and compounded health problems. These immediate neighbourhoods were all in the lowest decile of national deprivation statistics. Kings Cross sat on a clear divide within the city, a place that was viewed by the development sector as an unattractive and high-risk proposition.

The site came up for development in the late 1990s when ownership was passed from the Government to London and Continental Railways (as part of the construction of the high-speed rail links to continental Europe.) Argent PLC was appointed as developer and entered into negotiations with the London Borough of Camden to agree a planning consent. Unusually, Argent was open to a collaborative approach to planning, it sought to reduce risk of the development by involving local stakeholders. Its design approach started with agreeing

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12 The developer subsequently backed down in the face of public outcry. The Guardian 25th March 2019.

objectives, understanding constraints, sharing these publicly and studying good development precedents on which to build (Bishop and Williams 2016). The timing of the development was important in understanding this approach and the eventual outcome. The preceding period had produced Canary Wharf, and the large trading floors of Broadgate in the City. But it was drawing to a close. Changes in the London property market meant that high quality floorspace with good open space, shops and restaurants and well served by public transport was at a premium.

Camden was a Labour controlled Council, with a long history of social radicalism and a proud track record in building innovative social housing.[13] It was open to the development of land at Kings Cross, but only if it produced a socially balanced community that was integrated with its poorer surroundings. The question of integration posed the real challenges. The site was physically separated from surrounding neighbourhoods by the stations (to the south), railway embankments (to the west) and a large aggregates depot to the north. On its eastern boundary was a busy road and an inward-looking housing estate. The site boundaries were hard and largely impermeable. But physical connections were not necessarily the problem. Even if connections could be made there was still the issue of how to persuade local residents that this was a part of *their* neighbourhood –a place where they belonged and felt welcome– not another wealthy, up-market enclave.

13 Camden architects department under Neave Brown had pioneered high density, low rise, housing in the form of housing estates such as Alexandra Road and the Maiden Lane estates. Constructed in the early 1970s these are now listed by Heritage England for their architectural importance.

The design process began by defining a set of politically based values that could be turned into objectives. Local residents were fearful that the development would be 'futuristic' and resemble Dubai or parts of Singapore. Instead, the planning aim was that the new development would 'just be another piece of London'. This was more radical than it sounded. Embedded in this statement was the commitment that the new development would be mixed use, socially mixed, based on a street grid, that the edges of the scheme would be porous, that the scheme would have public open space and facilities for everyone, including a new school and sports centre. A great deal of time was spent in considering how areas beyond the site boundary could connect into the scheme. There was early agreement that Kings Cross should 'merge' into its hinterland and that, in time, people would not consider it as a self-contained precinct. This was not just about physical master planning. It sought to consider how the boundary would be *perceived* by local people and whether they would feel excluded or uncomfortable in entering this new neighbourhood.

To compliment this physical vision, the following social question was posed: 'a child born today (in one of the local neighbourhoods) will be leaving school at 18 when the first jobs become available in Kings Cross. How can this development make a difference to their life opportunities?' This galvanised political interest in the scheme. Camden then consulted on its objectives over a six-week period (Camden 2002). The standard practice in planning is to consult on what often looks like (and often is) a finished scheme. This is more marketing than consultation and creates cynicism in local communities. Consulting on objectives was

different and new. It was a conversation about the kind of city neighbourhood that people might want to live in and what it would feel like. The Council and the developer publicly committed to publishing and consulting on all the planning documents, at each stage of the process. The results were then reported back. Camden also established a community forum that included local residents, businesses, school children and a wide range of local community groups from Housing Associations to the Chinese Women's Luncheon Club. The council and the developer committed to, 'talk to anyone, anytime, anywhere' and over the course of the 5 years of planning, approximately 30,000 people engaged with the process. The rationale for this was simple:

- A development will not be inclusive if the process that creates it is not inclusive.

- Community involvement is a form of market research. The more information that can be gathered at the design stage, then the better the design will understand and be sensitive to its context.

- The development would be there for a very long time. Early investment in community consultation would help build strong local social networks and these could be turned into social and political capital.

The lengthy consultation period allowed the council and the developer to explore the local communities' perceptions of, and aspirations for the area. It allowed ideas to be tested and resulted in a set of proposals sought to address the question: 'what is in this for us'?

The next stage was to develop a masterplan that reflected this dialogue. Its main elements were:

- A balanced community: 47% of the housing in the scheme would be affordable and available to local people on the basis of need.[14] In addition, there were to be 600 units of student housing. The housing was to be 'tenure blind' and distributed throughout the scheme. Provisions were included to cap service charges that would otherwise make the housing unaffordable to poorer families.

- Community facilities would be provided by the developer. These would include a publicly managed swimming pool and gymnasium, a pre-school kindergarten and a two-form entry primary school. The nursery and school would be bigger than required and would include places for children from the surrounding area. The siting of the facilities was important. The new nursery and primary school were placed deep within the scheme near to the new park. The aim was that parents taking their children to school would walk through the scheme every day, so making it a part of their neighbourhood. In contrast the sports facilities were sited on the western boundary as close to the local community as possible.

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14 Based on the 2004 London Plan definition with pegged levels on income. Camden Council had nomination rights to all of this housing.

- The developer would fund an academy to train local people for the jobs that were likely to be created in the scheme, and an agency to place them into employment.

- The public realm would contain parks and play areas and would be open and accessible to all.

- The developer would invest in a series of initiatives to promote local enterprise through the creation of approved lists of businesses and contractors from the local area.

- Priority would be given to independent shops and cafes.

- The schemes' anchor tenant was the London University of the Arts. This set the tone for a district that was part of London's burgeoning creative economy. It also guaranteed a high daily footfall through the scheme that instantly animated the new public spaces. Critically many of the people moving through the scheme were not wearing business suits.

CONCLUSIONS

The Kings Cross development is now nearing completion. It is still too early to judge its success but so far it has established itself as a popular destination for both local people and Londoners alike. The social housing and schools have been completed and the training agency has been expanded. So far it has placed over 1,000 local people into jobs. While there has been no research into the extent that the scheme has integrated into the local areas, anecdotal evidence suggests that a good degree of integration has taken place with few perceived local barriers. It is becoming 'just another piece of London".

The planning system cannot, of itself, achieve social integration. It does, however, have a role to play alongside other agencies of government to foster the right conditions for a healthy civic society. Large development schemes are always likely to be contentious – they are agents of change and there are inevitably winners and losers in the process (or at least that is how they are perceived). This places them into the realm of politics, and politicians need to make decisions based on the best available information. Planners and architects for their part need to be acutely aware of the implications of their actions, and inactions.

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