

# Conservation

Bulletin

London and the  
London Plan



Historic England

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Front cover image:  
The dome of St Paul's peeps out above surrounding buildings and construction cranes.  
© Historic England

# Introduction and Context

Editorial: heritage and the dynamic city.

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**Change in a world city is not just irresistible; it is good. London is arguably Europe's most dynamic city, and has been for many years. The reasons for London's dynamism are hotly debated, and understanding them is critical to the future of this remarkable place. Cities that inspire, cities where spirits can soar, are the ones that will be creative, happy and successful.**

I have seen and experienced, at first hand, many changes in London over the last three decades. And the pressures in London are replicated in historic towns and cities all over England. For example, areas which were once shabby are now smart. And in many cases, the historic fabric is in better condition as a result. But that is not always welcome to established residents of those areas, where rising property prices and changing social character can put pressure on existing communities. At the same time a chronic shortage of affordable and social housing (and these are usually different things) is rapidly emerging.

But the particular impact of tall buildings (recognising what is tall depends on context) is becoming more and more pronounced. The number of active tower cranes may be a sign of economic vitality, but whether it is a measure of successful and beneficial development rather depends on what is being built and on the impact on the community around that building. Successful architecture is more than a collection of 'iconic' objects that might 'belong' as much in Dubai as in London. It is defined (amongst other things) by the way a building works in relation to its

surroundings, its impact on views, and its relationship to the public realm, particularly at street level.

Momentum created by well-considered development drives the health of our capital. But unplanned and ill-considered development can have an effect that is unexpected and harmful. The historic character of London and its neighbourhoods is a very important factor in our success as a place in which to live, work and visit.

So how can we get the best of both worlds? Can historic character, which lies at the heart of why people value London so highly, be retained and enhanced whilst allowing creativity and sensitive development to flourish? It is possible. The Granary (now University of the Arts, London) and the regeneration of King's Cross is a model of a large-scale development that enhances the best of the old whilst allowing for well-designed new commercial and cultural buildings. It includes not just the iconic Victorian railway stations – incredibly, in the case of St Pancras, once a whisker from demolition – but also a number of sensitively-designed new buildings, in a coherent and well-planned public realm that makes the area attractive and accessible. The success of King's Cross has been led by a developer with a long-term vision and a well-thought-through strategic plan.

Planning lies at the heart of the challenge for London. Over the country as a whole, the National Planning Policy Framework, introduced in 2012, has been largely successful in giving an effective voice for the historic environment, despite early misgivings from the heritage community. The system of locally developed Plans, widely consulted, is a good one. Local Plans help define objective assessment and encourage community engagement. Amongst many things, they distinguish between areas where development will be encouraged and areas where the existing character is precious. A minority of Local Plans, however, are not up to date. Where they exist, we need to ensure that they are effectively implemented in the face of growing development pressure.



View of the City of London and the Shard from Waterloo Bridge. © Historic England

Decisions are primarily determined by the Boroughs although controversial cases can be referred to the Mayor for his consideration. So the effectiveness of the system depends ultimately on the consistency and objectivity of those decisions. The Mayor has recently updated the GLA's London Plan to give a strategic context to his and the London Boroughs' decisions across a wide range of subjects including planning and design. So far, so good. But the 2015 London Plan is pretty vague on issues such as the designation of appropriate areas for new tall buildings – applications for which the Mayor has rarely turned down in any event. So the current full review of the London Plan which will be consulted upon and subsequently adopted by the new Mayor is critical to the future of our capital city.

London has some great tall buildings. But it also has some which many acknowledge to have been mistakes, and very clumsily located. Some areas such as the south bank of the Thames in Vauxhall are – I would argue – already blighted by piecemeal high-rise development. With over two hundred consented tall buildings in London in the pipeline, the face of the city is already set to change. Let's seize the opportunity of the debate around the London Plan, take a long hard look at the future of London, and make sure we don't mistakenly kill the goose that lays the golden egg – London's special character. ■

# Where We Are Now

This edition of Conservation Bulletin is all about the challenges that will face the new Mayor after May 2016, how they can be addressed in the revised London Plan and what their implications are for the historic environment. Context is always helpful in considering these types of issues – in a London sense, both in terms of an understanding of the history and the way planning has ebbed and flowed in influence, but also how the city and its built environment has evolved and how it relates to other ‘world cities’. An analysis of what development and change means in 2016 in terms

of architectural styles and urban design forms can also help us better understand what works in London, and what people want in terms of the houses, streets and neighbourhoods they live in. In a forward looking sense, emerging methodologies for analysis of the built stock offer potential opportunities for making better use of existing buildings – an imperative that assumes greater importance in the light of climate change and its implications. This section sets out the background against which the issues of growth and its implications need to be considered.

## London’s planning in context

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**London is often thought of as an unplanned city, so what does a plan for London mean? Well, it depends what we understand by planning. London never enjoyed the kind of formally sponsored and controlled spatial extension of the city-area familiar from Amsterdam, Barcelona and other conurbations. Its easy geography and patterns of land-ownership allowed it to grow outwards simply and organically, with few restraints and at low densities.**

Not that London’s growth lacked discipline or amenity. It was in landowners’ interests to maintain the value of their property when it was developed for building. So they set rules for builders about such matters as lines of frontage and the quality of materials to be used. In due course these came together with the rules set by local London authorities and by insurance companies to uphold public safety in streets and houses alike. This network of regulation, accumulating from the Great Fire of 1666 until well into the twentieth century,

is the key to London’s distinctive architectural look. It is a form of planning in itself, passive and permissive rather than interventional or authoritarian. It deserves understanding and respect when fresh or revised plans for London come up for consideration.

How then did planning turn into the rather different tool it is thought of today, as a strategic guide to London’s future? Two reasons may be emphasized, one spatial and architectural, the other economic or abstract. The spatial factor is about size and age. Once a city is old enough and big enough, much effort has to be spent on updating and reconstructing what is already there to suit modern needs. That is far more complex than building on virgin land, requiring greater co-ordination and powers of coercion. The economic point concerns the growing significance of cities. In former centuries cities were often thought of as parasitic, reliant upon the natural bounty of the countryside and waters around them. But nowadays the country depends on the city. How often we are told that Britain’s prosperity depends upon London, and London’s upon the City! We may question the doctrine, but it is rooted nowadays in national policy. London’s economic success must at all costs be maintained, and planning today is regarded as one of the tools to ensure that.

Attempts to replan London go back to Victorian times. But interests and jealousies always got in the way – inner boroughs against peripheral ones, the City of London

ABOVE : VIEW FROM A POINT  $\frac{1}{4}$  MILE WEST OF CHIPPING ONGAR HIGH STREET LOOKING SLIGHTLY SOUTH OF WEST. IN THE RIGHT FOREGROUND IS GREENSTED PARK WITH THE COMMUNITY CENTRE AND THE AVENUE LEADING TO GREENSTED VILLAGE AND CHURCH. IN THE MIDDLE IS THE SHOPPING CENTRE WITH FLATS BEYOND AND SCHOOL TO THE LEFT. MOST OF THE TREES SHOWN ARE EXISTING.

# ONGAR

BELOW : VIEW OF THE SHOPPING CENTRE OF THE SAME NEIGHBOURHOOD, LOOKING EAST, SHOWING SHOPS, CINEMA AND OFFICES. THE BUS ROUTE IS JUST OFF THE PICTURE TO THE LEFT. COMPARE THIS ARRANGEMENT OF A SHOPPING CENTRE, FOR PEDESTRIANS ONLY, WITH THE PHOTOGRAPH OF GUILDFORD HIGH STREET BETWEEN PAGES 134 and 135.



Illustration of proposed shopping centre in Ongar. From the 1944 Greater London Plan by Patrick Abercrombie.

against everyone else, and a reluctance by successive governments to concede powers to a central authority for London. That finally broke down during the Second World War. Planning was popular then in a way that is inconceivable today, while a vision for the future gave hope in an era of destruction and crisis. So Patrick Abercrombie with few resources and a tiny staff of architect-planners was able to come up with not one but two plans for London, the celebrated County of London Plan of 1943, and its successor, the Greater London Plan of 1944 covering the outer areas. The main emphasis of these documents was spatial and architectural. They covered some economic issues, notably the location and zoning of industry. But the great preoccupation then was housing. The Abercrombie Plan recommended a series of density rings, higher in the centre, lower in the outskirts, and an accelerated decentralization of London industry and housing – a policy held to be misguided today.

Britain has never enjoyed such a controlled economy as in the two decades after 1945. During those years the Abercrombie policies were implemented to a

remarkable degree. The New Towns round London, the ‘mixed development’ housing estates of the 1950s and ‘60s, the first tall buildings in the City, the respect for the Georgian fabric of the West End, the enhancement of parks and open spaces, the cultural centre on the South Bank, and the eventual planning of the M25 were all foreshadowed in his reports.

Then the consensus broke down. The London County Council gave way to the Greater London Council, partly with the aim of improving and unifying planning. That failed to happen. The first Greater London Development Plan (1969) was largely about roads, and had to be recast following public rejection of the Inner Ringway or motorway box and equally destructive plans for Covent Garden. Subsequent GLC plans were tamer documents, allowing a climate within which conservation flourished as never before. During the 1970s and ‘80s there was a feeling that London needed time to recover from its wartime and post-war wounds and could do without further radical plans for roads or high buildings. Some creative planning about transport, industry and employment did



Social and function analysis diagram, from the 1943 County of London Plan by J H Forshaw & Patrick Abercrombie.

go on during Ken Livingstone's reign at the GLC (1981–6) and bore fruit in London's now greatly improved public transport facilities. But the policies for employment collapsed when Mrs Thatcher abolished the GLC in 1986.

The end of the twentieth century was a curious period for London planning. While the rest of the world looked on in amazement, the largest city in Europe functioned without any central authority, let alone a plan. It looked like the triumph of 'Non-Plan', as *New Society* in 1969 famously dubbed a less interventionist approach. But that Non-Plan was a type of planning that was proved by its most famous outcome, the regeneration of London's Docklands by means of a development corporation with its own rules and ethos. Meanwhile a balkanized London soldiered on, with an unglamorous advisory committee (LPAC) trying to co-ordinate the boroughs, which since 1986 have had wider planning powers.

Has London planning got better, or more effective, since the Greater London Authority was reconstituted in 2000? Again, it depends what you mean by planning.

With the economists in the ascendant, post-millennial plans from City Hall have tended to favour whatever makes London richer, denser and taller. Crucial in the GLA's early years was the influence of Lord Rogers, who has persistently championed density, variety and activity in the inner city, scorning suburbanites and conservationists. As centralized planning is unpopular, the GLA tries to be light on its feet, outsourcing what it can and steering boroughs towards 'opportunity areas' and brownfield sites.

Some issues recur. There is greater concern today than there has been for fifty years about housing. It is to be hoped that the GLA's new plan will help to meet London's desperate need for affordable housing. One thing is certain: successful planning needs to respect London's traditional strengths and character, which form a major part of its international appeal, and not just make it more like other cities round the world. ■

## Using new technologies to analyse and predict change in the building stock



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**As London and other UK cities face increasingly stringent energy and waste legislation, and ever greater pressure on infrastructure and resources, the use of big data, machine learning and predictive analysis to maximise efficiency and aid resource conservation is set to grow.**

Energy and waste directives are also now shifting Europe's focus away from new build towards maintenance, adaptation and refurbishment and a greater awareness of potential socio-economic and environmental value embedded within the building stock. Diversity is also currently a hot topic, seen by economists as a fundamental requirement for knowledge economies and as essential for liveability, economic growth, and attractiveness in cities.

Within this climate an opportunity exists for those working in building conservation, building history, and the production and conservation of historical spatial data to radically reposition themselves at the forefront of the intelligent cities debate. Their USP is an unrivalled knowledge of the building stock and its evolution and of the impact of change. As a city's stock forms its largest, most complex and most valuable resource, detailed data relating to finite components, and changes to them, are likely to become increasingly highly prized.

Such repositioning, however, requires a more scientific approach to data collection and analysis, and an upskilling in the area of data science. Knowledge relating to the stock has the potential to be organised, and created, in such a way as to enable testable explanations, predictions and ultimately laws to be developed. However, to begin this process objective observation and measurement of data are necessary to produce evidence which can be repeated and verified. A basic requirement is a reliable counting methodology. Though a relationship may, for example, be hypothesised between high capital value and designated stock (as indicated in Fig 1), or between designation and the attraction of intellectual capital (shown through qualification data), lack of precise counts for both

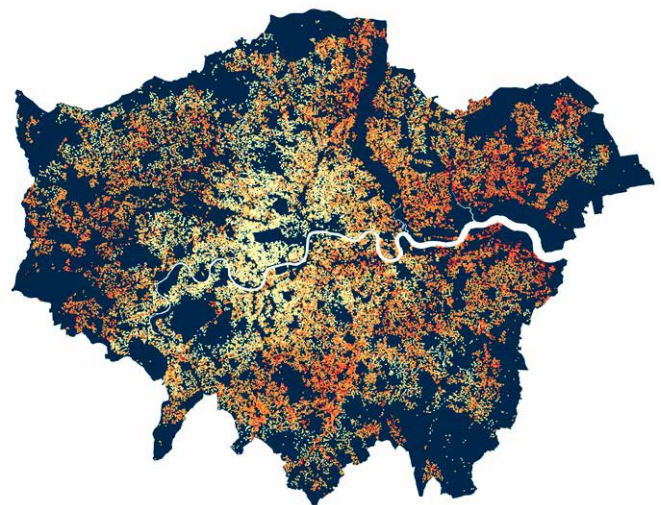
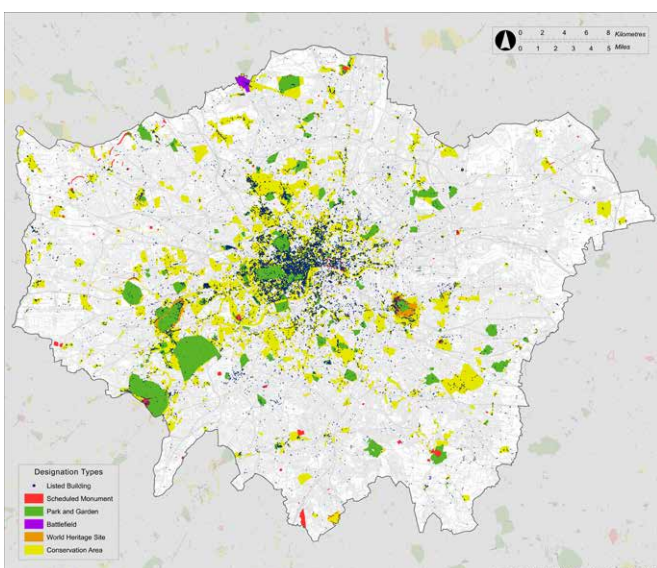


Figure 1. Left: Designation map produced by Tom Duane at English Heritage for the 'Almost Lost' exhibition in 2013 showing designation distribution in London. Blue dots represent list entries, many of which comprise multiple buildings. Right: House price map produced by Neal Hudson for Savills, 2014, with high capital value stock denoted by lighter colours. Background mapping courtesy OS





Figure 2. Draft dating of Central Camden. Polly Hudson, CASA, UCL 2014. Data sources include: The Survey of London, the NHLE, The Pevsner Guides and Edina Digimap Ancient Room. OS MasterMap Licenced Data © Crown Copyright 2015.

Aggregated age datasets released by the Valuation Office Agency have recently been visualised by Oliver O'Brien. <http://blogs.casa.ucl.ac.uk/author/ollie/>. Digitised age data relating to present-day urban landscapes have also been collected since the 1990s as part of Historic England's innovative Historic Landscape Characterisation programme.

designated buildings and for total buildings in UK cities currently prevents these hypotheses being tested.

Significant potential also lies in the production of accurate data relating to building age. Building age visualisations, released for the Netherlands and US cities since 2013 and currently being developed for London (Fig 2), have huge popular appeal. Their value lies in their potential to increase knowledge of the contribution that specific building morphologies make

to the city, the impact of their loss and the benefits brought by diversity of stock age. To achieve this, age data needs to be analysed against other variables such as energy consumption, health, deprivation and capital value, and research in these areas is already underway. However in the UK this work needs to be accelerated; an estimated 20-25% of our stock is likely to be discarded over the next 30 years, with no current requirement on local authorities to assess or track embedded value other than for a small proportion of designated assets.

Age data and vectorised historical spatial data also allow us to analyse patterns of change, and investigate reasons behind the longevity and adaptability of building forms. Research in Japan has recently shown the value of such data for calculating and geolocating construction material held within the stock and its movement over time, and can be used to reduce extraction levels. This research also explores methods of calculating building lifespans, as does current work at UCL into London's historical and current demolition rates (Fig 3).

Predicting the geolocation of change is a more difficult task but of critical importance to the intelligent cities debate. Pioneering research by Kiril Stanilov is now helping to define this field. Fig 4 shows the remarkable accuracy with which historical spatial data, employed within computerised mathematical



Figure 3. Left: Demolition in Central Camden (in pink), between 1916 and 2014. 6500 buildings were destroyed comprising 72% of the building stock. Right: Demolition between 1955 and 2014. OS MasterMap Licenced Data © Crown Copyright 2015. Polly Hudson, CASA, UCL.

## modelling the growth of West London



Figure 4. Image from Kiril Stanilov's article 'Planning the growth of the Metropolis', Journal of Planning History 2012. This shows computer generated predictions for changes to a 200km2 area of West London, between 1935 and 2005, based on rules devised from analysis of 1875, 1895 and 1915 data. © Kiril Stanilov and Mike Batty, CASA, UCL.

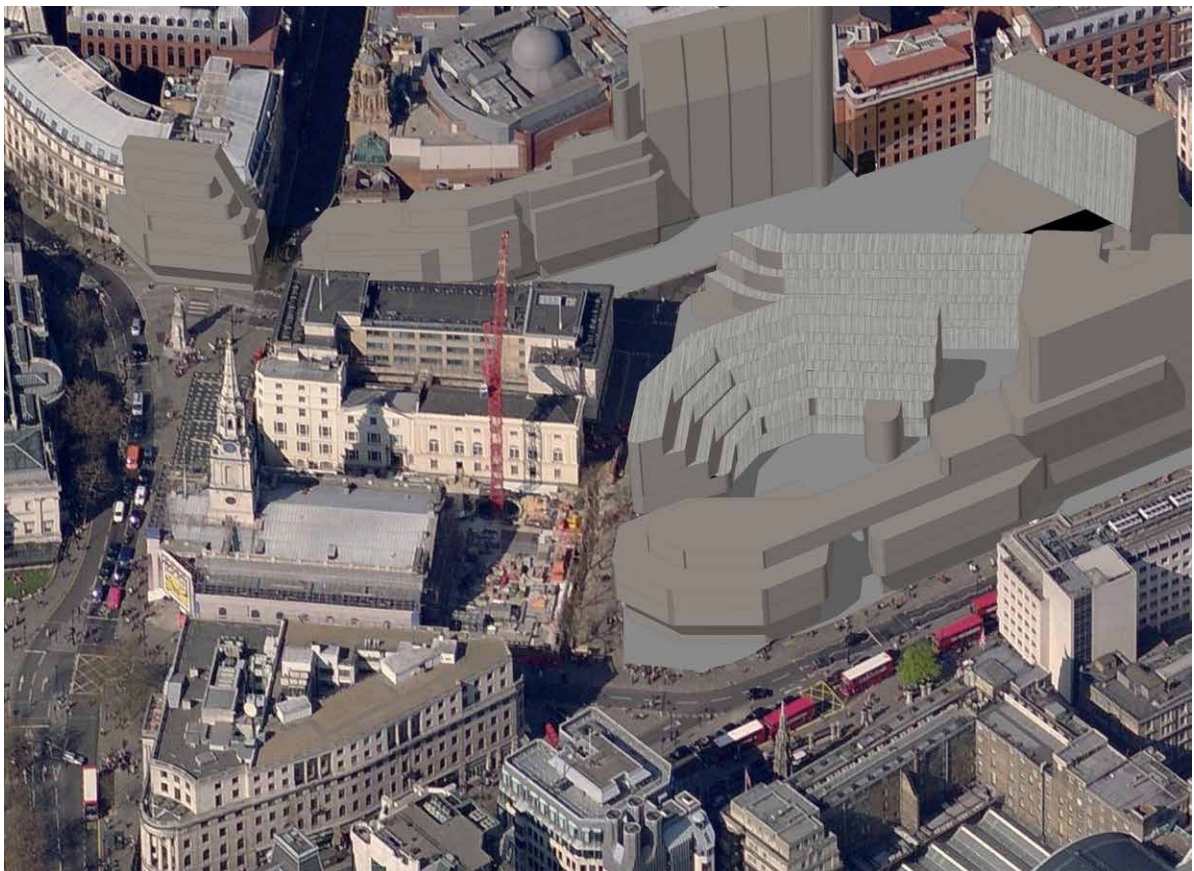


Figure 5. Reconstructions of 1960s rejected proposals for Covent Garden, now one of many high-value areas in London once proposed for demolition. James Woodward for PHD, for English Heritage 'Almost Lost' exhibition 2012.

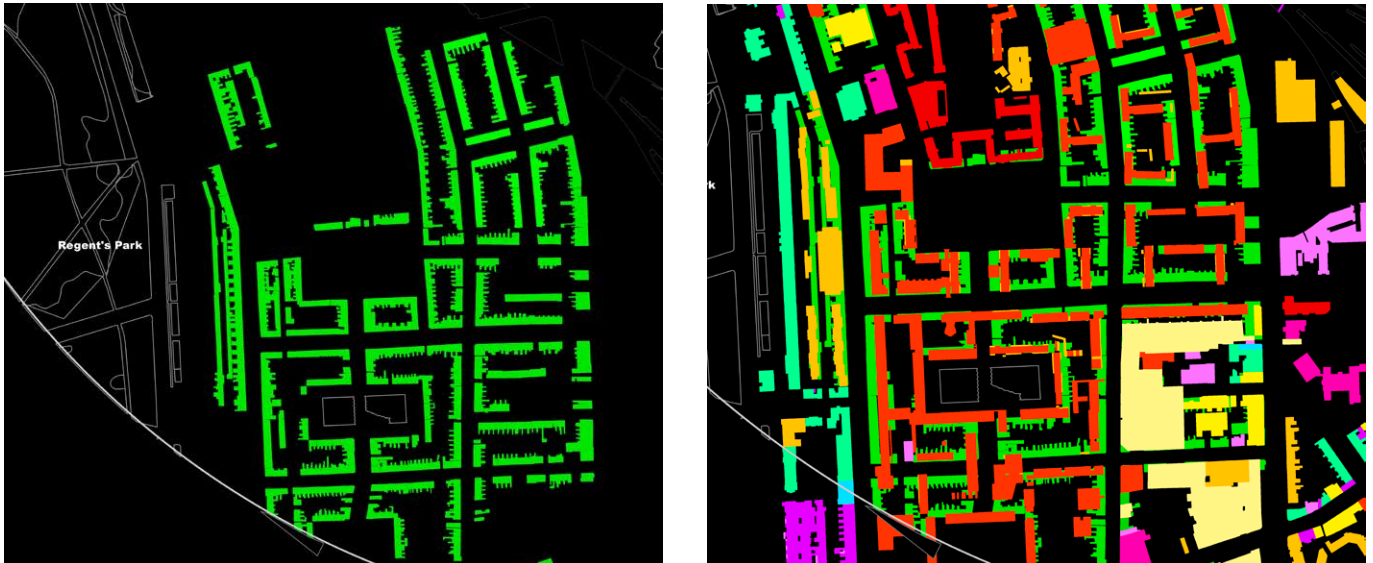


Figure 6. Left: Reconstruction of c1000 Georgian buildings east of Regent's Park, partially bomb damaged and demolished in the 1950s to make way for new social housing estates, shown right in red. Polly Hudson, CASA 2014. OS MasterMap Licenced Data © Crown Copyright 2015. Historical data courtesy of OS Landmark via Edina Historic Download. What difference would the refurbishment of these buildings have made to this area today?

models, can predict spatial patterns of urban growth and change. These models, which explore the existence of systematic relationships resilient to change, also offer opportunities for demolition prediction.

Conservation campaigns, driven by local knowledge, which have accurately foreseen the success or failure of proposed schemes also offer an as yet untapped source of data able to support predictive analysis (Fig 5). Knowledge gleaned from assessments of lost potential socio-economic value within demolished stock is also of relevance (Fig 6).

Lastly we turn to city evolution animations. Complementing 3D city models, these are able to connect information on the past, present and proposed future of a city or local area. First developed for London (Fig 7) these allow us to collate, visualise and rapidly disseminate vast amounts of historical data via social media and media-sharing sites, not only to help us plan 'smarter' cities but also to encourage greater discussion about urban change between sectors, generations and nations. ■

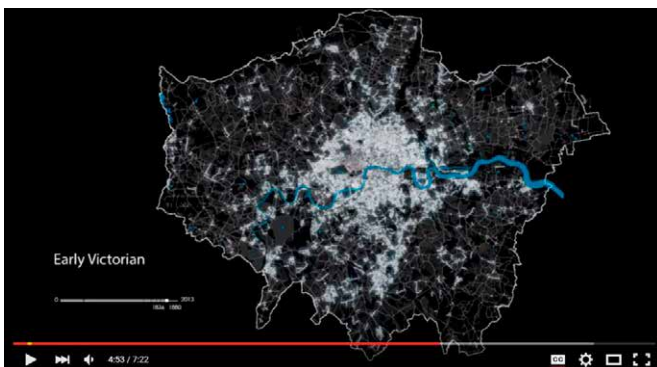
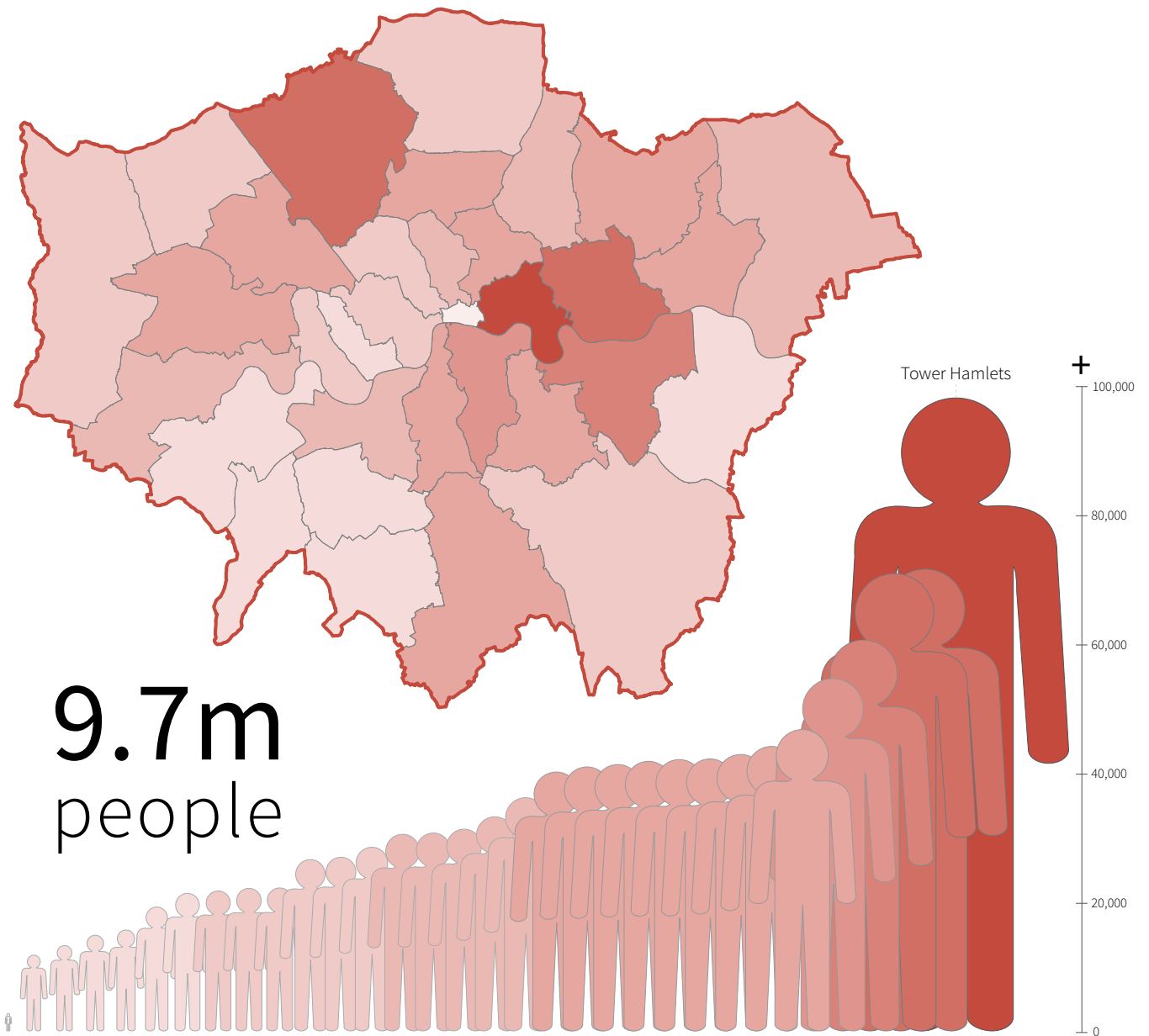


Figure 7. Left: The London Evolution Animation, funded by English Heritage for 'Almost Lost', built by Flora Roumpani, CASA 2013, involving a collaboration between multiple historical spatial data providers. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NB5Oz9b84jM> The animation has received over 350,000 YouTube hits demonstrating its public appeal. Right: Local 4D Evolution Animations. Clapton sample. Research showing the value of 4D local evolution models undertaken by Steve Evans and Polly Hudson since 2004, initially developed for The Building

### London's Projected Population in 2028

London's population is projected to grow by over a million people by 2028, with the biggest increase likely to be in Tower Hamlets – almost 100,000 people. Source: Greater London Authority (2014)



## Residential densities in world cities – how London compares



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**London may have passed its historical 1939 peak population just under a year ago, but despite being Europe’s largest city (depending on where both regional and municipal boundaries are drawn) it has relatively low residential density. New York City crams the same amount of people into roughly half the space, and suburbanisation and Victorian slum clearance mean that many inner London Boroughs are less dense today than they were in 1939.**

Density is a fundamental measure of urban structure and determines the efficiency of its urban footprint. Higher densities can facilitate more sustainable public transport, walking and cycling, making it more efficient to provide services, while also promoting opportunity for urban vitality. These advantages depend, however, on high-quality urban design and effective city management to minimise the negative impacts of overcrowding, stress and pollution. Hong Kong, for example, benefits from extremely low travel times; but tightly packed tall buildings increase the challenge of reducing pollution in the city.

Hong Kong is unusual in having fairly consistently high density across the entire urban region. Only 6 per cent of the city’s population live in areas with less than 5000 people per square kilometre (km<sup>2</sup>), compared to 36 per cent in London. However, tall buildings aren’t the only built form to support higher densities. São Paulo is

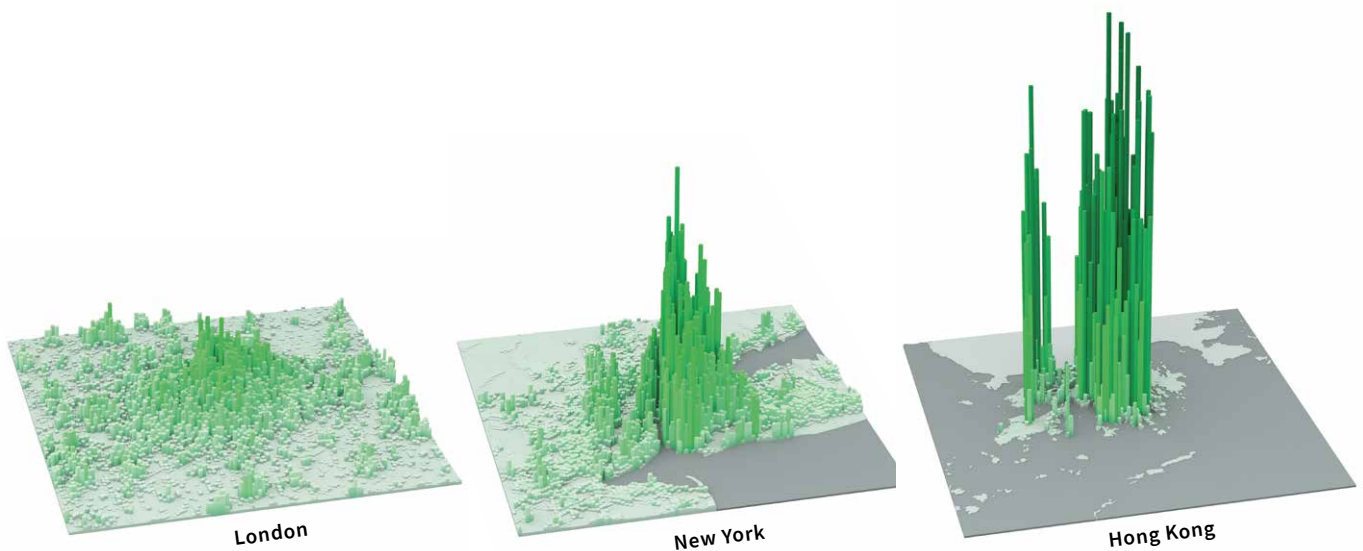


Figure 1. London has lower residential densities than other world cities, although ongoing intensification (particularly in East London) is affecting this pattern. However, densities peak elsewhere – 27,100 people per km<sup>2</sup> in Pimlico.

New York’s highest residential densities are in Manhattan, peaking at 59,150 people per km<sup>2</sup> in the Upper East Side. High-density living is prevalent across New York City, with lower-density suburban patterns dominating in the outer boroughs.

Hong Kong is the city that stands out in density mapping, with residential densities exceeding 110,000 people per km<sup>2</sup> in some areas. Scarce land availability has led to a ‘Rail plus Property’ model – extremely high-density development clustered around public transport nodes. Diagrams © Urban Age, LSE Cities

multi-centred and similar in its overall density pattern to Mexico City, yet São Paulo's skyline is dominated by high-rise apartment blocks, while Mexico City's is consistently low-rise.

The highest density cities typically have grown around a harbour with limited land availability, as is the case in New York. Hong Kong is bounded by both water and steep terrain. To some extent, the Green Belt acts as a constraint too. Policies, like the London Plan, which seek to intensify land use around public transport, also focus growth. In London's case this is inside the Greater London boundaries and on former industrial brownfield sites, suggesting densities will increase.

In a time of austerity increasing populations can be helpful given that many cities depend on residents' taxes to finance urban facilities and infrastructure. While some cities have maintained residential levels in their central areas, others are losing population from these zones as their boundaries expand and as motorised growth facilitates urban sprawl.

Cities often have a high percentage of people entering to work each day, increasing employment density. London's population grows by 9 per cent during each work day. While not as high as Tokyo, where 20 per cent of its population enter the administrative city every day, it increases the importance of governing cities to make sure that scarce space resources, like roads, pavements or public transport, are used both efficiently and equitably – challenges the next Mayor of London will need to address.

Cities specialising in knowledge-economy sectors such as finance and creative industries maximise competitive advantage by high-density environments. In these cities there is great demand for office space, and consequently high employment densities in their inner core areas. New York has the greatest employment density at 151,600 jobs per km<sup>2</sup>, while Hong Kong (120,200 jobs per km<sup>2</sup>, much closer to the residential density peak) and London (141,600 jobs per km<sup>2</sup>) are not far behind.

High employment density requires an extensive public transport network to enable millions of employees to flow efficiently in and out of central business districts on a daily basis. Despite Hong Kong's affluence, only 7 per cent of commuters use cars for a typical journey as a result of the efficiency of public transport. This would be unlikely without the city's dense urban form. New York and London display similar but less marked patterns, with 90 per cent of City of London workers using public transport and around 40 per cent of residents in New York's midtown Manhattan walking to work. This movement of people makes it vital that city government ensures efficient and equitable use of scarce space resources like roads, pavements or public transport. This is a challenge that the next Mayor of London will need to address.

Higher densities are one way of reducing travel times as they facilitate a tighter relationship between where people live and work. Reducing the costs of travel and opening up walking and cycling not only help to reduce pollution and boost health, but also may improve social equity within cities by increasing access to jobs and basic services. As transportation is a significant contributor to pollution, many cities are investing in reducing transport emissions wherever possible. This investment in clean, efficient public transport has economic benefit too: the internet hasn't reduced the competitive advantage of efficiently packing people side-by-side. Without good accessibility between places of work and homes, agglomeration benefits would be less noticeable.

While London, New York and Hong Kong demonstrate some similarities in employment densities, London remains significantly different when it comes to the pattern of residential density (see Fig 1). The new Mayor and the revised London Plan face a challenge in reinforcing London's dynamic employment environment, while responding to the need to reduce transport emissions. Crossrail will help, but the biggest hurdle will probably be finding ways to spread density more equitably across the city while considering London's low-rise, low-density character. ■

## London needs to create great streets



### Jonathan Schiffers

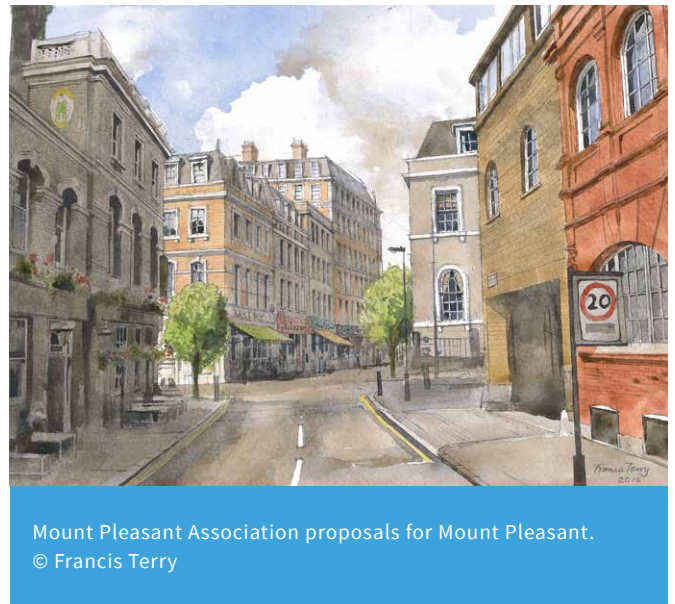
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**When London's new mayor takes office in May 2016 the affordability of housing will be among the city's top concerns, and not just for those on low incomes. Business leaders increasingly report that housing pressures negatively impact recruitment, retention and pay for those with valuable skills and talents. By the time the new Mayor's term ends in 2020, about 400,000 additional people will call London home. In the rush to build, London risks leaving itself a future inheritance of poorly designed neighbourhoods and piecemeal development. To achieve greater density we are generally getting taller towers and bigger blocks. The challenge the new London Plan must take on is not just technical, it's cultural: how to make new housing more popular.**

Great cities are largely defined by great streets. London has a particular inherited urban form – terraced residential streets with small retail at street corners. This form is wildly popular and has proved adaptable to needs across three centuries. The fact that new developments rarely revert to this successful model should raise suspicion that something isn't functioning well. In local disputes over new housing – in particular its density – economic growth is being constrained because the public generally takes issue with what that growth looks like. Can you think of a fantastic new street that has been added to London's stock of 100,000?

The creation of great streets within new development is often ignored because local plans consider them a messy liability. Local authorities are loathe to 'adopt' responsibility to maintain new streets. Meanwhile the strategic scale of the London Plan sets policy for whole neighbourhoods designated for high growth (eg Opportunity



Mount Pleasant Association proposals for Mount Pleasant.  
© Francis Terry

Areas) and creates guidelines for density and space standards – which become crushingly inflexible in the hands of stretched local planning departments. While more people are studying urban design, none of the principle professions (architecture, surveying, town planning) would concern itself primarily with the art and science of how professionals create streets which excel in the way they look, feel and function. Architectural determinism is just as naïvely applied to Victorian vernacular terraces as it proved to Corbusian skyscrapers.

At the RSA we've been working with the Heritage Lottery Fund on a major programme exploring the potential for new links between heritage, identity and place. We think, predictably, that better tools to mediate between professions and the public they serve would yield value. The experience of the Know Your Bristol initiative is a prime example demonstrating that people come to know their place through walking their local streets. Programmes like this build design perceptivity among citizens. More inclusive and representative public involvement, in both decisions on the historic environment and the future built environment, needs support. There are many reasons to unleash what the RSA calls the inherent 'power to create' in citizens. It is also the surest route to making new housing more popular.

We rarely pause to think what kind of streets would best support suitable densities, let alone start with an idea



of the street we want. Street aspirations may emerge in masterplanning efforts (like that at Old Oak Common) but new streets with houses – which most people would prefer to live on – are rare. Masterplans will be more common as London looks to densify post-war social housing estates. Oval Quarter could provide a good model for replacing blocks with streets; nevertheless, most development will take place on our existing grid.

Beyond blanketing London in conservation area designations, how do we honour London's street heritage as we build for the future? Several common misconceptions need to be challenged. London is neither 'full', nor is it a low density city. We could build denser and smarter. Indeed, we need only look to the past. Pimlico and Notting Hill are among the densest parts of London, but they retain traditional housing design on classic London streets, across a variety of scales including mews and wide thoroughfares. Both areas are adorned with slices of green space. Although these are often reserved for private access, new evidence shows that high-quality communal open space can contribute to well-being more reliably than private gardens.

Create Streets, a design, campaigning and research social enterprise, has shown at Mount Pleasant – a large Royal Mail site soon to be redeveloped – that traditional forms

of street planning could deliver equivalent density to a modern scheme. The long-term value of developing a new patch of old London-style housing may even exceed that of contemporary blocks, according to surveyors.

Across London, momentum is building for the greater use of what Create Streets calls 'direct planning approaches', including co-design processes, more common use of design codes, and upper and lower density caps agreed democratically by communities. More transparency in viability assessments and guaranteeing against disadvantageous relocation of social tenants will be easier with investment partners who understand and pursue long-term value.

For professionals concerned with the historic built environment, the new London Plan faces the perennial challenge: to find a balance between ensuring that new homes, offices and streets are of decent quality without stifling the market's ability to deliver a range of products (and design solutions) to satisfy diverse demand. We shouldn't prescribe a single design code for a city approaching 9 million citizens, but we shouldn't prevent developers from building popular streets with houses that look like those that London is known for. Great streets are durable – after all, they have withstood challenges to the present day. ■



Create Streets argue terraced streets are popular, sustainable in the long term and sufficiently dense to help meet London's housing needs.  
© Copyright Create Streets

## New London Vernacular

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**Peter Murray**

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New London Architecture

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**As London prepares to elect a new Mayor it is instructive to study changing attitudes to housing design under Ken Livingstone and Boris Johnson. Livingstone, advised by the Architecture and Urbanism Unit headed by Richard Rogers, favoured a**

**‘European’ approach to new housing which is most prominently demonstrated in the design of the Olympic Athlete’s Village - 10-storey blocks of flats surrounding semi-public courtyards, a model based on the Cerda plan of Barcelona and modernised for that city’s own Olympic accommodation.**

Boris Johnson, in contrast, prefers the more ‘English’ idea of streets and terraces; he believes brick is the only appropriate and suitably long-lasting material for the job. His vision was given contemporary reality in the Mayor’s Housing Design Guide, first drafted in 2009. As well as setting new and improved space standards for housing, this report aspired ‘to encourage a new London vernacular that can take its place in this rich fabric’ and



Houses in Den Helder in the Netherlands by Tony Fretton Architects. © Christian Richters



Proposals for new housing on the site of the Aylesbury Estate in London. © Mae Architects

called for ‘housing that has a clear and sophisticated urban intention, and improves and civilises the streets and public spaces around it’. It discouraged ‘iconic’ architecture, and suggested that architects should focus on great background architecture made of durable materials that weather well. The guide references the enduring success of Georgian and Victorian precedents while suggesting that new models are needed if they are to respond to new challenges such as climate change.

The outcome of all this is a sprouting of recognisably New London Vernacular (NLV) schemes across the capital. Reflecting the spare architectural style of the post-Great Fire homes, these developments have plain brick walls punched through with regular portrait-shaped windows with reveals. Residences have their own front doors to the street, although these may open into maisonettes at lower levels; elevations are generally faced in brickwork and topped with a parapet. Sometimes gables reflect the use of pitched roofs; balconies are often recessed.

This stripped back, largely orthogonal architecture is sympathetic to the street yet is fundamentally modernist in style. It sits happily in the oeuvre of architects like Allies and Morrison and Tony Fretton as well as Maccreanor Lavington and AEM. It also delivers acceptable background buildings in the hands of the day to day practitioner. Ironically, in the light of the Mayor’s aim to deliver 42,000 new homes a year, the ubiquity of NLV has had the effect of creating a major shortage of bricks. This pushes prices up and can also delay schemes which require variations in their planning permission when it is found that specified products are not available.

In this, the 350th anniversary year of the Great Fire, it is interesting to note that London’s brick terraced houses of the 17th and 18th century had their origins in Dutch architecture, and that key NLV proponents like Maccreanor Lavington and Fretton cut their teeth delivering their self-effacing designs in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Delft. Plus ca change. ■

# Challenges for London

Whichever way we look at it, London in early 2016 appears to be on the cusp of significant change and growth. Its magnetic pull continues to draw in people and jobs – and in their wake comes the inevitable development and change to provide the homes, transport, offices and all the other infrastructure that such a world city needs to remain both successful and functional.

Some implications of this type of change are possible to observe already – such as increasing densities of development right across London (including the

outer suburbs), the steadily increasing numbers of tall buildings either navigating the planning system or already with us and the upgrading of infrastructure such as major rail hubs. Others are perhaps still to become quite so visible – such as perhaps the pressure on historic open spaces across the capital or the effects of the development boom on the River Thames.

Are there other challenges that this unprecedented level of growth brings? And are we equipped to ensure that in managing the change that is coming we conserve London's unique historic environment?

## Accommodating London's growth without heritage conflict?



**Roger Mascall**  
Director and Head of Heritage,  
Turley

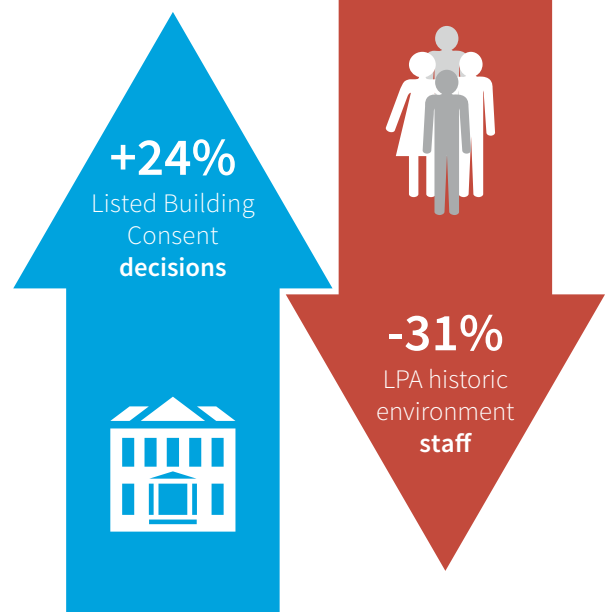
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At the beginning of last year I was asked to crystal-ball gaze and offer a view on the likely key heritage issues for the London property sector for the coming year. It was easy: proposals for high-density and tall building development, and the resulting tension with the protection of the historic environment. Extra zest was added by the review at the time of post-war commercial buildings for listing, where some of the tall buildings under consideration were in their day subject to fierce conservation campaigns to prevent their own construction. Today, the tall building and densification debate continues as a raft of new proposals emerge both in expected places – commercial districts and some defined Opportunity Areas – but also in some less expected locations.

This debate is alive and prominent in the minds of those seeking to refine strategic planning policy to facilitate accommodation of London's growth within

### Listed Building Consents vs LPA Staff

The number of listed building consent decisions taken by local planning authorities (LPAs) in London has risen significantly in the last ten years – at the same time as we have seen a sharp decline in the number of historic environment staff employed in local government. Source: Heritage Counts 2015



the framework of a new London Plan. Buildings significantly taller than their surroundings will continue to be promoted as positive ways of achieving testing residential density targets and sustainable



Tower Bridge, London. © Turley

commercial development at key transport hubs. Yet, London's rich time-depth history, acknowledged by extensive heritage designations, ensures that development of any real quantum is rarely not within the setting of designated heritage assets of one sort or another. After all, London has over 1000 conservation areas, 150 registered parks and gardens, and 17,000 listed buildings. It's therefore no surprise that concerns regarding impact on heritage assets are often at the forefront in many of the significant development proposals in London that encounter controversy in the planning process.

However, does the promotion of such development to assist in accommodating London's growth have to result in often such strong tension with the historic environment? The question is especially relevant today when national policy and guidance suggest that the reconciliation of heritage interests with local plan allocations and development is possible and that harm can be avoided by positive strategies.

So why is this often not the case? Some thoughts on what could be done better.

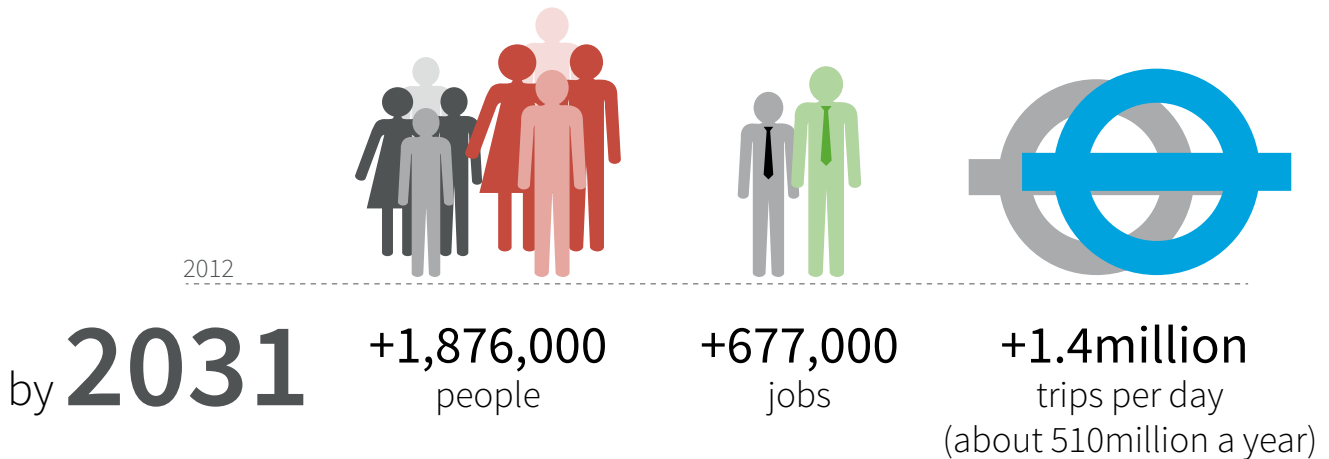
On the whole, heritage designation and protection systems have worked well in London, seeking to ensure that the best and most important aspects of our historic city are identified and fully taken account of within planning decisions. However, have we been too successful and are we reaching the point where nearly everything is valued in one way or another, and sometimes accorded disproportionate importance in decision making? For example, are some local designation campaigns pursued in absence of robust criteria?

It is particularly important to ensure that potential heritage assets (ie those elements that may be considered of heritage value on closer inspection) are defined and scoped before an area or place is identified for growth and significant change, ie within the plan-making process. If not, unrealistic expectations regarding value and development capacity will result and conflict follows when a heritage-focused study

**People, Jobs, Travel**

London is projected to be busier in more ways than simply a greater population over the next decade and a half- adding over 650,000 jobs and 1.4 million additional daily public transport journeys by 2031. Sources: ONS, GLA and TfL

# London



reveals interest that may in turn limit the nature and extent of development opportunity. When this happens, the otherwise critically important role of early engagement is devalued, and heritage interests are all too easily portrayed as obstructive to change. Historic England’s recent advice assists, but the advocated approach needs to be adopted as common practice by all those making plans and allocating sites for growth and change in London. Conversely, those promoting the development of a site or area should ensure they fully understand likely heritage potential – noting it may extend beyond what presently appears on heritage lists or registers. Such early ‘heritage due-diligence’ is often undertaken by more informed investors and developers before land acquisition, thus significantly reducing risk. Importantly, more widespread adoption of this approach is now supported by use of Historic England’s new Enhanced Advisory Services to provide such clarity in a timely manner.

A realistic acceptance is often needed that new development of the quantum and densities envisaged to meet London’s needs will be intervisible with multiple heritage assets. But this need not necessarily result in harm to their intrinsic significance. Whilst

heritage setting is now quite rightly a widely-held and established concept, a proportionate response is required in assessing impact, bearing in mind intrinsic heritage interest, relative role of setting, distance and interposing urban form. This is particularly important in a city such as London where urban context often prevails. Impact on setting is not necessarily impact on heritage significance.

A related and common issue is the need for better understanding of the role of setting in spatially-based designations such as conservation areas in a city such as London. Often, all that is actually important in terms of special interest is encompassed by the designation, with a lesser role for wider urban setting, which may have been subject to successive change. Similarly, many of London’s parks and open spaces, whilst incredibly important, are now largely surrounded by an urban metropolis, which can contrast with and emphasise their characteristics.

Whilst consideration of impact on heritage setting may involve more than simple visual considerations, such studies remain the principal tool for assessing the effect of proposed development. However, if these are

properly founded and articulate heritage significance and the role of setting in that significance, they can assist in understanding relative impacts. Similarly, if such assessment is missing, the resultant work can be narrow in focus and potentially anodyne in content. Those promoting change should also ensure that a scheme's benefits are real and unlikely to be delivered in another way. Ultimately for such benefits to outweigh any potential harm to heritage significance, they need to be tangible and unlikely to be delivered in another way if they are to be accorded sufficient weight in the planning balance.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, is the need for adequate resources. Heritage control is complex and involves experience and expertise from both those promoting and those managing change if positive engagement and dialogue is to be established. Absence of expertise on either side leads to conflict, delay and sometimes acrimony. The present concerns regarding lack of capacity and expertise, particularly within local planning authorities, need to be addressed if a more proactive approach to managing the change necessary to realise London's future growth is to be realised without conflict. ■

## Meeting the challenge of delivering growth sustainably



**Will McKee CBE**  
Chair, Outer London Commission

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**London is experiencing significant population and employment growth, with projections of an additional three million people by 2050 and over a million new jobs. However, views on the extent of this growth vary, with some suggesting that London's average long-term growth could be in the order of 120,000 per annum compared to the more modest 64,000 per annum emerging for the review of the London Plan. But regardless, the scale of growth is significant, and well above the 50,000 expected in the 2011 London Plan.**

London's economic success and global competitiveness depend heavily on an efficient labour market and this in turn requires an appropriate supply of housing to sustain it. Ensuring a sufficient supply of quality homes, of the type that people desire and can afford, in the right places for residents to access employment opportunities, as well as necessary services and amenities, is of fundamental importance to the city's global success and the quality

of its offer in a competitive employment environment. London's cultural diversity and range of distinctive environments provide a high quality of life for many people and will continue to play a significant and defining role in its attractiveness as a place to live and do business. Other issues such as climate change and the provision of infrastructure will also determine how growth can be delivered in sustainable ways.

Due to the scale of growth expected, there is an inherent tension between the delivery of housing and of employment land, and competition between the two invariably impacts on the spatial and economic structure of the city. It will be up to a new Mayor to determine how London responds to meeting the challenges of growth. Whilst options should rightly focus on re-using brownfield land and on intensifying development in existing built-up areas with good public transport connections, there is a limit to the extent to which densities can be increased before the quality of life of residents is compromised. This is a message loudly received by Commission in its work on the future of outer London. Given the scale of London's challenge, it is therefore prudent that the future Mayor considers the potential of all options of supply to ensure that London's quality of life, attractiveness and unique and distinctive character is maintained.

All parts of London will need to play their part. Inner London is able to support higher densities, particularly

in some of its town centres, Opportunity Areas and Housing Zones. Outer London also needs to play a more significant role and could offer potential for a range of different types of higher-density developments in areas with reasonable public transport accessibility. Such areas include some suburban locations, green-belt corridors and surplus industrial zones

Regardless of capacity issues, deliverability remains a key challenge, with London consistently delivering only half the 50,000 homes per annum required. The Commission's key declaration to Government, the Mayor and other public and private sector partners is that whilst the barriers facing housing delivery are significant and interrelated, many are surmountable. However, the scale and complexity of the challenge

means that coordinated and effective action is required. The Commission's core message is that London needs more proactive funding and planning mechanisms to drive housing and economic growth and urgently needs to ensure that there are more house builders building a greater range of different-sized sites across a wider geographical area. This will require additional and more varied sources of supply, alterations to the existing planning framework and increased housing delivery from small builders, the public sector and rented housing tenures.

Notwithstanding these challenges, London's future remains bright. A carefully balanced blend of old and new will ensure that London retains the unique and distinctive character that contributes to its vibrant economic success and world-class status. ■

## Learning from our mid-rise legacy



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**With the nation's housing concerns dominating UK media reportage last year, commentators are already suggesting that 2015 will be remembered as 'the year the housing crisis became mainstream.' In the UK's capital, the housing shortage reached staggering levels, compromising the ability to foster strong enduring communities whilst putting the city's historic architectural and urban identity at risk. As a new year commences, the time comes to learn from past innovations.**

In 2015, the average house price in the capital rose to 16 times the average Londoner's salary while average rents rose by 11.6 per cent. Nonetheless, the majority of new housing provision served those in the highest earning brackets. The effect is a city increasingly spatialised by housing affordability, as middle to lower-income



residents are pushed to the periphery of the city, if not driven out entirely. The prospects for young people in London are increasingly compromised too, as young workers and families struggle to find a footing on the housing ladder, endangering the city's ability to attract and maintain the brightest talent.

With the city's population expected to reach over 11 million by 2050, the need to address London's housing shortage becomes critical. To manage this growth we must make better use of London's land stock, achieving higher density living across its boroughs. Higher densities can be an emotive topic amongst local communities. London's faceless residential



towers and poorly conceived mega-schemes have given high-density a bad name, all too often eroding street life and undermining the social fabric and architectural heritage of the city. Thus, while problems of affordability threaten the vitality and vibrancy of London's population, poor design quality does the same to London's historic streets and neighbourhoods.

In 2014, the Prince's Foundation for Building Community explored how increased density might be achieved while preserving desirability. In our report, *'Housing London, a Mid-Rise Solution'*, we argued that high-density need not be synonymous with high-rise, nor high financial, social, and environmental cost.

Neither vertical sprawl nor horizontal sprawl will provide London with the inclusive, sustainable communities that the city needs in order to thrive. Instead, we advocate a return to one of London's greatest architectural legacies; the mid-rise residential building. Whether the mansion blocks of Maida Vale or the converted Victorian houses of Sloane Square, well-constructed, beautiful mid-rise housing is both one of London's greatest architectural assets and among its most sought-after housing types. Mid-rise housing crucially provides London with much needed density, often higher than modern tower blocks enveloped by empty space. The London Boroughs of Islington and Kensington & Chelsea, neighbourhoods well endowed with 4 or 5-storey terraces and 6 to 10-storey mansion blocks, are also London's densest boroughs.

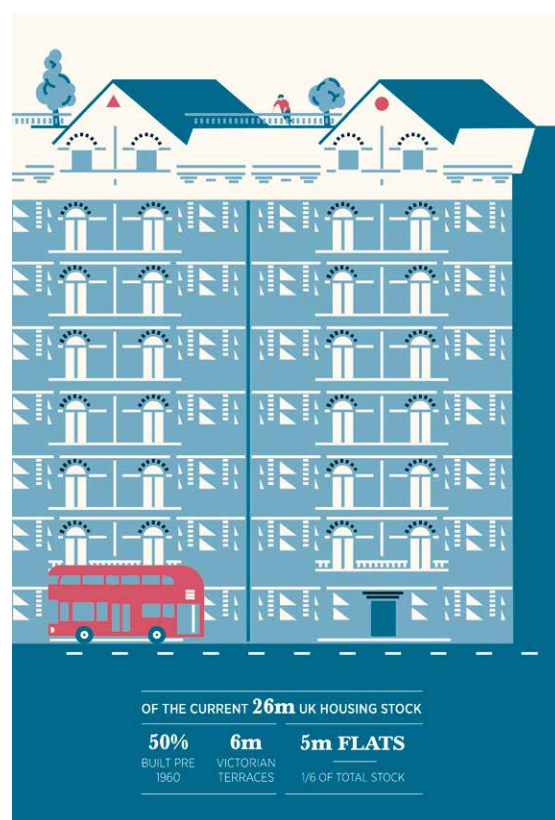
London's historic mid-rise housing presents a form that is adaptable to a diversity of residential and commercial needs, offering a variety of housing units and configurations. One of its strengths is the interaction it encourages with the street, for mid-rise is more likely to result in livelier, more cohesive neighbourhoods. In contrast to the glass and steel high-rises currently multiplying across the city, mid-rise blocks can retain the fundamental character of an area and can be constructed using more ecologically-friendly, locally-sourced materials.

Crucially, this month marks the announcement of the Government's £140 million fund to regenerate and improve the UK's so-called 'sink estates.' We believe the time has come to revisit London's mid-rise heritage in

order to ensure past errors in achieving density aren't replicated. As recent Savills statistics have shown, 73 per cent more homes could be built if tower blocks were demolished and replaced by terraces and low-rise blocks.

But beyond securing increased density, the new programme of estate regeneration must equally outperform past projects in terms of community involvement. After all, who knows how to improve a neighbourhood better than the people who live there? The Prince's Foundation has long advocated this message and recently issued a free, online Toolkit. A play on the phrase, 'NIMBY' our BIMBY (Beauty-In-My-Back-Yard) Toolkit will offer local communities a means to engage in neighbourhood planning and work meaningfully with local planners and developers.

It is our ambition that a new movement of BIMBYs will emerge, developing housing standards for villages, towns and regions that build on the simple but unique character of their location, ensure that any new development will enhance its setting and be welcomed by existing residents. Without adopting BIMBY housing standards we pose the same question, 'where are the conservation areas of tomorrow?' ■



## Profit from provenance



**Richard Upton**  
Deputy Chief Executive  
U and I Plc

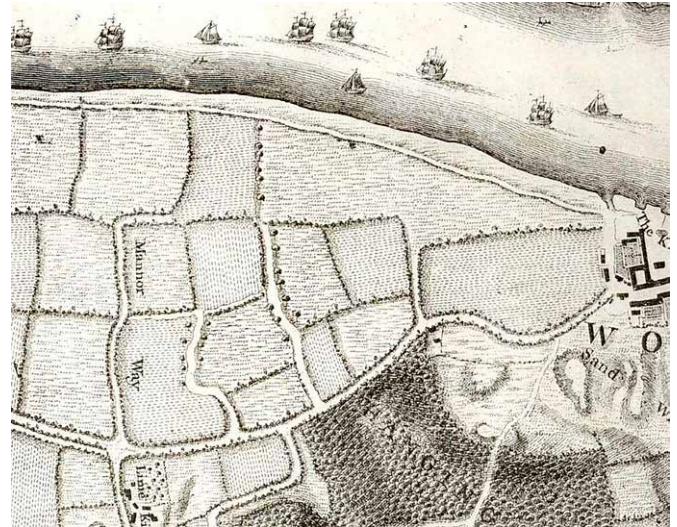
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### Whether spending on Italian wine or plastic-wrapped British-farmed chicken, society today is more and more conscious of provenance.

You could shop at Iceland or Fortnum & Mason for all I care, but, there's a decent chance you will care if someone has benefitted (or otherwise) from your consumer decisions. At the very least, you'd like to know what's in products, and where they emanate from, before choosing what to buy.

So it saddens me that provenance within London's unique built environment is so often overlooked by developers. Consumer purchasing power, which drives improved standards across most markets, scarcely moves the needle in property. In fact, the stranglehold developers have over the property market chokes off such healthy competition, and threatens to strike repeated blows to our capital's heritage. All across London, the rush towards quick development profit – combined with feverish demand – is contorting not just the property market, but the physical face of the capital. Myopic property speculators have scant incentive to consider heritage and conservation when left to themselves. Instead, these critical issues are forced upon the shoulders of policymakers.

The stick of planning and conservation policy might work fine in many contexts but cannot succeed alone as the guardian of the capital's vast history. With the huge development onslaught required to accommodate Greater London's population growth between now and 2030, what the industry needs is more incentive to preserve character. Developers must be reminded that real, sustainable value lies not in faceless apartment blocks, but in a place's uniqueness. For



Printed copy (1810), of original survey made in 1695, drawn by Samuel Travers.

me, conservation is not an order from on high; it is our golden goose: heritage is the one thing about a place that you literally can't replicate anywhere else. What's more, by honouring and enhancing provenance, we don't just engender long-term value, we inspire civic pride, and a sense of community and belonging.

That's my company's theory anyway – a belief in the long-term wellbeing of the places we create. That means looking backwards to go forwards. We've successfully deployed this theory recently at the Old Vinyl Factory in Hayes, West London, where we've revived and reinstated an unloved site's vibrant manufacturing past. It is an incredibly exciting and productive thing to do.



'Charlton Horn Fair' by W. Woodley. © Greenwich Heritage Centre

**Cerlstone**

Charlton is recorded in the 1086 Domesday Book as Cerlstone. It is formed from Old English 'ceorl' and 'tun' and means 'farmstead of the freemen or peasants'. A church dedicated to St Luke is recorded in the village as early as 1077, although no trace of the medieval building survives.

**Market**

In 1268, the Abbey was granted a Monday market at Charlton, as well as an annual fair of three days, centred on Trinity Sunday, the eighth Sunday after Easter.

**Charlton House**

Between 1607 and 1612, Sir Adam Newton had a new manor house, Charlton House, built in the village. It is regarded as the best-preserved ambitious Jacobean house in Greater London.

**The Horn-Fair**

In the early 18th century, Charlton was described by Daniel Defoe as a village famous, or rather infamous for the yearly collected rabble of mad-people, at Horn-Fair; the rudeness is such as ought to be suppressed. The mob take all kinds of liberties, and the women are especially impudent for that day; giving themselves a loose to all manner of indecency and immodesty, without any reproach, or without suffering the censure which such behaviour would deserve at another time.

**Spencer Perceval**

Spencer Perceval (Prime Minister 1809 – 1812), the only Prime Minister to have been assassinated, is buried in St Luke's Church, Charlton.

**Siemens Brothers**

The flat land adjoining the Thames at Charlton Riverside became a significant industrial area. The establishment of heavy industry centred on Charlton Pier, and led to a number of serious fires in the area in the mid 19th century. A notable establishment was the Siemens Brothers Telegraph Works. Employing over 2,000 people and functioning until just before WWII, Siemens' Charlton factory was one of the few in the world capable of making long distance telegraph cables between the UK and US.

**William Cory**

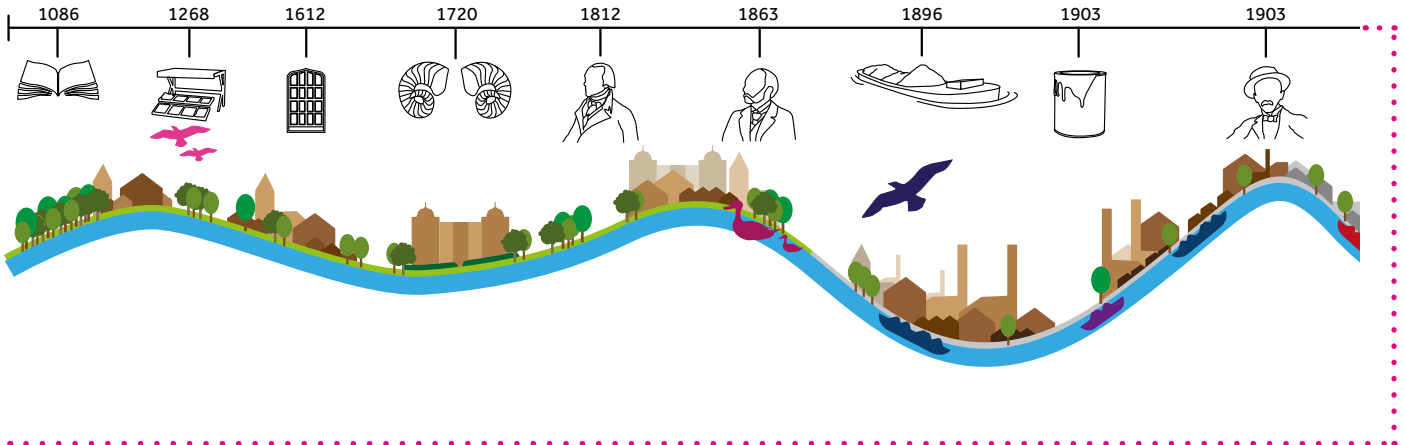
In 1896, William Cory and Son amalgamated a collection of coal factors, merchants and lightermen at Bugsby's Reach to operate the unloading of the coal and transferring it onto barges. In 1908 the surviving streets of Atlas and Derrick Gardens were built on Anchor and Hope Lane as a form of early corporate responsibility to house the families of Cory's workers.

**Gioachino Veneziani's**

Established by Giuseppe Moravia in 1863 in Trieste, Italy, Moravia Paints started production as one of the first anti-fouling paint producers. Moravia later entrusted the future of the company to his daughter Olga Moravia and son-in-law Gioachino Veneziani. In 1903, on request of the British Admiralty, Veneziani founded the first anti-fouling factory on the Charlton Riverside site. The manager at the time was the famous Italian author Italo Svevo.

**Italo Svevo**

From 1903 to 1913 the Italian writer Italo Svevo lived in a house on Charlton Church Lane. While working for a family firm selling high-quality underwater paint for ships, he documented this period in his letters to his wife which highlighted the cultural differences he encountered in Edwardian England. Svevo's written work might have disappeared altogether if it were not for the efforts of his good friend James Joyce. He went on to write the classic novel 'La Coscienza di Zeno' (Confessions of Zeno).



**Charlton Athletic FC**

It was in this industrialised area that Charlton Athletic F.C. was established in 1905, before moving a short distance to 'The Valley' in 1919.

**British Ropes**

Established in 1912 Charlton Ropeworks were fire-ropes makers. During the 1930's they moved the factory from the western to the eastern side of Anchor and Hope Lane and onto the Charlton Riverside site. They developed wire rope production and in WWII made, among much else, the cables for the Mulberry Harbours (temporary portable harbours to facilitate the rapid offloading of cargo onto beaches during the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944).

**United Glass Ltd**

Formed in 1913, The United Glass Bottle Manufacturers Ltd acquire rights to the first successful automatic bottle making machine in Britain. The area soon became known for the extraction of glass-making sand for the bottle factory. Large sand pits remained in use until the 1930s.

**Charlton Greyhound Stadium**

Built and opened in 1928 by the amusement contractor Thomas Murphy. An extraordinary event is recorded concerning Murphy & his 13 member Jazz Monkey band. The band escaped in 1928 after thieves let them loose and the 13 monkeys made their way from Latimer Road to just about everywhere as they caused havoc in the Latimer Underground Station and many other parts of London, one even making it to Rugby.

**Blow Up**

Michelangelo Antonioni's cult Italian-British film "Blow-up" from 1966 had several of its key scenes filmed in Charlton's Marjory Park, just by from Charlton Riverside.

**Nick Drake**

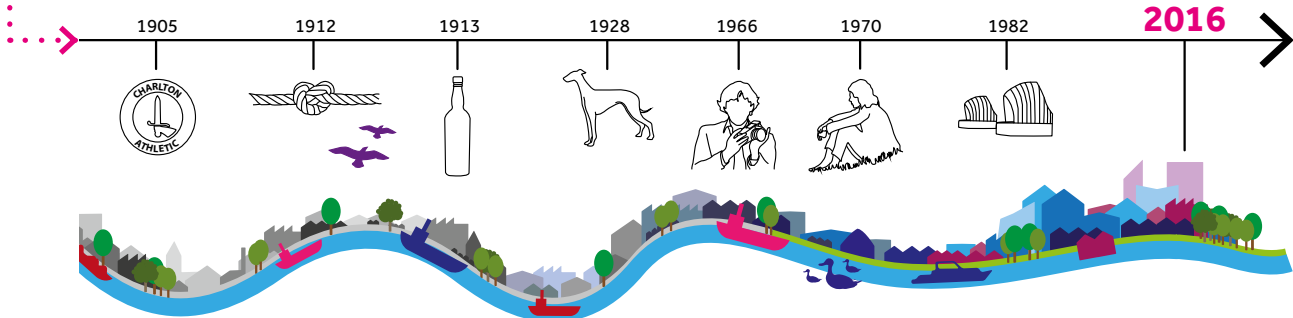
The singer-songwriter Nick Drake sitting on Gilbert's Pit, overlooking Charlton Riverside in a photo shoot for his 1970 album 'Bryter Later'.

**Thames Barrier**

The Thames Barrier spans the width of the river from Charlton across to Silvertown. Operational since 1982, the barrier prevents the floodplains of most of Greater London from being flooded. Today the barrier stands as a triumph of British design and engineering. The structures elegant curves create an unmistakable statement on the landscape, placing Charlton on the map and offering a significant precedent for the high standards of design to be adopted in any future development of the riverside.

**CHARLTON RIVERSIDE**

Today Charlton Riverside presents an industrial landscape full of potential and opportunity. A growing movement of support and optimism has allowed an imaginative vision of Charlton's future waterfront to evolve. This vision is to create a new urban village for London, bringing together the most relevant and best aspects of the city's other great quarters and using the site's history, stories and character as building blocks for a future that brings the past to life.



In Charlton, U+I will soon control sufficient land to create a small town spanning 6 million square feet and providing 5,000 homes. The site is brownfield and light industrial in nature, but we've delved into its past and from this, we'll create a future that makes it unique. The grimy industrial routes actually reflect the patterns of paths and hedgerows from the 17th century. Lovely. I promise you we will bring history and parochial distinction alive. Charlton will once again provide affordable homesteads for ordinary people alongside the river Thames.

Such an approach to development requires a cultural shift in our sector. There are interventions that could help speed up the process. I was heartened in January to see the government doing more to diversify

development by supporting smaller house builders to deliver state-sponsored homes. Let's signpost a route for these newcomers from worthy to greedy and back again. Could developers be forced into retaining a long-term interest in land, encouraging them to show its inherent characteristics more respect? More radically, could we resurrect an idea like the mooted town centre Real Estate Investment Trusts, asking property owners to take a stake in neighbouring ownerships, encouraging greater collaboration across whole areas? We need to show developers how to combine both profit and worthier goals – yes, like provenance. It takes a degree of risk and imagination, but examples such as King's Cross Central or Marylebone High Street, or even our own Old Vinyl Factory should show that the pay-offs are there. ■



Aerial view of the Charlton Riverside site. © U & I

## Investing in infrastructure and improving connectivity



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**London is a global powerhouse and competitive world city, vital to the UK economy. It is growing rapidly, exceeding its 1939 peak of 8.6 million and rising inexorably to 10 million by 2030. Planning a growing metropolis whilst keeping it moving is one of the greatest challenges for a new London Plan. London is different from other international cities like New York, Tokyo, or Hong Kong because of its unique historic development and character. Its rich heritage gives it an edge over many world cities, adding to its cultural offer and the well-being of its citizens.**

To keep London moving huge strides have been made with strategic transport investment. It has an integrated and world-renowned public transport network; London Overground has created a magical orbital corridor

along the “Ginger Route”, opening up new areas of city growth like Dalston and Peckham. The Docklands Light Railway stretches further east creating development opportunities at the Royal Docks, Lewisham and Beckton. The Northern Line Extension was critical to opening up the Nine Elms Battersea Opportunity Area for 20,000 new homes and 25,000 new jobs, with the river and historic Battersea Power Station at the centre of place creation and value generation.

Park Royal, London’s largest industrial estate, contains industrial heritage beside the Grand Union canal and is to be at the heart of future place making. Euston Station presents challenges to planners and heritage advisers on how to retrofit or comprehensively redevelop a station with a huge level of intervention, which will remove the unattractive 1960s buildings and replace them by 2026 with a new HS2 station. Careful design and conservation approaches to the wider Euston area will be critical to secure a once in a lifetime opportunity to re-create a world class station gateway at Euston sitting harmoniously within historic central London whilst delivering optimum economic and development benefits for London and local communities. Taller and higher density developments around key transport investment hubs have been secured. Amazingly, when done well these sit cheek by jowl and complement



London Bridge station is currently undergoing massive reconfiguration at the historic heart of the city and Borough integrating a Victorian main station into a 21st Century transport hub whilst enlivening the surrounding area.

© London Bridge Design and Access Statement – Grimshaw

18th and 19th-century buildings and townscapes. King's Cross Central and St Pancras are fine world-class examples of modern high-density and high-quality urbanism at historic Victorian railway destinations.

Certainly the biggest transport project is Crossrail. It will create high-speed transformative rail connection from Heathrow into Central London and Canary Wharf and on out to Stratford, Shenfield and Abbey Wood. The Mayor's London Plan anticipates that Crossrail will release more growth zones, with 38 London Opportunity Areas like the Old Oak Common/HS2 interchange, which will enable 24,000 homes and 55,000 jobs.

Crossrail has gone through a smart over-station development design curve in schemes affecting sensitive historic locations with fine-grain urban forms,

such as at Tottenham Court Road and Bond Street. We must be even smarter in the next wave of heavy transport interventions to accommodate a population of 10 million while retaining London's historic character and reputation as a grand, beautiful, ever-changing city. So, here comes Crossrail 2, connecting north-east London with the capital's historic heart at Victoria and onwards south-west to the historic gems of Wimbledon and Kingston. The challenge is ensuring that large-scale rail corridors like CR2 bring massive transport connectivity and economic benefits to new growth zones. Many fine historic areas, town centres, riverside locations and ancient buildings are protected and designed into the heart of transformation areas and change. This blending of old and new will be the challenge for the next Mayor of London, working closely with historic experts, and for the new London Plan. ■

## Delivering major infrastructure schemes in London's historic environment

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**Deborah Lazarus**  
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**In common with other major cities, London faces the dichotomy of accommodating an expanding population and workforce with the necessary provision of infrastructure and other amenities while ensuring that the historic environment is successfully integrated into development plans. London ranks among top tourist destinations worldwide, putting further strain on its heritage.**

Recent notable infrastructure projects demonstrate what can be achieved with sufficient vision. At Kings Cross station, the new concourse roof has been acknowledged as being of exceptionally high quality design and the driver for reinvigorating the immediate area. The underground station, one of London's busiest, has been

transformed by extensive expansion achieved without impact on either existing infrastructure or the historic buildings above. At St Pancras, the London terminus for High Speed 1, works have included innovative structural intervention to the historic station and the adaptive



King's Cross Western Concourse has opened up the front of the station, as the original architect intended in 1852, and created a major new public area. © Hufton and Crow

reuse of the former St Pancras Chambers to restore the building to its original use as a luxury hotel.

These examples, of work carried out on discrete assets, are rather different to the works in progress for Crossrail 1 and those planned for Crossrail 2, Thames Tideway and High Speed 2, but there are some common themes. Different in that these major underground works potentially impact on very large numbers of assets, but similar in the need to build close relationships with heritage bodies, to maintain good communications and to establish best practice for damage assessment. This includes the identification of sensitive heritage features and of the optimum approach to damage mitigation and repair.

Just as Crossrail 1 absorbed technical lessons from the Jubilee Line Extension and High Speed 1, so its own experience will be used in the next generation of tunnelling projects. The Tunnelling and Underground Construction Academy, a unique facility in the UK established by Crossrail in 2011, will enable specialist tunnelling skills to be passed on. Other legacy activities include review and refinement of the methods used for assessment and mitigation, including the use of compensation grouting. A similar approach will be taken to monitoring and interpretation of the mass of data

produced. These schemes are enormous and successful delivery requires integration of large, multi-disciplinary design teams; on both the design and construction sides, joint ventures and good working relationships have been established and can be maintained or re-established.

And of course underground railways need stations. Throughout Central London, new ticket halls with commercial over-site developments are under construction. Close control is required over the new developments to ensure that the guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) is followed in relation to protection of the historic environment, and to obtain an appropriate balance between commercial drivers and the critical need for good design.

It was really encouraging in this context to see prominent architect Sadie Morgan quoted recently in the design/architecture publication *Dezeen* as saying that 'the British government is beginning to understand that design makes a difference in major infrastructure schemes'. The benefits that such schemes can deliver have to be matched by ensuring that the historic environment is afforded the necessary protection and enhancement, a significant challenge in a crowded urban environment. ■



The new Canary Wharf Crossrail Station in the heart of the financial area provides a dramatic area of public realm which connects the railway to its surroundings. © Arup

## A city of towers?



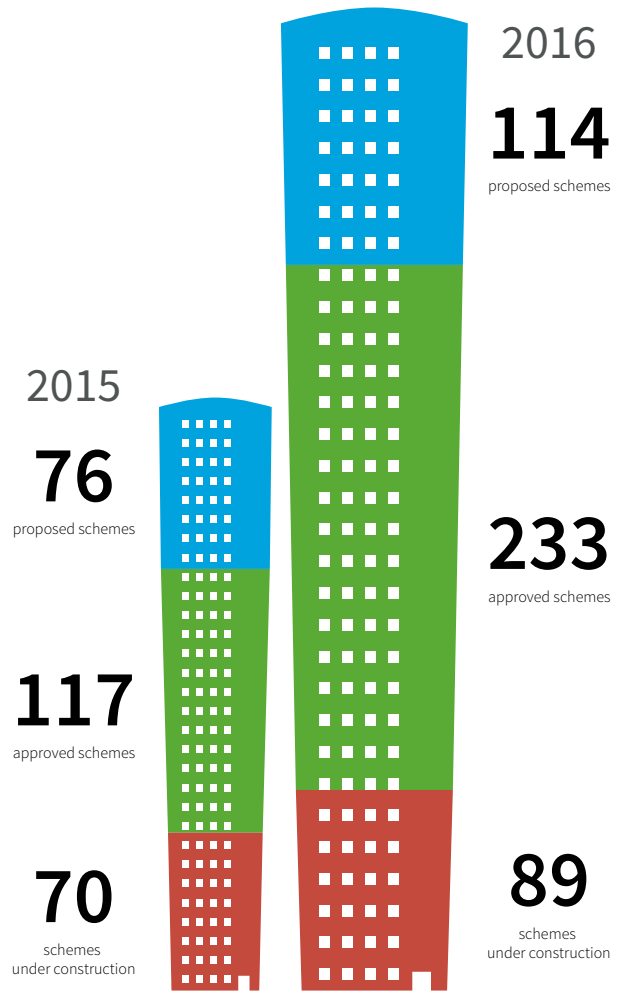
**Barbara Weiss**  
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**The battle is raging, the lines have been drawn. The word is out, and the grand debate has started, cropping up at every gathering and never out of the news: ‘London – the new Dubai’; ‘The only way is up’; ‘London’s precious skyline for sale’ – such headlines vie daily for Londoners’ attention. After a moratorium of almost 30 years, new very tall private residential buildings are currently being built with a vengeance, not only across the whole of London, but also in other British cities.**

The most extraordinary aspect of this particular tall building boom has been the degree of apparent subterfuge with which it has been planned, approved and enabled, particularly considering the scale of the towers and the complexity of the inevitable deals involved. Prior to New London Architecture’s *London’s Growing up* exhibition in April 2014 and the contemporaneous launch of the Skyline Campaign, very few Londoners realized the full extent of the onslaught that was to follow, the hundreds of planning applications that were going to be submitted for skyscrapers of all sizes and shapes, and the resulting chaos that was going to descend on what for centuries had been a rather well-preserved, very spread out, low-rise city.

Even now, two years later, it is still impossible to imagine what the new hyper-dense neighbourhoods will feel like, and whether these vertical cities, full of extremely wealthy residents, will ever manage to integrate with the low-lying, often very modest, pre-existing local communities. This is indeed very much a story that underlines London’s growing, cruel social split between haves and have-nots, not only because the greatest tower activity is occurring mostly in the poorest boroughs (Tower Hamlets, Lambeth, Hackney), but also



**Tall Buildings**  
The number of tall buildings either navigating the planning system or already approved is increasing rapidly – a 60% rise in the space of a year. Source: New London Architecture

because these huge ‘bling’ structures, veritable ghettos of the rich, will remain, in perpetuity, odious reminders of the UK’s depressingly enduring lack of social mobility.

So what really is behind this unexpected wholesale transformation of our capital?

A lot of convenient myths have been circulated by those who stand to gain from this boom: it is claimed that towers are providing the extra housing that London needs, that London has run out of brownfield land, that we need to reach for the sky, that towers are about putting London on the map. But we can now see that these points are propaganda, neither true nor compelling. To the contrary: despite the towers, the



housing crisis is raging unabated, and London, one of the greatest world cities, is in real danger of destroying its heritage and its much cherished character.

The overriding reason for building tall is that towers are seen as a lazy and convenient way for London to attract foreign investment and for the Boroughs to rake in cash and Section 106 money required for their under-funded facilities and services. Enduring recession and austerity, few Councils have been able to resist the allure of promises from mermaid-developers.

The wake-up call offered by the recent experience of physically seeing some of the appallingly inappropriate towers coming out of the ground – City Road, Nine Elms, South Bank – coupled with the impending Mayoral election, has finally concentrated Londoners' minds, and raised the temperature of the discussion.

For many, we are at a watershed moment. The proposed 72-storey Paddington Pole is turning into a rallying cry for the 'Enough is Enough' party. The passion, the hype and the headlines are welcome. The Skyline Campaign is asking for the debate to be expanded: we want a city-wide review and discussion about how to safeguard our precious inheritance while sensitively and intelligently increasing London's density. It must involve the powers that be, the money people, the aesthetes and the man in the street. It must be in-depth, honest, skilled, thoughtful and comprehensive.

We need to establish a vision for the whole of London that benefits all its citizens and transcends fire-fighting, short-term gain and partisan beliefs. We need to create



New tall buildings under construction at Elephant & Castle.  
© Historic England

policies that reflect our concerns and allow us to enforce our decisions. The culture of loop-hole politics must go. Historic England's new guidance is very much a step in the right direction, and has been produced in the nick of time. As campaigners, however, and controversially, the Skyline Campaign would like to advocate an even bolder step: our new Mayor should impose an immediate moratorium on all new tall buildings above 20 storeys, to allow time for a new chapter in London's history to be imagined, re-written and implemented.

In a world of chaotic urban growth, why must it be unthinkable that London should lead the way to a new form of urban renaissance? ■

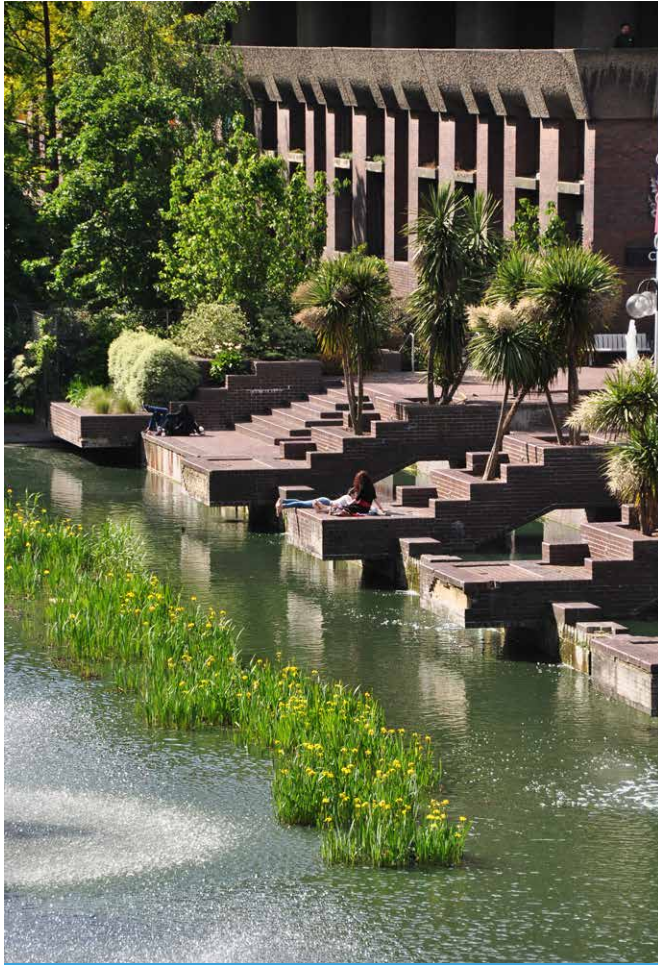
## London's landscape infrastructure and how to make the most of it



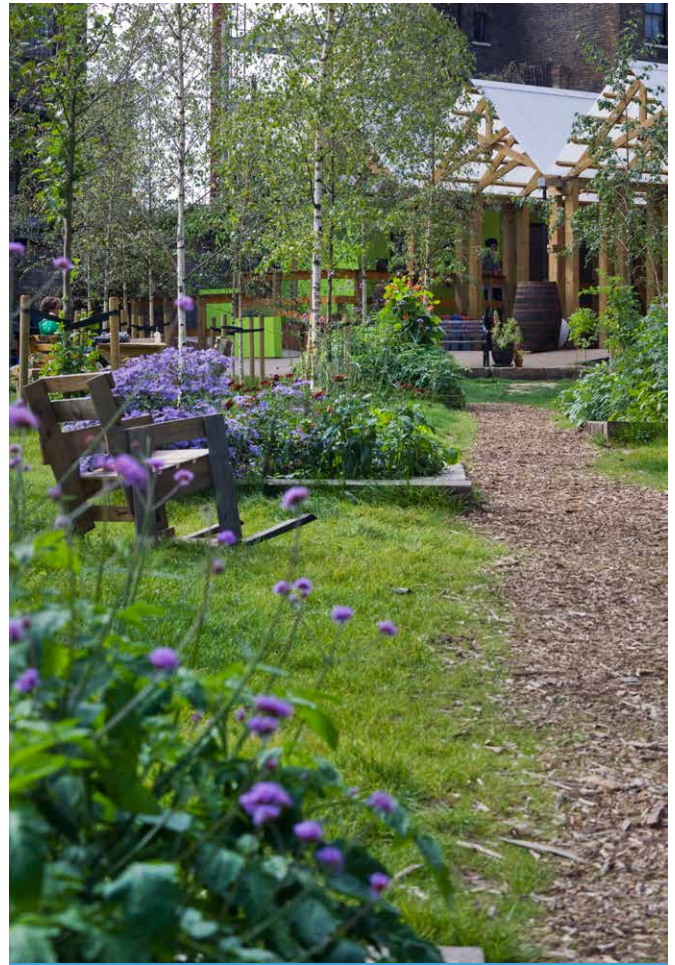
**Johanna Gibbons**  
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**The All London Green Grid has been in place as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) since 2012 and is embedded in the GLA's London Plan. The 'green grid' conceived back in 2004 deliberately ignores the constraints of administrative boundaries and highlights the potential of London's gardens, parks, network of spaces in and around housing estates, tree-lined streets, waterways and urban forests as an integrated network offering multiple benefits of:**



Barbican Estate listed building management guidelines – landscape: J & L Gibbons with Avanti.  
© J & L Gibbons



Dalston Eastern Curve Garden: J & L Gibbons with muf.  
© J & L Gibbons

- heritage and distinctive places
- access to nature and open space
- physical and mental health and well-being
- biodiversity
- food growing
- porosity and water management
- active travel and green routes to work and school
- green skills

The policy acknowledges London’s landscape infrastructure, the city ‘landscape’ as *‘integral to the capital’s metabolism’* (ALGG SPG).

As boroughs intensify, the role of the capital’s public realm and green infrastructure becomes ever more vital. Those who live and work in London realise the magnitude of the change that is occurring and the need to ‘sweat’ the benefits of the green grid. Transport for London’s Roads Task Force, for instance, acknowledges

that roads not only provide movement but also contribute to equitable high-quality living.

In the spirit of sustainable development, local involvement is as important as policy change. As responsible custodians of the public realm, developers must be encouraged to set the bar high, with a commitment to community engagement to nurture landscape infrastructure. This approach sets a new expectation in management of the streetscape that embraces amenity benefits and consequent co-benefits of biodiversity, clean air, health and well-being. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) continues to be instrumental in ensuring a commitment to capacity building and setting standards in long-term management. At Alexandra Road Park, for instance, park restoration was achieved with the active involvement of residents through investment by HLF.

At a strategic scale major infrastructure projects such as Thames Tideway Tunnel have the potential for multiple cross-overs with the All London Green Grid. An integrated vision could help secure much needed long-term investment in parks and gardens to perform as major sponges for the attenuation of rainwater. Due to intensity of use, deeply compacted soils often perform more like concrete. Decompaction would increase the capacity of park soils to absorb surface water whilst providing wider benefits to soil biodiversity, resilience of the sward and the health of parkland trees.

Growth must deliver quality. In future development schemes, it is critical to identify what they bring to the neighbourhood; to appraise what is meaningful in

terms of community asset and heritage significance; to assess what impact they might have on the street; and to consider how they could connect with and enhance the existing landscape infrastructure.

Many parts of London are over-stretched as it is. The careful management of change should maximise value for space, so that the benefits of the investment are shared. The potential to positively affect a child's walk to school, or the provision of civic amenity, should be targets as important as the development potential itself. Especially as it is landscape infrastructure that increasingly represents the long-term asset, underpinning neighbourhood identity. ■

## The River Thames – conserving the capital's greatest urban space



**Graham Morrison**  
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**London is defined by its river. It is the reason for its existence and the backdrop for two millennia of its history. At low tide, it reveals our city's largest public open space, a meandering shingle path that both divides and unites our capital. It was London's neglected back door until we rightly developed our Canalettoesque concern. And today, the walk on London's south bank from Greenwich to Battersea has made the river one of Europe's major urban spaces – both compellingly popular and attracting some of London's most important cultural destinations.**

Characterised by its buildings, the river and its setting is arguably the capital's most valuable spatial asset. As a space, its significance is beyond measure: without it, London would not be the extraordinarily memorable place it is. This unquestioned value is threatened by London's pressing need to develop. The relentless

exploitative pressure on sites near the river has not been matched by a policy or organisation capable of managing such change. Worryingly, there is no single authority charged with its overall protection. Without a champion, to whom should we turn to protect it?

We might look first to the seventeen London Boroughs that face onto the river. They are, however, definably parochial and find it hard to agree about which should be allowed to develop along the river. Some choose to exploit it and others resist any change and, together, they provide little strategic consensus for the control of damaging development.

London's strategic planner is the Mayoral authority. It could take the lead but it doesn't. It may say some of the right things but we remember that it promoted the River Park on the City of London's frontage – a discredited proposal that provided a platform for commercial space masquerading as public realm. Instead of trumpeting the exemplars of Somerset House and The Royal Festival Hall that engage with and contribute to the river, it has supported developments that aggressively exploit it. It has allowed too many developments, planned perpendicularly to the waterway - like pigs to a trough, maximizing a financial return from every window but leaving the city fabric and the river with the hermetic stumps of their lower floors.



Aerial view of the River Thames looking west, with Vauxhall bottom left. © Historic England

You might hope that the Port of London Authority would have an influence on the form of the urban fabric that forms the riverfront. But this would be beyond its remit. Its interest is singularly about the water and how it is used. In proposing a new vision for the future of the Thames, it describes in anodyne ‘consultation-speak’ a number of obscure and probably indefinable ‘goals’ that will have no impact on a sense of place for the Thames.

We ought to look to Historic England - the Government’s adviser on the historic environment. As a recent Commissioner of that organisation, I investigated if the central section of the River Thames could be listed. Though most view the river as a landscape, my understanding was that, as much of the riverbank is a man-made structure, it could in fact be listed. A listing designation would elicit a wholly different status to the normal cautionary advice of its officers. Developments would be considered not just in their own terms but also in terms of their impact on the setting of the river as a whole. But currently Historic England can only respond on an application by application basis and without reference to an overall strategy.

Sadly, there is no strategy. There is nothing for Historic England to grasp, little coordination or shared consensus between the Boroughs, a Mayoral office that (in my view) fails in its duty and The Port of London authority that bulkily and ineffectively occupies the strategic ground that a conservationist authority should command. There is neither a strategic plan for the urban welfare of the river nor any authority that can be effective in its defence.

I propose that the river should be listed - perhaps from Tower Bridge to Putney Bridge. Such designation would place much more responsibility with Historic England. But in the absence of that safeguard, or perhaps parallel to it, a River authority could be established, separate from the Port of London Authority, charged with the duty of protecting the river as a space. Its remit would include coordinating the view of all the political authorities, conserving the river’s history and ensuring that new development understood, addressed and reinforced the character of the river rather than simply exploiting it. Such an authority would fill a yawning gap in the armory of London’s conservation. ■

## Growth and pressure: supporting the capital's informal culture



**Munira Mirza**

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Royal Vauxhall Tavern, London. The Royal Vauxhall Tavern was listed at Grade II in 2015 as part of Historic England's ongoing research into LGBT heritage © Historic England

**London runs on creativity. The city's creative industries are worth £34 billion to the economy and now account for one in six jobs. Three quarters of the UK's film industry is based in London. One fifth of the UK's video games industry is based here. London is one of the 'Big Four' fashion capitals.**

Culture also means tourism. The capital's post-Olympic bounce shows no sign of slowing down. With over 18 million visitors last year spending £13 billion, London is now the world's number one tourist destination. Four out of five visitors cite culture as the main reason for their visit. Culture gives London its 'buzz' – and this attracts talent. It helps build individual neighbourhoods and people's attachment to them. London is a world city made up of small villages – each one with its own culture, character and heritage.

Yet, our success inevitably means growth and this is going to put huge pressure on culture, heritage and the built environment. London has already lost over a third of its live music venues in the past decade, but the Mayor's Music Venues Taskforce put forward a rescue plan last October to help save those that remain. Artist studios are also under threat, but our regeneration funding will replace a significant amount of studio space. We have also published [An A-Z of Planning and Culture](#) to engender more pro-cultural planning across the city.

Development has had a particularly acute impact on informal culture, that is, culture led by communities of interest rather than by arts professionals. Informal culture covers activities like skateboarding, street art, busking, or visiting a pub or a nightclub. These are often youth-led and sometimes at the margin. Yet

both formal and informal cultures are vital to London and feed off each other. The V&A's most successful show in recent years was about David Bowie, a popular artist who first played in clubs and pubs, who influenced street fashion, but who also enjoyed 'high culture', attending concerts and visiting galleries.

In the past few years, the heritage sector has come to recognise the value of informal culture. The Rom skatepark in Hornchurch was listed in October 2014, the first of its kind in Europe to be given this protection. Last August, the country's best Inter-War pubs were listed, many of them located in the capital. More recently, the Government acknowledged the social and communal value of The Royal Vauxhall Tavern when they listed one of the oldest LGBT venues in the UK. This is a welcome trend that signals the importance of intangible cultural heritage – to local communities and to the 'buzz' that makes London a successful world city.

In London we are being called upon more and more to protect an area's identity through the sometimes fragile fabric of its venues or places. Not only do these embody our past, they are a space for new creation and ideas. We want to foster pro-cultural planning, recognising that as well as the architectural value of a building, its cultural use and place in the capital's story also needs to be considered. If we want to maintain a pro-cultural city we need to appreciate the social and communal factors that make spaces valuable. Providing we work together, we can support and sustain what makes this a truly world city. ■

## Restoration: infrastructure as a catalyst



**Lucy Musgrave**  
Director of Publica

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**London is a historic city, but it is also dynamic, priding itself on its openness to new people and ideas and to transformational change. Changes in our public spaces are not only inevitable but desirable: they are the physical manifestation of a city in a constant state of flux. This appetite for change and growth places multiple pressures on the city's public spaces. The steady stream of ad hoc interventions can erode an area's character over time.**

Paradoxically, projects that are potentially the biggest threats could also offer the richest opportunities for our historic places. Multiple stakeholders and legal,

political, bureaucratic and financial hurdles can make public realm projects slow to get off the ground, yet this can provide time to explore and understand a place's physical, social and cultural qualities and what makes it special; time to assess what should be kept, what should be restored and what should be replaced; time to work with multiple agencies and interest groups to ensure a holistic plan.

Publica is currently one of the partners working on a programme of public realm improvements to Hanover Square and its environs. One of the first spaces laid out as part of an integrated urban composition in the West End of London, the area is an important example of set-piece urban planning and influenced the development of the Great Estates as a whole. Whilst the original urban design and long axial view through Hanover Square from Cavendish Square to the portico of St George's Church have survived, much of the original architectural fabric has disappeared. The square itself has faded from a desirable destination to a traffic-clogged backwater providing secondary functions to the great retail thoroughfares of Oxford Street and Regent Street.



Hanover Square proposed view. © Publica

Infrastructure projects and heritage considerations do not usually work in harmony. But in this instance Crossrail's Bond Street Station's Eastern Ticket Hall, due to open in late 2018, has been the catalyst for a raft of new building developments and a related appetite for public space improvements. These aim to transform the square and its surroundings into a world class 'front door' to the West End while respecting, revealing and enhancing the area's intrinsic historic qualities. From a heritage perspective, the challenges are to grasp the opportunity to reassess the Square's layers of historic character and ensure its sensitive reinvention for modern times; and to ensure that public realm improvements and new developments are conceived

within the context of an over-arching agenda to reveal historic vistas and to provide an appropriate setting for historic buildings and monuments.

This project shows how, in the context of rapid urban development and change, a group of private and public sector bodies – in this case including Great Portland Estates, Westminster City Council, Transport for London, Crossrail and Historic England as well as neighbouring landowners and other developers - can work together to bring heritage restoration of the city's townscape to fruition, fulfilling the objective of making our historic places relevant, attractive and useful – now and for generations to come. ■



A holistic design for Hanover Square. © Publica

## Funding and investment in the historic environment



**Stuart Hobley**  
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**London really is the most extraordinary place, a city where heritage and cultural identity have gone on to become the stuff of global stories. Just think about 2016 – a year when we celebrate both the 40th anniversary of the city’s relationship with the punk movement – and the 350th year since the Great Fire of London.**

It is a thriving, bustling and growing city where heritage is at the heart of all aspects of culture, attracting visitors from around the world. But the city is more than just a

tourist destination; for more than 8 million very diverse people, it is ‘home’ and it is vital that our heritage is a key and active part in their lives too. London is a city which reinvents itself, and meeting contemporary needs can put things we value at risk. With historic areas of the city being absorbed by development we must value our heritage, not as a barrier, but as the important thread which connects people with place.

And this is where Heritage Lottery Fund can help. Underpinning our grants is a desire to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities.

Have you seen what’s happening at Woodberry Wetlands in Hackney? With a grant from us of almost £700,000, together with further funding from the London Borough of Hackney, Thames Water, a private developer and crucially, the support of residents, the London Wildlife Trust is transforming the watery world of Woodberry Down, restoring a listed building, opening access to



A recently regenerated historic urban block at 64-68 Whitechapel High Street, East London. © Dennis Gilbert



natural heritage and achieving biodiversity gains in the middle of London. All this makes life better for local people.

In Walthamstow, HLF has worked with Waltham Forest Council to realise the potential of the heritage offer, for both people and their economy. Lloyd Park received a £3million grant and as a result annual visits have almost doubled and more than 11,000 hours of volunteer time help to keep the park a much-loved amenity, with. The park is blossoming and in tandem with townscape change, there is a demonstrable impact on inward investment and quality of life.

Our Townscape Heritage grant has a strong track record of taking run-down streets and making them vibrant community centres once again. Whereas St James' is just getting started, the Whitechapel Market Conservation area has seen dozens of precious historic buildings restored within the last few years. A key link between the centre of Tower Hamlets and the Olympic Park, and with almost 60 buildings involved in some way, our funding to Whitechapel has seen an incredible change in the

market streetscape benefitting visitors, businesses and local people. And with the new Whitechapel Crossrail station, it's clear that heritage can and should play a key role in catalysing change in London.

Embedding heritage in plans for growth and development makes a very real and lasting difference. Whether we are dealing with the built environment, natural heritage or even people's memories as to how places have changed over time, it is vital that the city's historic voice contributes to sustainable change. It's clear that when heritage is involved, developments are strong and robust, attracting both business and community support. So, if you're reading this and have an idea, maybe we can help. Our grants start at £3,000 and go up (and up). All of our funding comes from Lottery players, so it is absolutely right that our projects help to make London a better place to live for all its communities.

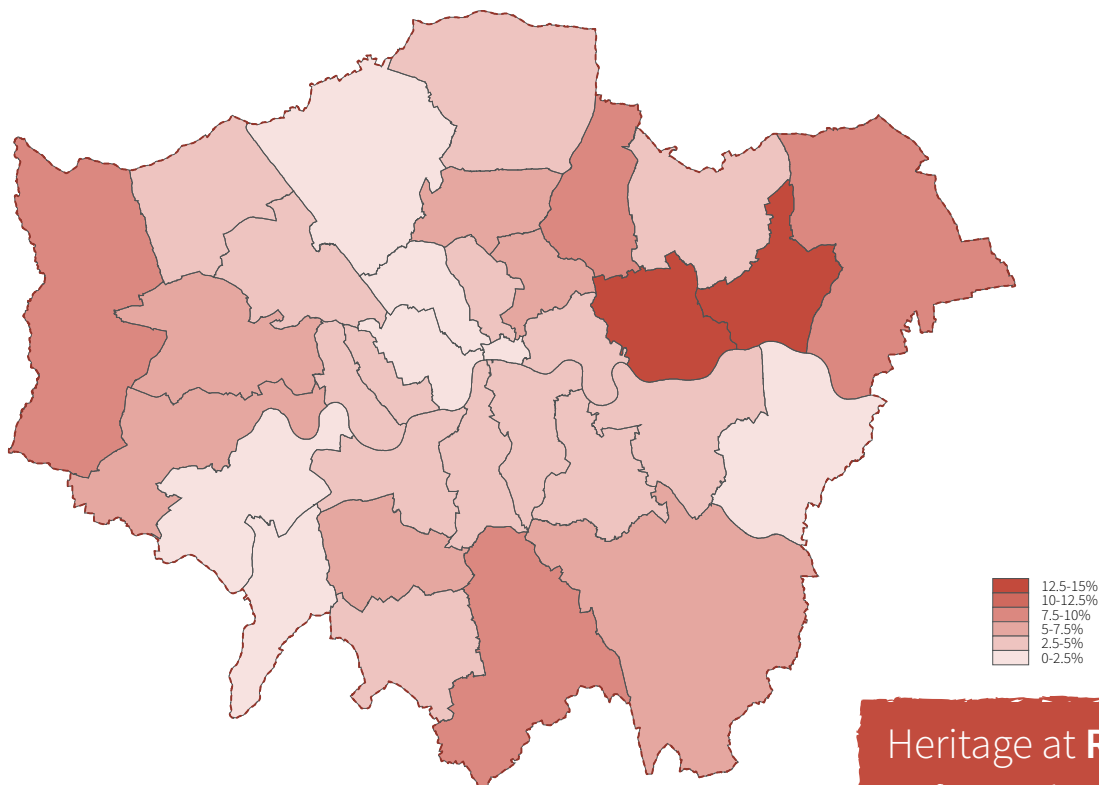
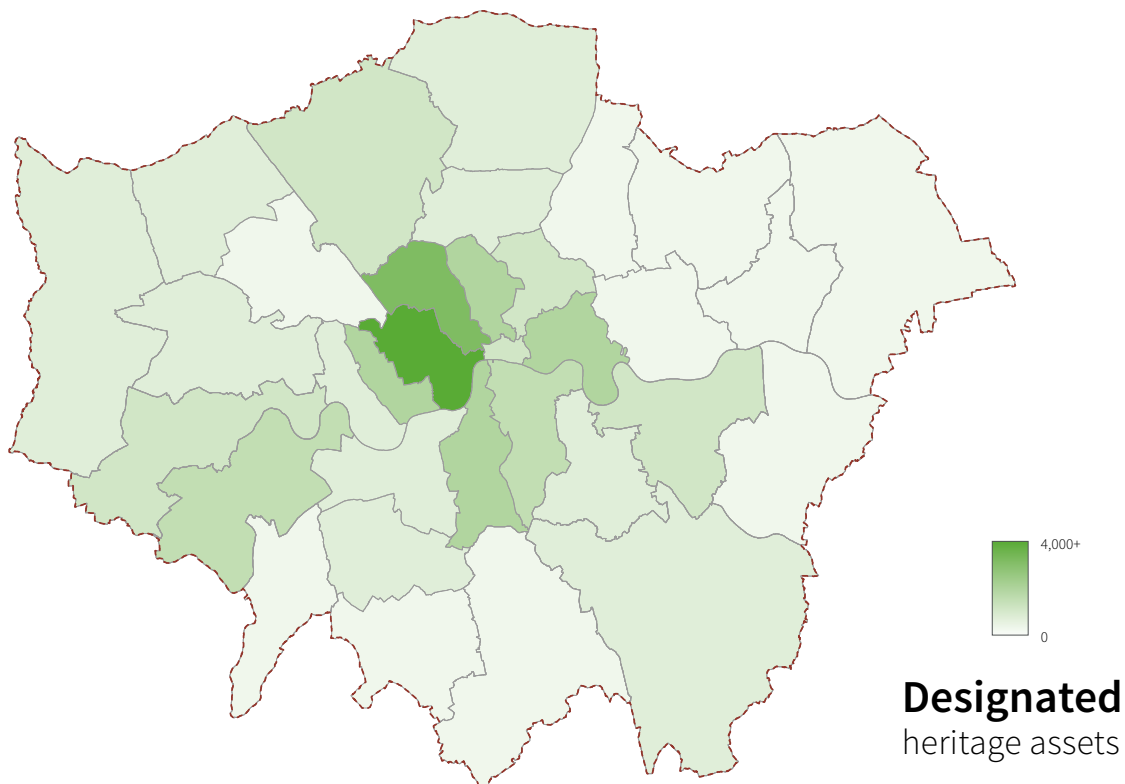
London's heritage is distinct; it has shaped the growth of the city and must play a central role in defining its future. ■



Lloyd Park in Walthamstow, restored with HLF funding. © Dave Lee

### Numbers of Designated Heritage Assets in Each London Borough

(source: National Heritage List for England)



### Heritage at Risk in London – Proportion of Total Designated Assets Currently on the HAR Register

(source: National Heritage List for England)

# Heritage As Part of the Plan

In thinking about the implications of the type of growth and change that London is likely to see over the next few years, it can be all too easy to focus on the potentially negative impacts on the historic environment. Yet, there is plenty of evidence that heritage can and does play a significant role in making better places. The stunning transformation of the wider King's Cross area is perhaps one of the best illustrations of this ever seen in England, and has gone a significant way in addressing perceptions around the complexities of such projects and their viability.

Of course, it is not simply development projects where we need to ensure that heritage considerations

are adequately considered. The next iteration to the London Plan, as well as the ongoing growth in neighbourhood planning, offer opportunities to ensure that heritage is comprehensively reflected across the tiers of planning policy.

London's built environment and heritage has always evolved as the form and function of the city has evolved. Ensuring the historic environment remains an integral part of planning policy is supremely important in conserving the city's character and distinctiveness as we enter a period of such potentially significant change.

## A developer's perspective – heritage adds value



**Robert Evans**  
Partner, Argent

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**In July 2001 I helped write 'Principles for a Human City' about the redevelopment of King's Cross. One of its principles was 'harness the value of heritage'. We recognised that King's Cross has a powerful heritage of great historic significance and that many of these assets can and should be re-used to generate new life and activity and ultimately value.**

Almost 15 years on, the application of those Principles is a significant work in progress. King's Cross is the largest mixed-use development in single ownership to be masterplanned and developed in Central London for over 150 years. 20 historic buildings and structures represent around 30 per cent of its footprint and around 1 million square feet of its floorspace (around 15 per cent of the total). Three listed buildings, close to the stations, have been rejuvenated. The beautiful,



An external view of *The German Gymnasium Restaurant*, One King's Boulevard, King's Cross. © John Sturrock

listed German Gymnasium is now a restaurant; the last remaining Stanley Building now provides serviced offices and meeting rooms; and the Great Northern Hotel is once again welcoming guests to its bar, restaurant and boutique rooms.

A second grouping of buildings sits along the Regent's Canal, within the former King's Cross Goods Yard. The buildings provide new homes for Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design and the Art Fund and House of Illustration, commercial space, restaurants and a supermarket. Further along the Canal, one



Granary Square and all of the King's Cross Estate north of the canal. © John Sturrock

of the listed gas holder guide frames has recently been re-erected and re-opened as an urban park. We have similarly restored three other gasholder frames to become the setting for 145 beautiful new homes. At the top of the buildings, private and communal roof gardens will provide magnificent views over the canal, parks, and the city beyond.

The retention and re-use of these and other historic structures provide the context for 50 new buildings at King's Cross, all set around 20 new streets and 10 new public squares, parks and gardens. The layout, street pattern and geometries within the masterplan come from the historic buildings, which also underpin the emerging sense of place. Granary Square, in particular, is now embraced by Londoners as a major new piece of our public realm

All this amounts to a powerful case for keeping the best from the past. And yet, the bare truth is most of these projects would not be viable in their own right, even in the high land value location that is Central London.

The development costs of undertaking these projects properly are very high, even before one finds unexpected ground conditions, archaeology or asbestos. They work because they are part of a greater whole. That is one of the important lessons from King's Cross.

Another is the need for flexibility in planning. Very early on, we agreed with Camden Council and English Heritage (now Historic England) that given the timeframe of this major development, there was little point in submitting detailed designs for the historic buildings. They would inevitably and quickly become redundant. Instead we agreed a 'parameters' approach within an outline planning application, an approach since replicated by very many other development proposals. Many people at the time interpreted national planning policy as requiring full detailed designs up front. It never said that, instead stipulating the need for the right level of information to permit informed decision-making. We framed our "parameters" very carefully and accordingly, based on thorough assessment of all assets.

That approach was controversial with some at the time, but it worked partly because we received consistent excellent and expert advice from English Heritage. We have not, of course, agreed on everything, but the professional and productive working relationship that developed has been crucial to the King's Cross model of constructive conservation that, we believe, captures the special quality of London as it has grown over the centuries.

My third lesson is that such projects will always be controversial, because people care passionately about historic buildings and places. Taking an industrial area like King's Cross and making it a place for people has meant some necessary interventions into historic fabric. This has proved contentious, with opposition in some cases progressing to the High Court. As a result, many developers shy away from taking on such projects. Controversy, risk, delay and cost are not an attractive combination!

There is no easy answer to this, but my fourth lesson would be the importance of expert advice and high quality, objective information about historic assets. Unfortunately, too many listed building citations, conservation area statements or other designation descriptions are too 'thin' to be of any practical use. For example, the listed building description for the Stanley Building referred only to the outside so was of little utility in guiding the internal changes necessary for modern office re-use. All too often, what fills the void is differing personal and subjective opinions over what may or may not be important.

This puts a premium on the appointment of Conservation Architects, specialist Structural Engineers and Accessibility Consultants with the necessary expertise and experience. But even with these on board, the true costs can come out double or even more than forecast by specialist cost consultants. At King's Cross the professional fees for heritage projects have generally been 2-3 per cent higher than for the new build elements. The concept and scheme design stages have generally been longer due to the additional technical skills and the high levels of experience of the individuals involved. In addition, more pre-application

meetings with the Local Authority and Historic England were required to develop the design.

Retaining skills and experience as we move from project and project has been vital. Contractor teams that have worked on one heritage building have then moved onto the next and the same applies for the specialist sub-contractors, such as those that carry out underpinning and brickwork and ironwork repairs. Investments in 3D modelling and BIM have helped everyone.

The good news is that we have found companies and organisations which are enthusiastic about becoming tenants at King's Cross. Of course, we need to work carefully with them, to set out clearly the responsibilities that come with the historic territory. For example, we have generally sought to retain the internal character of buildings by not insulating the walls. Together with like-for-like window repairs and replacement, this means the thermal performance of the buildings is significantly less than for new-builds and has to be accounted for in the tenant's Corporate Social Responsibility or sustainability narrative and their operational costs. Service charges can also be higher than for new builds, as the design life for elements such as painted timber windows is significantly less than that of contemporary facades. For listed buildings there are also typically restrictions on their fit-out.

So there are countless challenges. However, they can all be overcome by an open spirit of trust and collaboration between the various stakeholders. That is our experience at King's Cross. Fifteen years after penning 'Principles for a Human City', I see a successful, distinctive place that demonstrates how good planning and development, by many teams of talented people, can conserve and enhance our cities. Edwin Heathcote of the Financial Times once wrote that King's Cross 'is the perfect mix of grittiness and shininess, simultaneously a symbol of London's industrial and engineering past and the creative present.' I would not have dared write that back in 2001. ■

## The City's heritage: the keystone to its future



**Gwyn Richards**  
Head of Design, City of London

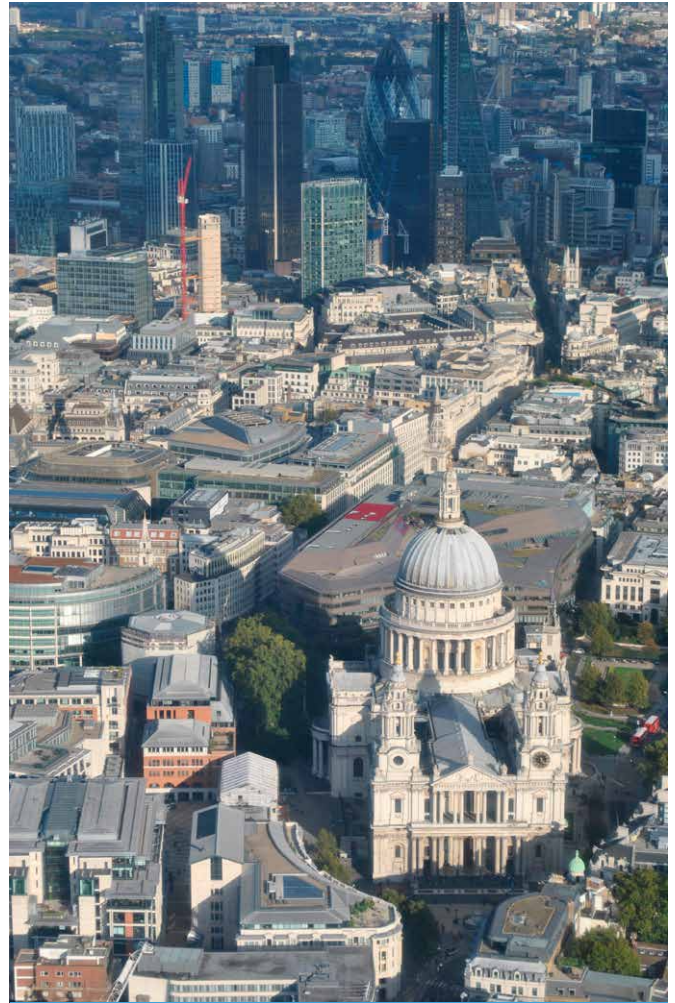
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**Throughout its history, the City has evolved. This dynamic quality defines the Square Mile. Facilitating appropriate change to buildings and townscapes will ensure it remains a vibrant place, not only as a World Business centre but also as a City for all.**

We are currently enhancing our understanding of how the Square Mile will evolve in future, a future full of opportunities and challenges. What is clear is that the City will have heritage at its heart; it is the City's enduring unique quality, its deep-rooted pedigree. Far from being a hindrance, this rich heritage is attractive to investors and businesses as well as to residents and visitors. Its protection will ensure a healthy future for the City.

Where and how people work in the City, the nature of the businesses and the expectations of the workforce are changing radically, while many are attracted to the City's heritage buildings. The Square Mile will become a more culturally enriching place, not only as a vibrant business centre but as a destination for visitors seven days a week. There is an increasing emphasis on the public realm with more inclusive buildings with active retail frontages interacting with high-quality public spaces. Schemes such as the new square in Aldgate and the future work on Bank junction will exploit the heritage assets defining these spaces.

The City is committed to engaging the Square Mile with London as a whole, diversifying its appeal to become an inclusive City for all. We are negotiating free access to new roof-level public viewing galleries giving all parts of the community access to the exceptional views of the area and its historical landmarks. New pedestrian routes and alleys are being secured, integrating



© City of London

new development in to the medieval network of thoroughfares and maximizing access along and to the riverside, introducing vitality and exploiting the river as a public asset.

Heritage informs much of what we do. Our clustering response to tall buildings is a direct response to the view constraints developed to protect our heritage assets. The tall building cluster, occupying a small proportion of the Square Mile, provides an area where the City can develop whilst reducing pressures in the City's historical core. In this respect our approach to tall buildings facilitates the protection of our heritage.

As many inevitably focus on the new towers, the continued work of the City in protecting and enhancing its rich heritage is often overlooked. We have negotiated

smaller scale contextual schemes in our historic areas and facilitated creative uses of historic buildings: for example, some Banking Halls have been converted to pubs. This maximizes their public benefit and makes them a relevant and vital part of the future City. In other schemes we are negotiating public exhibition spaces focussed on surviving Roman remains, such as the Temple of Mithras in the Bloomberg development

and the Roman wall in Vine Street. This will enhance the public appreciation of the City's rich past and also make the past relevant to future generations. The City's heritage is the keystone to its future, and we will continue to cherish and protect it, to ensure the Square Mile remains a dynamic, living place that thrives as a World Business centre as well as a City for all. ■

## Civic society and a collaborative future for built heritage



**Jonathan Manns**  
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**century, its call is, more plainly, to look after the old, seek the beautiful, cultivate the future.**

Founded in 1912, the London Society was established by a group of influential residents concerned about the lack of vision for the future of the city. The fledgling organisation was launched by an extraordinary assemblage of individuals, both in influence and scope. Unsurprisingly there were architects, planners and engineers, but also politicians, business people and artists.

***Antiqua Tegenda, Pulchra Petenda, Futura Colenda. It might sound like the motto of an Oxbridge college, or a Hogwarts spell, but it is in fact the rallying cry of the London Society. One of the most influential civic voices in Britain's capital during the early-twentieth***

Some discussion about the historic and future built environment already existed. What was new, however, was the drive to take discussions forward in a more collaborative, holistic and strategic manner. The Society



Southbank's historic skate spot highlights the need to fully understand an asset's significance. © Historic England

quickly set about preparing the first *Development Plan of Greater London* (1919). This proposed new arterial roads to relieve the city's congestion and a narrow green belt of land, protected from development, to provide amenity for residents and an edge to the city. It also looked backwards and worked to identify those elements of merit and deserving of protection, with a particular focus on London's historic squares and churches. A key achievement was to show that extending engagement beyond "experts" and towards a wider audience created better outcomes; something of continued relevance today.

In March 2013 the Southbank Centre unveiled designs for a £120 million redevelopment of its 'Festival Wing' that would have transformed the iconic undercroft skate spot into retail units. It hadn't been designed for skating, but the proposals failed to fully consider the importance of the space to the community of artists and skaters who used it, not least as the oldest recognised and extant skateboarding space in the world. Identification and assessment of the *significance* of the area was therefore

a crucial factor in the acceptability of the proposals and the scheme's shortcomings resulted in over 30,000 individual objections being submitted to the plans.

That application was refused, but the experiences of the Long Live Southbank campaign which it spawned have resulted in new understandings, both of the building's built and social heritage. They have also led to new relationships being formed between the undercroft's various custodians, from which its future can be explored once again, in a more collaborative manner.

Today, London's built environment is experiencing rapid and fundamental change, with tall buildings and densification re-shaping the physical landscape whilst modernisation of existing stock forces reconsideration of the buildings we experience each day. Such decisions cannot be made in isolation and herein lies the continued importance of civic society groups, much as it was a century ago: *to look after the old, seek the beautiful, cultivate the future.* ■

## Recognising the economic value of investing in heritage assets

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**'Recognising the economic value of investing in heritage assets': it seems simple now, but for many years developers were not always convinced. Now, however, a generation of developers recognises that our built heritage can enhance a development and that many of the best projects are a vibrant mix of new and old.**

Historic buildings and features have a great appeal to the public and a growing group of property occupiers. Why, for example, would we want to depart from the established street pattern, or demolish historic warehouses, at

our Blossom Street development in Shoreditch when it is that very urban fabric which is attractive to the occupiers of today? One of the key reasons for retaining the 19th-century warehouses at Blossom Street is that they will appeal to media and tech occupiers looking for expansion space in the City fringe area which is characterful and enhances their working environment.

Even in the 1980s London was littered with derelict buildings which seemed to have no future. Many were swept away. The problem has diminished over time, but today we believe that it is quite wrong to leave these sites in a dilapidated state if they have fallen into disuse. At the same time, however, they have to be upgraded to meet modern standards. This is where the best modern development practise comes in. A great example of this is Derwent London's Tea Building, in Shoreditch, which through imaginative re-use has become the symbol of the whole area's renaissance.

Some obstacles to this enlightened approach remained in 2010, when I was asked by the Government to review





British Land proposals for Blossom Street, London E1. © British Land

‘non-planning consents’ – development controls which are separate from the process of winning planning permission. I found that developers were experiencing problems with the sequencing of decisions from consenting bodies, difficulty in resolving differences between them and sometimes a lack of responsiveness.

Heritage consents were no exception: listing and conservation designations late in the planning process can create uncertainty for investors. For example, soon after we won consent for The Leadenhall Building (or Cheesegrater) in the City of London, we were told of a request to list the existing building on the site. Not only

would this have prevented the creation of a world-class development, it would also have meant that the five years we had spent securing that consent would have been wasted.

Now the system works much better. We have recently been working with Historic England to secure an exciting future for 1 Finsbury Avenue, an iconic office building on our Broadgate estate designed by the late Arup Associates architect Peter Foggo. After detailed investigations by Arup, Historic England and ourselves we have agreed a programme of improvement and enhancement to the Grade II listed building which gives

it a useful future while maintaining the look, feel and spirit of Foggo's original design.

While this approach has worked well, we also believe Historic England's new programme of Enhanced Advisory Services has much to offer. Listing enhancement (which provides greater clarity over the extent of statutory protection), extended pre-application advice and screening surveys will all help developers to understand the heritage context for a development and prevent nasty surprises further down the line, of the type we nearly experienced in Leadenhall Street. We are also backers of Certificates of Immunity from Listing.

While some developers may be reluctant to apply for a certificate for fear of triggering a listing if the application fails, it is better to clarify the issue at an early stage rather than again being subject to a late shock.

Developers now understand the merits of historic buildings and their economic value better than ever before. We still sometimes have differences of views with Historic England but the system now exists to allow the development and heritage worlds to work positively together. We have the tools to make the very best of the UK's unique heritage – it's up to us to make it work. ■

## Securing what makes London special for the long term

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**Lynda Addison**  
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**London's economic success has many elements, of which its unique character is part. The importance of the London Plan and its coherent delivery in maintaining this uniqueness, which makes it a "great world city", cannot be overestimated. That uniqueness is made up of many distinctive areas and an amazing range of buildings and places, together clearly illustrating London's history. Their character is part of why they are engines for economic growth, as we see in Clerkenwell and Bankside. However, the scale, nature and pace of change now facing London means this very uniqueness is under threat. London needs to change and grow, but critical to its economic survival is the maintenance and enhancement of its unique characteristics if it is to become 'the greatest city on earth' by 2020 (2020 vision - *The Greatest City on Earth: Ambitions for London*).**

A major opportunity now exists but also a complex challenge. The Greater London Authority (GLA) is embarking on a new London Plan to replace that adopted in 2011. The key role of this Plan is to support the delivery of the new Mayor's vision. He is highly likely to pursue the aspiration of "the greatest city on earth". The Plan therefore needs to place protecting London's uniqueness at its heart whilst encouraging growth and change. How it does this is complex and controversial. Planning decisions should positively, cogently and coherently work towards the Mayor's goal and not undermine it. I have increasing concern that the current Plan, and the way it is being implemented, is undermining the very essence of London. The new Plan has to address this issue.

The London Plan review has rightly started with the gathering of evidence. To ensure effective understanding of what makes London unique, and so facilitate its conservation, it is essential to be able to articulate all the attributes that together make London what it is today. In a heritage context this is not just the formally designated historic environment but also the wider character and variety of places and their different make up across London. This understanding is as critical as knowledge of the housing market, demography, transport and environmental impact.

This complex challenge has not previously been undertaken. The complexity is re-enforced by the essential requirement that the outcomes must be widely owned. This is best achieved through collaborative working. The GLA and Boroughs, the development industry, community and academic sectors, as well as voluntary organisations which have an interest and expertise in this field, should be engaged. All can contribute to an iterative process of Plan development. Without an understanding of the constituent parts of London's uniqueness, owned by this cross-sector of interests, London runs the risk of losing its intrinsic characteristics.

There will not be agreement across all these organisations. However, producing a substantial body of knowledge refined through debate will provide a consensus on the "skeleton" of the character of London. The Plan and its policies can then be constructed based on how this character can be protected. The GLA and Boroughs have a duty to co-operate and work with a wide range of other organisations. In addition, effective engagement with the community is a critical part of planning, allowing what is special to local communities to be articulated and built into the foundations of the Plan.

As the Plan evolves it will be important to test policies and proposals against this skeleton so they do not undermine it. New development, essential to secure

the status of London, should then take place without harming its intrinsic value. Subsequently Borough local plans and neighbourhood plans can refine and expand on the skeleton, re-enforcing its diversity and fine grain and preserving what makes London globally regarded. A strong Plan with a clear vision, coherent objectives and policies must be implemented through consistent and coherent decision-making based on a thorough understanding of what makes London and its different areas unique. This has to be a daily occurrence so decisions do not undermine the basic "skeleton". The responsibility resides with the Mayor and senior officers but also with GLA and Borough councillors, senior planning officers and the development industry. All need to understand this context. If they are party to the evolution of the characterisation evidence base and the subsequent foundations of the Plan, they are more likely to implement it.

We are facing a major challenge – but it is a fascinating challenge. It is one which we can meet but only if quality plans are adopted and quality planning decisions are taken consistent with the plans. All parties in both the public and private sectors wish to secure the global success of London: we just need to agree how to do it. ■



New residential development under construction at Vauxhall and Nine Elms, one of London's Opportunity Areas. © Historic England

## 20th century architecture and the impact of current development

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**Catherine Croft**  
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**Appreciation that not just the best buildings of previous centuries but also those of more modest interest, recording the lives and stories of local people, can be successfully integrated into new development is now widespread, and London has led the world in demonstrating the benefits of sensitive urban conservation. Professionals and politicians strive to achieve this across London, and recognise that the result is usually better than wholesale redevelopment, supporting a sense of community and belonging that enriches lives.**

The big exception is twentieth-century buildings. While the twentieth century is well and truly now a 'past century', the merits of retaining good post-war buildings, in particular, are too often overlooked. The reasons for this are obvious and understandable: buildings of the '60s, '70s and even '80s, are at a low ebb in their lifecycle. Certainly no longer new and fashionable, they may have been under-maintained, and are often lumbered with outmoded technology, poor environmental performance and battered landscaping. With rocketing land values and a shortage of development sites across the capital, a wide range of twentieth-century buildings face pressure for change, but post-war housing estates are particularly threatened with replacement.

Faced with a critical need to provide more housing, London Boroughs are in an incredibly difficult position. The relative ease of using publicly owned land, especially council housing estates, compared with assembling brownfield sites at scale and speed makes it a tempting target for development. A small minority



Central Hill estate, Crystal Palace. © Joe Gilbert

of estates, however, are really well designed and capable of renovation, upgrading and densification. It is possible to repair and design out minor faults, to address new requirements for safe accessible access, and to provide much improved environmental performance. We are getting better at doing this, and more products are available to help. It is also possible to add in new blocks between existing ones, or add extra storeys to large elements. The Twentieth Century Society commissioned Sarah Wigglesworth Architects to design a scheme for extra storeys at Robin Hood Gardens to make this very point. When skilfully designed, such schemes have minimal impact on design and heritage and on the established communities for whom these estates are homes.

The major works of Camden Borough's own in-house architects department are listed, and have received HLF funding towards their rejuvenation. They have enthusiastic fans on social media, and host architectural tours. Reappraisal has not been without controversy, but the consensus is now that these estates really are special, both for their architectural design and for the skilful planning that ensured that neighbours bump into one another, that children have places to play, and that residents have outdoor space on generous balconies.

It is estates south of the river which are currently most at risk. Like Camden's Borough Architect Neave Brown, Lambeth's Ted Hollamby was a charismatic figure with extraordinary energy. Under him, estates across the Borough were at the forefront of good practice and design. Whilst Camden had a preference for concrete, Lambeth favoured brick. Houses, flats and maisonette blocks surround tree-shaded streets and 'village greens'. The rolling landscapes of Tulse Hill and Gypsy Hill were emphasised and made best use of by an architecture rooted in both an appreciation of modernism and a love of vernacular incident and detail. Now two of the best examples, Central Hill and Cressingham Gardens, neither of which are currently listed (the former still under consideration, the latter recently turned down) are among estates proposed for demolition.

The Government has launched a review under Lord Heseltine to consider the regeneration of major council housing estates. While replacement schemes may well

increase the number of people housed in each site, this could instead be achieved by selective redevelopment of smaller areas or by infill development. This would not only preserve an important chapter of London's architectural heritage, but would also be much more environmentally sensitive and, most importantly, would not necessitate the wholesale destruction of communities. The political rhetoric of 'brutal high-rise towers' and 'dark alleyways' being 'a gift to criminals and drug dealers', thereby linking design inexorably to social problems, surely masks more complex issues, including under-maintenance, while raising questions about the wisdom of almost unconstrained high-rise residential development. It is good that the Heseltine panel includes representation from RIBA as well as landowners with experience of conservation and place making, but it will need a determined effort for it to recognise the contribution that twentieth-century heritage can make to ensuring a better twenty-first century London. The best twentieth-century homes can deliver what is needed, where people want to live. They deserve to stay, and posterity will thank us for it. ■

### New Houses

The GLA has set a target of over 400,000 new houses to be built in London by 2025 (source: Greater London Authority: the London Plan 2015)



## Neighbourhood planning – the ‘city of villages’ restored



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Neighbourhood Planners. London logo.

**London is changing fast. It is growing, going up and spreading out. There is a plethora of local government-led planning to manage change, from the London Plan and Mayoral Opportunity Areas to Borough Local Plans and Area Action Plans. Yet many London communities feel planning is being done to them, they lack a say and too much of what they value is being lost.**

Neighbourhood planning is now emerging as an antidote. This is planning done by the community for the community that carries the same legal weight as the planning policies drawn up by the Mayor and London's boroughs. The growth of neighbourhood planning in London is remarkable. In the absence of parish councils, new neighbourhood forums have been set up from scratch and boundaries have been established in the complex politics and geography of the capital. In just four years, over 100 communities have become engaged in more than 20 boroughs. Four plans have been through independent examination; three have been put to referendum and passed with massive majorities at an average 87 per cent yes vote.

Neighbourhood planning in London is not without challenges. It is not universally welcomed by ward councillors and planning professionals. The GLA and TfL give it scant attention. Some suggest it is a NIMBY's charter although all the evidence to date shows neighbourhood plans accepting as much and often more growth than in Local Plans. Ingenious tactics have sometimes been deployed by Borough councillors and officers to delay, obfuscate and frustrate its role. Yet London's communities care too much for their areas to allow this to obstruct the burgeoning movement.

Already neighbourhood forums are coming together and a new network, Neighbourhood Planners London, is being formed.

Heritage and conservation has much to benefit from neighbourhood planning. Communities care passionately about their local story and their heritage assets and can place them front and centre in plans for the future (and the community infrastructure levy can be tapped for delivery). It should be no surprise that London's first neighbourhood plan (Norland) was heritage-led and heritage policies feature strongly in the visions, objectives and policies of those being prepared.

The question now being asked is whether neighbourhood planning is about more than community-led plans. It is clear that in ten years' time London's boroughs won't exist as they do today. Already most are sharing officers, and key services – like heritage and design – will only be capable of being delivered through pooled resources. As boroughs merge and become more strategic so neighbourhood forums can step forward. The creation of a “parish council” in Queens Park is likely to be the start of a trend.

It is an historical truism that London is a city of villages. The capital's story is complex and too often lost in the broad brush of strategy, World City thinking and Borough plans. Now with neighbourhood planning there is a chance for a future which is in touch with the different pulse and diverse histories of London's communities. This is an opportunity that all who care for the conservation of London should welcome with open arms. ■

## Listing the world in a great world city



**Emily Gee**

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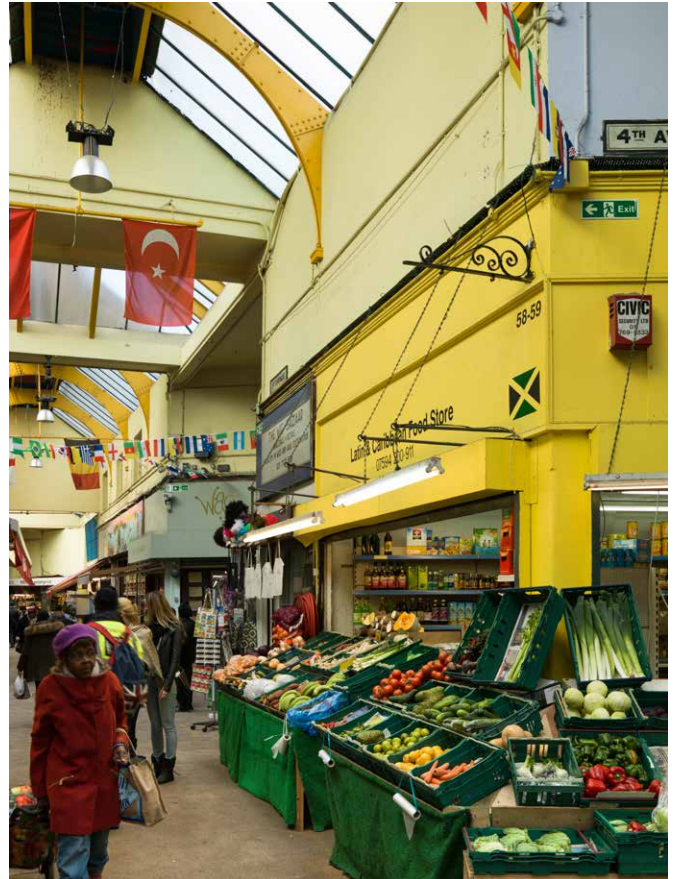
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**London has always been a city of movement and migration, and the diversity of its population has made an important mark on its character. An understanding of the city's international history can help in the process of shaping its future, and the National Heritage List for England (with just over 19,000 listed buildings, 162 scheduled monuments and 152 registered landscapes in London) increasingly captures the experience of communities which played a part in that history.**

Buildings can embody the impact of successive waves of immigration. The Grade II\* Brick Lane Jamme Masjid in Spitalfields, built in 1743 as a French Huguenot Chapel, was later used successively by the Society for Propagating Christianity among the Jews, the Wesleyan Methodists, and a Lithuanian Orthodox Jewish group. From 1976 to the present day it has been used as a mosque. The listing was updated in 2010 to elucidate this remarkable range of religious history on one site, including mention of the new silver minaret.

London was once a great port and its docklands embody our world history. Rotherhithe is home to the Swedish Seamen's Mission (1964-6 by Bent Jørgen Jørgensen, Grade II), the Finnish Seamen's Mission (1957-59, Cyril Sjöström Mardall of YRM, Grade II) and Norway's St Olav's Kirke (1927, John L. Seaton Dahl, Grade II), buildings which illustrate the international character of worship that sea trade brought to the capital.

Indian heritage is acknowledged in a number of listed places ranging from the Mughal-influenced monument in Kensal Green Cemetery commemorating the Indian judge, Daboda Dewajee, who died in 1861, to the



Brixton market was listed at Grade II in 2010 largely due to its role in the everyday lives of the post-war Afro-Caribbean community that settled in the area. © Historic England

YMCA Indian Students Union and hostel of 1952 in Bloomsbury. The Grade II\* Liberty Cinema of 1928 in Southall was built in an exuberant Chinese style and since 1972 has exclusively shown Indian language films for the local community, giving new life to the building; this colourful cultural melange is symbolic of London life.

Jewish heritage has been studied and protected for some decades now, and ranges from burial grounds and 17 listed synagogues in London (including the Grade I Bevis Marks of 1701) to commercial and welfare buildings. The 1930s reliefs on the listed 88 Whitechapel High Street are highly expressive of Jewish solidarity at a time of international unease.

Not all of this history is comfortable. The legacy of the shameful transatlantic slave trade is most redolent in the Grade I buildings of the West India Import Dock,

built expressly to receive the products of slavery. A much more positive, post-war story is reflected in the Grade II listing of Brixton Market's arcades, which formed the commercial and social heart of the extensive Afro-Caribbean community that settled after the Second World War. The Listing in 2010 stressed the historical importance of this place as the clearest marker of an immigrant community's experience and the complex has since undergone a revival with the introduction of new restaurant-based uses.

These sites are just a handful of listed places that capture some of London's historic global character. Historic England is sensitive to the need to make sure we recognise more sites. We can now tell more stories about listed buildings because the new *Enriching the List* tool allows new information to be uploaded and to appear beneath the formal List entry. Safeguarding the testaments left by diverse cultures should be an important starting point for planning our shared future. ■

## Strategic listing: helping to shape London's future

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**London's rich heritage is a key part of what makes the city unique and it is essential that this is recognised, valued and given due weight in place-making for the**

**future. Historic England's Listing Group has an important role to play in this regard. In recent years our strategic listing projects in Greater London have targeted areas of major change, such as in the Lower Lea Valley in advance of the construction of the Olympic Park, and we are currently working in Kingston-upon-Thames ahead of the arrival of Crossrail2. We are also working on archaeological projects to enhance London's Schedule of Monuments. Strategic listing often undertaken in collaboration with Historic England's Research Group, helps us to celebrate what is nationally significant, inform the planning process, and work with owners, occupiers and site managers to encourage positive management.**



Anthony Gormley's 'Listening Man' (1983-4) is the first sculpture by this internationally renowned artist to become Grade II listed. © Historic England

Public houses are a good example of a building type threatened by closures or insensitive modernisation. Historic England has responded to this through our inter-war pubs research and listing project. Inter-war pubs do not have the same flamboyant interiors as the flashy Victorian gin palaces that preceded them. Socially, however, they mark a significant change in attitude, with designs intended to be welcoming and appealing to women and families so that pubs were no longer simply a male preserve. The recently listed *Rose and Crown*, Stoke Newington (1930-32, A E Sewell for Truman's Brewery), illustrates this with its smartly decorated saloon and more architecturally modest public bar. A major research project and report has informed the listing of the best eleven inter-war pubs in London, considerably raising their profile nationally. We very much hope that these listings will result in a



secured future for these buildings which are often so valued by their local communities, as at the 1930s *The Ivy House* in Nunhead (also by Sewell for Truman's) where its Grade II-listing helped its transformation to a community-run pub.

In Listing Group we pride ourselves on our constructive interactions with owners of potential listed buildings, an approach developed further as part of our national Post-war commercial offices project. London's leading commercial role meant that many key buildings were in the capital, and particularly in the City of London, where real estate values are very high. We knew that our interest in these buildings had the potential to cause anxiety to owners so we offered early meetings to explain that listing can clearly indicate which parts of a building are not of special interest (such as repetitive modern office interiors), and that we can exclude such

parts from any listing and, in many cases, from statutory controls. Such communication proved very successful in smoothing the path for the listing process and we were grateful for the assistance and understanding of those with whom we negotiated.

Post-war public sculpture was designed for everyone to see and enjoy but has often been unappreciated. Historic England's current campaign has raised the profile of many overlooked works of art in the public realm and has resulted in the listing of 25 key London sculptures, many by internationally significant artists. The positive response from the public to this project and the associated 'Out There' exhibition at Somerset House has been overwhelming and is a clear indicator that the historic environment is highly valued and must continue to be so. We are proud to be able to contribute to this appreciation through our strategic listing work. ■

## How local communities are saving London's heritage



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**Talk to colleagues in the heritage sector and they all agree: London's historic environment is under threat today as it has never been before. The source of the threats is clear: decline in public funding; loss of local authority conservation teams; the relaxation of planning law under the National Planning Policy Framework; an increase in high capital developments based on multi-storey towers, and their impact on existing buildings and areas. As the impact is felt, the sector is not alone. Appreciation that the character of London is bound up in the detail of its streets and buildings is growing amongst a mainstream voice.**

The Norton Folgate campaign attracted the support of east London's technology and creative companies,



Stanley Halls, South Norwood: the Stanley People's Initiative, a community interest organisation, have taken a 35 year lease from the council and are about to submit a round 1 bid to the HLF. © Heritage of London Trust Operations Ltd

while the appeal to prevent the demolition of the Strand buildings was SAVE's fastest growing petition to date. And this wave of energy is not restricted to campaigning. The Architectural Heritage Fund has seen an increase in community-led heritage projects. New groups are forming as not-for-profit trusts or co-operatives, focused on a single building that they manage and operate on completion of capital works. The Heritage of London Trust Operations

and the Spitalfields Trust are now in the minority in London as professionally led, revolving fund trusts.

A handful of examples reflect the diversity of recent community projects. The Ivy House in Nunhead is the first co-operatively owned pub in London, and was acquired from the owner by capital raised through community shares. The Stanley People's Initiative is driven by an energetic group, determined to see Stanley Halls in South Norwood remain open as an arts venue after the Council could no longer afford to run it. The St Clements Hospital site in Bow is a new housing model, providing a high proportion of affordable housing for local people. Initiated by Citizens UK, the site is now owned by the East London Community Land Trust- the first of its kind in London- following a transfer from the Greater London Authority.

Regardless of the delivery model, the outcome is the same: a listed building is saved for the benefit of the

public. But with a building that requires on-going management, a robust business plan that can weather market forces is vital. The Heritage Lottery Fund's Heritage Enterprise Grants were developed with this in mind. In general community heritage projects have a sound framework of advice through the Architectural Heritage Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Historic England's 'Pillars of the Community' publication is known as a 'bible'.

With more councils expected to off-load their buildings, and the high value of cleared sites, the work of these volunteer groups and professional building preservation trusts, with all their collective skills and experience, is critical if London's endangered listed buildings are to be saved and if schemes that respond sensitively to their surroundings and the needs of the local community are to be delivered. The voice of mainstream opinion has come at the right time and needs to be harnessed. ■

## A vision for London

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**I have lived in different parts of the world and more recently in different parts of the country, and it is clear to me that London is a special city. It is uniquely democratic in its ability to provide a wealth of different neighbourhoods that welcome communities from across the globe. Its success, identity and appearance have been founded upon trade and its open approach to change has shaped it into the vibrant world city it has now become. Its distinctive character and identity are unique selling points and are irreplaceable.**

Historic England's vision for London, including its Outer Boroughs, is for it to be a dynamic city that understands

and is proud of its rich heritage. It is for all of us to treat its historic places as the invaluable asset that they are – economically, culturally and socially. We want this inheritance to inform change that maintains an inclusive city and addresses the needs of its communities.

To achieve that aim requires long-term thinking, continuing the approach of previous generations that helped to create the characteristic urban forms of the city, including its squares and terraces, its town centres and its great public parks. We also need to deepen our understanding of the inherent value of London's diverse and multi-layered character and use that knowledge to inform change. This means appreciating the quality, variety and flexibility of London's inner-city and suburbs, which have sustained the needs and shaped the identity of generations of Londoners.

We need to develop creative thinking about the green legacy of the city, recognise the resilience and embodied value of buildings and places, and exploit heritage as a resource by encouraging repair, imaginative adaptation and refit wherever possible.



Nottingham Place, Marylebone. © Historic England

Alongside these approaches, we must develop a concept of strategic coherence, an understanding of the capital as a whole, so that, where strategic intervention is necessary, the city's legibility and hierarchy are retained and enhanced. We acknowledge that London has to grow and that growth requires the infrastructure to move people around and to provide places to live, to work and to enjoy, but we need to ensure that this is done in a way that is rooted in what is currently most successful and valued about the capital - its diversity and variety of places.

The world's most successful cities retain and develop what is individual and authentic to them – understanding and building on the character that

has been created, layer-on-layer, by each generation. We need to nurture the authentic characteristics of different places, give equal attention to the ordinary as well as the extraordinary, and appreciate the value of well-managed, well-served places where old and new are harmoniously balanced.

The review of the London Plan is a unique opportunity to make sure that this generation enhances rather than harms or destroys our important assets and places. Failure to acknowledge the importance of London's unique character and identity when planning for its future will risk London's global standing and cause irreparable loss for its citizens. ■



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