

—*between
edges and
hedges*

*Gaily into Ruislip Gardens
Runs the red electric train,
With a thousand Ta's and Pardon's
Daintily alights Elaine;
Hurries down the concrete station
With a frown of concentration,
Out into the outskirt's edges
Where a few surviving hedges
Keep alive our lost Elysium – rural Middlesex again.*

'Middlesex' by John Betjeman

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Photo series

Between chapters, a set of four photos by Philipp Ebeling help locate individual topics in the everyday context of Harrow. The sets of photos also create thematic connections between chapters, e.g. between suburban identity and density, play and diversity, or character and detail.

As a whole, the series of 56 photos tell a bigger story: that of the human, creative and spatial potential that future developments will build on and help grow. Philipp's photos index the connection between the broader aims of Better Design and the spaces and sites of the Borough.

The photos were taken on a series of walks around and between Harrow Council's key regeneration sites, and are published here with the kind permission of Philipp Ebeling and the Harrow Regeneration Unit.

Philipp works as an independent photographer, publisher of photography and curator. He is co-founder of Fishbar Gallery in Dalston, East London.

This collection of essays by the Harrow Council Design Unit is based on an event at the Royal College of Art on 10th July 2017. The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed are those of the authors only. The purpose of this booklet is stimulate discussion as part of our Better Design initiative about design challenges facing the borough through accelerated growth and development.

Foreword

Keith Ferry

Cllr Keith Ferry – Deputy Leader of the Council; Regeneration, Planning & Employment Portfolio Holder. Head of the Planning Committee

Harrow is a great place to live; we have fast connections into the city centre and the Green Belt on our doorstep. It offers the perfect balance between town and country and a safe family environment. But how can Harrow develop in new ways to support both a growing population and its ageing residents? Nurturing a better community anchored in new jobs, new homes, new facilities and safe, play streets is at the heart of our Building a Better Harrow initiative.

We're beginning this process ourselves. Harrow Council will deliver several ambitious large residential and mixed-use developments in the next decade, essentially refurbishing, rebuilding, or redeveloping nearly everything we own. We're creating a new residential quarter on the existing Civic Centre site, building a new Civic Centre, a new leisure centre, redeveloping several carparks, and building thousands of new homes in the process.

But how will we increase density in Harrow without adversely affecting existing communities? The benefits might appear apparent: Improved public realm, improved provision of community uses, and improve public infrastructure. But 'improving' any component of the city is not without bias. How do we ensure that new infrastructure privileges all residents not just those that work in the centre of London?

A future-oriented Harrow will focus on the local area as a place for living in, that is: A place of both work and leisure with a wide offer for families, young professionals and older residents to be active and engaged. As part of this, the Council will be opening up new affordable workspace, and launching Harrow's first new public square, in the next two years. The existing community in Harrow will be strengthened as we work towards a sustainable decentralised economy with leisure, health and education facilities and service and industrial jobs alongside residential development.

To deliver this vision for Harrow we must champion good design – not as an aesthetic add-on but as integral to the success of the growth of a community. To do so, we've launched our Better Design programme and we're in the process of reworking the processes that facilitate the communication between the Council (be it officers or members) and the applicant to ensure we can work together as transparently and efficiently as possible.

The Better Design programme sets out early dialogue between the applicant and the council. Pre-application Committee and Design Review Panels provide early steers on the design quality. Alongside this, we're up-skilling officers, providing training for members, reshaping design policy, conducting workshops and seminars, and producing publications like this – all to engender a culture of good design within the Council.

This new model will engage everyone, so from planning submission to Planning Committee, Harrow's stakeholders – and that is all our residents, present and future – will be well informed about the projects being proposed for Harrow. Better Design will also mean that professional expertise on architecture and urban design informs our Planning Committee, so that when permission is granted we are sure a scheme addresses the aims of a safe, sustainable borough.

We look forward to the many challenges that we'll face in building a better Harrow – together.

Introduction

Fran Balaam (Design Manager) and Tobias Govert
(Head of Regeneration and Design)

Good design is about making great places to live. It is practical and sustainable. It can strengthen communities, and helps residents to take pleasure in their environment and homes.

Most of Harrow was built in the early twentieth century when the Metropolitan Line was extended north to serve the rapidly expanding city. Harrow remains a network of suburban villages and towns. Known as 'Metroland', the new housing came to define our perception of suburbia. The semi-detached housing that makes up much of the residential fabric is largely good quality and is pleasant to walk through – but many residents are reliant on cars and Harrow has the lowest cycling rates in London.

Harrow is proudly diverse, but also a borough of opposites, with highly desirable areas such as Harrow-on-the-Hill adjacent to deprived neighbourhoods with poorly maintained housing stock. The town centres are healthy, but are comparatively low-density with few tall buildings, and late twentieth century infrastructure projects have caused rifts in the fabric. It is the best borough for start-ups, but there is a lack of large business and it is losing commercial space fast.

Parts of Harrow have been identified as the 10% least dense and best connected in the Capital. It is a sensible place to intensify, and the next 10 years will see major investment and housing growth. On this we are closely aligned with the Mayor of London's commitment in the London Plan to 'prioritise the development of Opportunity Areas, brownfield land, surplus public sector land, [and] sites which are well-connected' and are ready to support housing growth. The challenge is to improve key areas, providing as many good new homes as possible, and maintain the Borough's unique and diverse character. We are leading by example with high quality developments on our own land, and the £1.75 billion 'Building a Better Harrow' programme will bring much needed investment and revitalise town centres, boost businesses and support our communities, delivering 5,500 new homes and 3,000 jobs.

Good design is central to this future development. Typically for outer suburbs, there has been a lot of poor quality development over the last decades. We want to change this and have launched the Better Design programme to raise design quality across the Borough.

We established the Harrow Design Review Panel (DRP) in May 2017 as part of the Better Design programme. It is an important step towards improving the design quality of future development, and the Panel will review all significant applications. They will bring expertise to boost design policy and guidance and will help train and up-skill officers and Members. The programme will build a culture of good design within the Council.

This publication brings together contributions from Panel members and industry experts, as the first in a series on specific Harrow design challenges. It is an interrogation of Harrow's residential past, present and future. It considers overlooked aspects of development and suggests potential to be radical and exciting. The Better Design programme demonstrates Harrow Council's commitment to design, and with this collection of texts, and future publications and events, the Council will explore the best possible future for the Borough and its residents.

Nearly a century after Metroland, we need to build on its foundations and develop a new and equally pioneering approach to intensifying suburbia.



View to Harrow-on-the-Hill from the Kodak Factory © Philipp Ebeling



A typical Harrow roundabout © Philipp Ebeling



A typical street in Harrow © Philipp Ebeling



View down Station Road, Harrow © Philipp Ebeling

Urbe in Rus: Densifying Suburbia

Charles Holland

The Green Belt legislation introduced as part of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 effectively curtailed the geographic spread of London. With this act the growth of new suburbs largely facilitated by the expansion of the road and railway network came to an end.

Harrow is one of those suburbs. It was developed in the early years of the twentieth century by the Metropolitan Railway Country Estates Company, forming part of what became known as *Metroland*. Celebrated and denigrated in equal measure, *Metroland* still represents a potent symbol of middle class aspiration and the leafy dream of suburbia. With the Metropolitan Green Belt seemingly inviolate (for the moment at least) current pressure for new housing in London means the densification of many of London's early twentieth suburbs. The city might not be able to spread any further out but it still has net inward migration and an astronomically expensive central core creating an intense need to rethink its lower density suburban areas.

The original appeal of suburban areas such as Harrow rested on the potent illusion of living in the country while still being connected to the city: Rus in urbe. How then to reverse this polarity and densify suburbia today? What form should this densification take? And how do we ensure the qualities that originally made Harrow desirable are retained and enhanced? If suburbia is to become ever more urban, what architectural languages will be developed to express this new character and what typologies are appropriate for its current and future inhabitants?

The Future of Metroland

The Harrow Better Design Programme has been formed to help guide this process and improve the standard of design and design awareness in the borough. To launch the Programme, Harrow Council convened a day-long seminar at the Royal College of Art attended by members of its newly-formed Design Review Panel as well as councillors, planners and development professionals.

Harrow have also commissioned a number of 'manifestos' written by architects and designers – some of which are currently working in the borough. The issue of balancing Harrow's early aspirations with current needs runs through every one. Suburbia has not always been popular with architects and urban planners though, so it is encouraging to see so much thought and appreciation for the architectural and spatial qualities of Harrow to begin with.

Much of course has already changed. Harrow already looks very different to those slightly dreamy *Metroland* posters of stockbrokers marching home past verdant lawns to half-timbered Arcadias. Predicated on the railway, Harrow is now dominated by high levels of car ownership. This has changed the relationship of houses to streets with front gardens often used for parking, making it a less friendly place for pedestrians and cyclists. The 'tremulousness green loveliness' extolled by the *Metroland* guidebooks is still there but harder to find and a little less verdant looking.

Harrow's social and ethnic make-up has changed a great deal too. As Pooja Agrawal's *Diversity: Please Tick the Box* paper points out, Harrow is one of the most ethnically diverse Local Authorities in the country, with the highest Indian population outside Leicester. This

affects its character in a multitude of ways, subtly inflecting the layouts of the houses, changing the shops and outdoor spaces and developing new forms of social and civic life.

And it has already been densifying in all sorts of ways for decades. The diverse ethnic make-up means that houses sometimes cater for multiple generations. And extensions, loft conversions and infill developments have intensified land use. Housing is always changing and evolving, but the loose fit of suburban typologies – particularly the venerable old Semi-D – has proved particularly adaptable. And houses that were already hybrids of historical styles have been overlaid with decorative modifications and architectural add-ons.

Radicalism and Conformity

David Knight and Cristina Monteiro's *Pioneering Suburbia: A Living Archive of Detail and Delight* dissects the emergence of early suburban housing typologies. Contesting suburbia's association with both architectural and social conformity, they propose that it has in fact been the site for radical and experimental new housing types. These experiments not only catered for, but also actively encouraged new forms of family and social life. Importantly though this radicalism was made desirable through the application of large dollops of bucolic imagery and fruity detailing derived from architectural history. Suburbia's combination of nostalgia and modernity is precisely what made it so popular. Knight suggests a similar combination of spatial invention and detail richness is required to make the new, denser Harrow desirable today.

In *Building Form and Character* Mark Tuff cites the Richard Norman Shaw-designed mansion blocks of South Kensington as an example of an urban archetype that could be applied to Harrow. Here are many of the architectural details of *Metroland* but writ large, demonstrating that historical decoration and ornament can be applied to denser forms of housing to provide detail richness and material enjoyment. Tuff's paper on typology, along with Richard Lavington's on Material and Detail demonstrate contemporary architects reacting to Harrow's context with sensitivity and finely judged affection.

Backs and Fronts

Suburbia is in many ways a victim of its own success. It can seem to go on forever, with no specific centre or definitive edge. Many architects are still in love with the Renaissance city with its defined edges, its squares and piazzas and its carefully defined public and private space. In comparison, suburbia seems to throw up endless strange back lots, edge lands and in-between spaces.

In any densification programme these sorts of leftover spaces are ripe for redevelopment and in *Backlands: Radical, Inventive and Bespoke*, Fiona Scott describes the opportunities. Changes in lifestyle and priorities mean that spaces previously given-over for suburban garage lots and access roads are ripe for inventive new typologies. And a demand for smaller flats and two-bed houses makes them potentially desirable for occupants without more urban lifestyles.

Nostalgia and Modernity

Perhaps the most lyrical contribution comes from Judith Lösing and Julian Lewis of East who, in *Suburban Identity and Grain*, write about how to capture the magical, transformative qualities of *Metroland*, its unique landscape and alluring combination of buildings and nature. Here perhaps is the nub of it: *Metroland* was a trick, a sleight of hand, the elision of new housing with countryside such that its appeal rests on the landscape that

it has replaced. This is the 'lost Elysium' mourned by John Betjeman in his poem *Middlesex*, a place that became desirable precisely because it evokes something recently lost.

Today a form of double nostalgia exists where Betjeman's words – originally intended as critique – reappear as a celebration. The suburbia satirised in *Middlesex* is itself disappearing under new development. The modernity of *Metroland* has faded into a nostalgic past of its own.

Perhaps then, drawing on the various manifestos, it is suburbia's ability to be many things at once, to be both modern and nostalgic, innovative and comforting, radical and familiar, that still offers a compelling vision of the good life. The co-existence of the suburban and the urban, of different and multiple aspirations and experiences might actually be suburbia's crucial asset. As many of the papers make clear, Harrow is a more complex place than popular mythology suggests, one that rests innately on a creative compromise. New hybrids and compromises – in the best possible sense – are needed today. Suburbia still offers multiple lessons in how to recombine, re-imagine and reinvent how we live today.



Allotment Shed by Roxeth Recreation Ground © Philipp Ebeling



Public Green, Pinner © Philipp Ebeling



Northolt Road, South Harrow © Philipp Ebeling



View to Harrow-on-the-Hill from the Kodak Factory © Philipp Ebeling

My Memory Lanes: How Harrow can build on its past

Neil Deely

Neil Deely, co-founder and partner of Metropolitan Workshop and co-Chair of Harrow's new Design Review Panel, draws on childhood anecdotes of Harrow's unique streets to call for change in the borough that builds on the best bits of its past.

The slopes of Harrow-on-the-Hill were the back drop to my formative years. Each time I walked over the hill from the station, I would relish the hidden network of spaces that make Harrow special. Sledging was a particular delight, improvising runs through these more secluded lanes and alleyways, although it was never risk-free; one year, a group of tobogganists turned a Morris Minor bonnet into a very fast sled that was impossible to stop.

The summit of the Hill is a special place in myriad other ways. After a steep climb up Roxborough Park, the road gives way to a crumbling tarmac path through St Mary's Graveyard, the intimate setting of the pre-reformation Church that sits in pride of place atop the Hill. St Mary's spire is a key protected view for the Borough – one that all new builds must respect – and its view out over London is also precious: Lord Byron's favourite spot, when he was a school-boy in Harrow, is nearby. Today, the spot remains inspiring – it is a well-used public bench – and its poetic resonance one I also experienced as a school-boy (below it, on the slope of Churchfields, I once spelt out my affections for a girl in eight foot high letters made from elderberry blossoms... in vain.)

Thankfully, Harrow has plenty of community character to counter such character-forming experiences. Cutting through the Church Yard, through the Grade II Listed Lych Gate, down Church Hill and along the undulating pavements of the High Street, edged by the stepped gables of bistros and outfitters, I'd reach the institution that was the Castle Pub. Many long, sunny, summer Saturday evenings were misspent there in the secluded beer garden at the back.

The borough has other impressive, if less poetic, historical credentials. It was once home to Frank Whittle, inventor of the jet engine, and the Battle of Britain was fought – at least strategically – from Bentley Priory, then Headquarters for Fighter Command.

The striking traditional beauty of Harrow on the Hill's most characterful streets are juxtaposed in my mind with the Brutalist concrete and functionalist structure of Northwick Park Hospital by influential architect John Weeks, as well as with the green tiled roofs of the iconic Metro-Land Modernism of Pinner Court Flats and other icons of the development of an innovative suburbia in the first decades of the twentieth century; many of the 'pattern book' interwar semis that characterise the borough have been successfully adapted to suit larger family groups with rear extensions and loft spaces.

The post war prefabs built near Hutton Lane by British Steel Federation and designed by the architect of Heathrow Airport and Liverpool Catholic Cathedral, Sir Frederick Gibberd, were built on pioneering principles – public housing provision, efficiency of build, affordable family housing, innovative typologies – remain relevant.

Harrow has a proud built heritage. This pride is not in any one building type or area, but in the mix and versatility found across the borough, its capacity to change and harbor diversity as well as its enduring commitment to local scale and natural spaces. Improving

the quality of the built environment will retain and improve values and reinforce civic pride; and the opposite of course is true. Building a better Harrow is a way of protecting its uniqueness. The successful revitalisation of Harrow will mean setting the bar high and keeping it there: the key is in not only demanding the highest quality and sensitivity to context, but also ensuring that both are delivered.

The Metropolitan Line's development of suburbia as a concept – and a special place – made Harrow a pioneering suburb; it can again be at the forefront of suburban, and urban, development by redefining the role of the suburb in the twenty-first century.

The building blocks for good residential development:

1. Localised Amenity: To reimagine the parades around South Harrow and in Wealdstone and attract new talent to the town centre retail experience. Strengthening amenity that has dimmed will reduce preset car dependency.
2. Cultural Capital: Arts have always been a strength of the borough, and now with a more diverse population than ever the opportunity exists to broaden its role. While consumption of arts and culture has changed radically, the interest from youth in popular culture has swelled. We must find a sustainable future for the invaluable Harrow Arts Centre as a creative industries and performance campus as the beating heart of a new era for the arts in the borough, as well as ensuring this cultural offer reaches every ward and community.
3. Outdoor Leisure: 'Ducker', the secluded outdoor Harrow School lido has fallen out of use, making Ruislip Lido (in Hillingdon) Harrow's closest 'sea shore'. Set in woodland and accessed via a concrete pedestrian bridge over the Watford Road, 'Ducker' is a valuable bit of heritage that must be brought back into public use. Harrow enjoys fantastic natural and leisure assets for which better access should be imagined: The great outdoors was the key draw of Metroland, and it remains one of Harrow's gems.



Former Winsor & Newton headquarters, now artists' studios © Philipp Ebeling



Off-street parking, Greenhill Way © Philipp Ebeling



Temporary Mosque at Harrow Leisure Centre © Philipp Ebeling



View down Masons Avenue © Philipp Ebeling

Pioneering Suburbia

David Knight and Cristina Monteiro

In the early years of the twentieth century, the area around Harrow was a radical laboratory for new forms of suburban living, informed by new ideas about lifestyle such as the Garden Cities movement, and by infrastructural advances such as those made by the Metropolitan Railway which transformed rural areas into commutable suburbs.

The relevance of Harrow's radical one-off experiments

The housing produced during this time provides some surprising lessons that can help us positively address the challenges and developmental pressures faced by Harrow today, particularly in terms of how to provide an architecture that responds to new forms of lifestyle and family.

Many of these local experiments in housing took the form of one-off designs for well-off clients, but in them the architectural languages that would become emblematic of suburbia were explored and refined.

At Grim's Dyke (1870-72), renowned architect Richard Norman Shaw combined Gothic Revival and neo-Elizabethan forms to make a contemporary house which felt like it had evolved and expanded over decades or centuries. The houses of architect-developer Ernest Trobridge, such as Tudor Cottage (Elm Park Road, 1921), combined the latest advances in technology and construction efficiency with an aesthetic derived from the archetypal English country cottage and manor house including elaborate thatched roofs, turrets and rustic timber cladding.

Along the Metropolitan line, in Chorleywood, leading Arts and Crafts architect C.F.A. Voysey developed a neo-vernacular architectural language of bay windows and low-pitched roofs that would become – in others' hands – the defining language of interwar suburbia. For a local doctor, Voysey designed Hollybank (1903), a detached house which appears from the front as a pair of buildings in order to make visible the doctor's surgery and consulting rooms. This 'paired' dwelling, visibly combining home and work, anticipated both the form of the archetypal 'semi-D' and the potential of the suburban estate to happily accommodate non-residential uses.



C.F.A. Voysey - Holly Bank, 1903 © David Knight

How the 1930s housing market drove innovations in density

More substantial estate-sized experiments also appeared. The 'Artisans, Labourers and General Dwellings Company Ltd' built a substantial estate of austere but carefully-detailed red-brick semi-detached homes at Pinnerwood Park (1935), deliberately aimed at an emerging middle-class housing market. The Metropolitan Railway's own development arm built Harrow Garden Village, an estate of 'mock-Tudor' style houses and shops, just north of Rayner's Lane. And local architects H. V. Webb and H. J. Mark built glamorous, Art Deco clusters of apartments. These feel like villas set in landscaped parks and are entered through grand arched portals, at Elm Park Court (Webb, 1936), Capel Gardens & Pinner Court (Mark, 1937).

Why the semi-detached house is radical

These experiments all combined historical architectural languages, with then-radical social ideas of access to green amenity and open space. They, and many others in the wider area, form a catalogue of visions for a positive suburban way of life. This would soon coalesce into the 'acceptable and very popular compromise' of the interwar semi-detached house, and the 'villa-style' block of apartments which became the most popular and widespread dwelling forms of twentieth-century Britain. The new lifestyles embodied in these homes were dressed in an architectural language that referenced widely-understood and deeply familiar 'homely' archetypes of the cottage, the manor house, the 'Tudor-bethan'.

We believe that this homely language, expressed in exposed timbers, inglenook fireplaces or porches that feel like inglenook fireplaces, fused gables, double-pitched gateposts, catslide roofs, stained glass, panels of tiling and so on, played a key role in making the suburban 'compromise' (not quite the town, not quite the country) acceptable and indeed desirable to a huge number of the population.

The 'semi-D', and its cousins, were not just an economical and structurally-efficient compromise between the tightness of the industrial terrace, and the ideal of an isolated house or cottage, they also formed an aesthetic compromise too, and one played out in details that feel crafted, homely and familiar, even if their reference points, like at Grim's Dyke, were highly idealised or fantastical.



Richard Norman Shaw - Grim's Dyke, 1870-72. © online

The enduring power of the British suburb

This aesthetic compromise generated a new formal language unique to the British suburb that has proved enduringly powerful and desirable. It emerged at a time before statutory planning had got into its stride, and therefore ahead of 'big' planning ideas like the Green Belt and Conservation Areas.

The development of the countryside around urban areas, at this time, was therefore limited largely by the developer's reserves, their ambition, and commuter travel times. Subsequent legislative ideas like the Green Belt were explicitly aimed at preventing the expansion of the interwar suburb ever further into the countryside, and they continue to inform our idea of where and how development should happen. They impose new forms of compromise, new questions about how we want to live and what is important about our homes.

As was the case 100 years ago, new forms of domestic compromise must emerge that are appropriate to new forms of society.



Ernest Trobridge - Tudor Cottage, Elm Park © Online



Hanging Tiles © Graham Horn



Cat-slide Roof © Patrick Roper



Inglenook Fireplace © H. Bedford Lemere

Balancing the rural idyll with economy of resources

In the 1930s, the shared, flue-containing spine wall of the semi-D, the light-filtering stained-glass fanlight, the garden fence and the trellised porch all supported a way of life that balanced the dream of a rural existence with the need for economy and a sharing of resources, for example by sharing a structural wall or a driveway, or providing for privacy or customisability.

Today, with an acute housing shortage, new forms of economy and compromise are required, and this requirement is already being met by new types of development, from expansions of the 'student housing' model into other life stages, to co-housing and collective housing models where responsibilities and spaces are shared and collectivised.

We believe there is a crucial role for architectural language – in the form of material and detail just as much as in organisation – to make these spatial and social compromises desirable. The need for privacy within complex social groups and new forms of family structure, the potential to customise, the chance to pursue a hobby without upsetting the neighbours or the street, more flexible working models. These and other issues continue into the present day in new formulations and subject to new developmental pressures of density and proximity.



Image from Thirties - British Art and Design © Paul Oliverv

Suburban detail and delight

Harrow's extraordinary laboratory of housing prototypes from the birth of suburbia is of profound relevance, we believe, to the present day issue of how to build housing here. A hundred years ago, the designers of suburbia, whether noted architects or speculative builders, evolved a language of detail that allowed new forms of proximity and inter-dependence to emerge as successful, desirable forms of housing. This laboratory is also a library of detail and delight that, we assert, should inform Harrow's development as the borough explores new challenges and new lifestyles.

1. Alan Jackson, 'Semi-Detached London: Suburban Development, Life and Transport, 1900-39' (Allen & Unwin, 1973)



Pinner Court © Philipp Ebeling



Public square, Rayners Lane © Philipp Ebeling



Interior decorators, Pinner © Philipp Ebeling



Allotment Shed by Roxeth Recreation Ground © Philipp Ebeling

Suburban Identity and Grain

Judith Loesing and Julian Lewis

How can residential developments complement and connect with Harrow's existing suburban fabric to create vibrant, mixed neighbourhoods?

Metroland as a new suburban idyll

For 100 years, the town centres of Harrow and Wealdstone have languished in the image of the 'Metroland', a term coined by the Metropolitan Railway's marketing department in 1915 when the Guide to the Extension Line became the Metroland guide. The booklet promoted the land served by the railway for the walker, visitor and the house hunter.

Over the next fifty years, this eloquent and innovative unity of town and country was portrayed through film, poetry and architecture. Charles Holden's modern tube stations, and John Betjeman's personal film and poems were set against a backdrop of new streets of 1930s housing in Arts and Crafts style.

The 'Metroland' vision, though compelling in its early clarity, became freighted with a kind of nostalgic glaze over the years. The language of its advocates shifted from the railway operators' dream of a modern home in beautiful countryside with a fast railway service to central London, to Betjeman's intimate poetry of a lost and yearned-for past:

*'Early Electric! Sit you down and see,
Mid this fine woodwork and a smell of dinner,
A stained-glass windmill and a pot of tea,
And sepia views of leafy lanes in Pinner –
Then visualize, far down the shining lines,
Your parents' homestead set in murmuring pines.'*

Elusive, and increasingly subjective, Metroland, according to the railway guide of 1915 was always 'a country with elastic borders that each visitor can draw for himself'.

So where is it really? Author Leslie Thomas wrote of Metroland being 'in the country but not of it', and A.N. Wilson has observed that suburban developments of the early 20th century became 'not perhaps town or country'.

Metroland as a modern model for development

This ambiguity of identity is of relevance to today's aspirations for Harrow and Wealdstone. A pressing need for good housing demands clear spatial thinking and ideas if we are to create vibrant, mixed neighbourhoods with which people can identify. To do this, we need to look closer at the distinctive characteristics of Harrow.

Harrow on the Hill existed before the advent of the railways, but two different railway lines steered its development in different directions.

The area now called Wealdstone was the site of the first station on a new north-western railway route, linking Euston to Birmingham in 1837. This ran to the north of, and bypassed, Harrow on the Hill. The station created new growth around a cluster of industrial buildings and associated workers' housing.

Roads here formed a rough and generously proportioned grid. Palmerston, Canning and Peel

Road, Headstone Drive and Harrow View set the scene for housing and large industrial lots such as Kodak. This is the more 'typical' suburb, with Victorian terraces running off a busy High Street, interspersed with more expansive industrial plots, soon to be redeveloped for large scale housing.

By contrast, Harrow-on-the-Hill station marked the famous Metropolitan line extension into Metroland and catered for affluent commuters. Roads here were more akin to the earlier tracks linking farming settlements, sinuous routes circumventing the ancient hills of the landscape. Looking at advertising posters and even photographs of these roads as they are today one is struck by a quality of openness and calm. Streets are not cluttered, they are empty of people and cars. Buildings are set apart, with large trees surrounding them, and often only one house visible at a time.

Whereas suburbia suggests a less intense city, which can be overcome by adding density and exciting uses, the term 'Metroland' seems to indicate something entirely different: the idea of movement and proximity to other places, and the promise of proper land or countryside. Intensifying Metroland therefore requires something very different from a simple densification of land.



Das Grosse Muminbuch, Tove Jansson



Metro-Land publication © Public Domain

Capturing character to generate urban design

The primary infrastructure that best captures the character of Harrow is its green space; promising long views, offering capacity for sustainable growth, its large trees silhouetting a deep collective history. Not only does this infrastructure need to be nurtured and maintained, it is a shared project that helps maintain the pleasant and desirable deception of being in the countryside.

It also offers a powerful urban design technique that can be used to create a new type of more dense living environment. By spacing buildings and plots apart so that trees can be allowed to grow taller than the buildings, built volume may be tempered, if not concealed, with a green foreground. It should not be possible to tell where one plot ends and the next begins and there may be no clear distinction between public, private and communal spaces. Arguably, this kind of 'inhabited Arcadia', is everything the orthodoxy for 'active' streets has made us unlearn.

The importance of green borders

These green 'elastic borders' are an important device. It becomes possible to substitute the quality of close proximity between buildings an important hallmark of urban living, and instead distort and play with distance by sustaining a green landscape between built development. The common ground is where choices can be made for interaction, and shared life resides. Vibrancy becomes possible through the diversity of people and uses set within a shared green infrastructure. Parking, amenity and play uses become equally important, as long as their shared quality is that of being part of a leafy verdant garden.

This design strategy might be compared to a zoo – different beasts are kept within entirely different conditions yet each sits within one large, overall landscape. It is possible, and desirable, to enter entirely different spaces, climates, architectures and styles in close proximity to each other, as long as the contract of the shared garden is adhered to.

Landscape to frame different experiences

The attraction is in the variety of experiences within, and the landscape is a frame in which to hold these experiences. The Giardini public gardens in Venice offer a similar experience with their array of national pavilions used to host the art and architecture Biennales. It is possible to enter different 'countries', or sample different cultural ideas, within ten steps of each other. The diversity and richness of the mix is tempered by a landscape of large mature trees between the pavilions. The event is successful not because of the content of the exhibitions but because it is so exhilarating to move between the different experiences.

This model for a new Metroland is archaic, humane and capable of many different kinds of interpretation. It encourages innovation and generosity, and enables a range of scales to be accommodated, including very large buildings.

There is space for the imagination to expand, and for new development to be rich and diverse – an alternative vision to suburbia.



The Bridge, Wealdstone © Philipp Ebeling



Civic Centre courtyard © Philipp Ebeling



Headstone Manor © Philipp Ebeling



The Kodak factory © Philipp Ebeling

Denser and Better?

Allies and Morrison

How can denser development help improve the quality of the urban environment in Harrow and establish a new identity?

Harrow's current identity lies in the tension between a historic Metroland suburban character and a more recent, denser urban one. Not dissimilar from other outer boroughs in north-west London, Harrow historically developed as a low-density suburb of streets lined with two storey terraces and semi-detached cottages. As London grew and public transport improved, Harrow's town centre expanded and urbanised through new, mid-rise schemes, especially around Harrow-on-the-Hill.

In the absence of a comprehensive plan, this process resulted in an often piece-meal and inward-looking environment that lacked a clear urban structure and coherent public realm. New large retail sheds, shopping centres, office blocks, large apartment buildings and an expanded road infrastructure provided convenience and growth for the town centre. However, these new developments often introduced wide roads, long stretches of blank ground floors, large areas of surface parking, sudden changes in scale, and left-over land that fragmented streets and often compromised the pedestrian experience. This challenged the traditional identity of Harrow that has been strongly associated with Metroland and the ideal of semi-rural living.

New development can play a crucial role in a coherent transition to a more urban, yet unique identity for Harrow. To help understand this role, we discuss below five key aspects of new development: building streets and spaces, managing height, intensifying land uses, giving back to the local community and defining what high quality means for a densifying Harrow.

Building Streets and Spaces

Central to Harrow's identity is its established network of streets and green spaces. New and infill developments can expand this network, and repair it where it has been left fragmented. By taking every opportunity to build new streets and spaces and connect to existing ones, Harrow's urban fabric will gradually grow to be more continuous, permeable and coherent. New pedestrian priority streets, public open spaces with playgrounds and communal gardens can also offer a crucial meeting space for existing community and new residents alike.

One's experience when walking along so many of the Harrow's streets is defined by large mature tree canopies and dense foliage of hedges and shrubs. If we are to nurture and grow this unique quality then we have to prioritise planting, with a focus on good levels of semi-mature trees. Moreover, tree planting can be particularly helpful in tempering the visual and micro-climate impacts of taller buildings on their immediate neighbours and surrounding open spaces. Mature trees can also be effective at key locations to help define a local character, key vistas and aid local wayfinding.

Managing Height

Tied to the question of density is a question of height. In Harrow, we can adopt a new model of high density, medium rise building types and not always depend on towers to deliver density. Medium-rise perimeter blocks are more relevant to Harrow's historic fabric. Building types such as mansion blocks and residential courtyards can help deliver the desired density

while providing adequate outdoor amenity space, sufficient daylight and sunlight and creating well defined public realm.

For denser schemes to make good neighbours with the existing low-rise fabric, the layout, building mass and disposition of taller buildings has to be designed in a way that minimises their impact and overshadowing on existing buildings, while retaining a good outlook for new residents.

Intensifying Land Use

New development can work harder to make more efficient use of available land. Hybrid building types can replace single use and expansive forms of development in the town centre by combining complementary uses. Retail uses currently accommodated in large sheds can incorporate residential accommodation and parking in a compact, vertically stacked form. Similarly, uses such as schools, leisure centres, community centres, nurseries and other amenities can provide public-facing ground floor uses while benefiting from improved viability through sharing the land cost with the predominant use.



Active ground floor uses

In residential schemes, street frontages can be animated by introducing well curated and flexible non-residential uses whenever possible, supported by front doors and communal lobbies. Necessary service spaces such as plant rooms, bin and bike storage and car parking can be integrated and mostly located away from street frontage. Infill development can follow a similar strategy and help repair Harrow's urban fabric by developing on the numerous back-land sites such as existing surface car parks or underutilised land next to railways.

Giving Back to the Community

For Harrow to maximise the opportunity of density, new development can contribute to the local resident and business communities. Cross-subsidies or supply of otherwise unviable spaces such as enterprise space, community cafes and spaces, local independent cinemas and artists' studios can add to the vibrancy of the local community. By providing enterprise spaces for small and medium businesses, Harrow can capitalise on the current migration of businesses out of central London and consolidate its existing local business community.

Higher density neighbourhoods can help support more local amenities, better transport and enhanced social infrastructure. This in turn will put more amenities and services within walking and cycling distances and support the start of a transition away from the car that dominates and blights many of Harrow's streets. Introducing a new density of residents can also help support some of the struggling small and medium businesses in Harrow's traditional high streets.

Defining High Quality

Simple and high quality design at higher densities does not need to be more expensive, but can make use of the economy of scale while adding value to new development. New architecture can utilise a simple and limited material palette that is easy to build and maintain. External building materials should be selected for their ability to weather well, complement the existing and historic context and introduce rich textures to the streets.

When repeated at scale, a set of simple and well considered construction details can bring coherency to the overall building. Small elements such as window reveals and frames, lintels and cills, front doors, balcony balustrades and soffits are key to the overall impression of quality, particularly in denser schemes. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for new architecture to take advantage of the Arts and Crafts heritage in Harrow and cultivate a language that re-invents this heritage on a larger scale.



St John's Hill © Hawkins Brown

At higher densities, maintaining and managing privacy becomes key to the perception of quality. The transitional space between street edge and front door mitigates between public interest and privacy of the home. Historically designed as front gardens, these 'defensible spaces' need to adapt to new typologies to address the scale and use of the buildings and the streets.

The current densification of Harrow's historically suburban fabric offers us the opportunity to establish a new, more urban, identity. Denser and infill development can play a key role in repairing fragmentation left by some of the recent ad-hoc and disconnected developments. A more connected and finer grain network of public realm, carefully managed height, activated street frontages, local contributions and an aspiration for high quality, will all help Harrow achieve this transition.



Metropolitan line into Harrow-on-the-Hill station © Philipp Ebeling



Rear access to Greenhill Way car park, off Station Road © Philipp Ebeling



View down St Anns Road © Philipp Ebeling



Unused allotments off Tenby Road © Harrow Regeneration Unit

Backlands: Radical, inventive and bespoke

Fiona Scott

How can development on back-land sites maximise potential and contribute to a rich network of streets and spaces in Harrow?

Harrow's high streets and residential areas have interesting pockets of vacant or under-used land. The patchwork of characterful spaces, off the main street network, behind high streets and into the residential hinterland, sometimes linked by informal routes and footpaths, is not always well-understood. These spaces, that can be brought into better use, may be car parks, unused garages, service yards, depots, underused, redundant bits of infrastructure, parcels of garden or 'greenfield land', all in either public or private ownership. They may be parts of existing housing estates, behind high street corridors, amongst suburban residential streets, or in town centres.

In the context of London's serious housing shortage, the value of these sites for residential development is key to Harrow's overall ambition to provide more high-quality homes. These sites often afford the opportunity for smaller-scale developments but the aggregate contribution of small-scale and infill sites is significant. Upwards of 110,000 homes are deliverable on these kinds of sites across London. Developments may also improve the wider street network by creating proper frontages in areas where there are 'loose', open site edges. Or they may resolve the threshold between different uses, such as between back-of-high-street service yards and residential streets beyond.

Back-land sites are sometimes seen as awkward or unpromising sites with multiple and varied constraints. Achieving planning consent may require greater upfront investment. But the value that is unlocked, and the benefits to the wider community are great. Intensifying housing in Outer London revitalises communities, bringing in more young families and more council tax revenue to pay for better public services and amenities.

How can development on backland sites deliver high quality housing and contribute to a rich network of streets and spaces in Harrow?

Demanding Design innovation

Back-land sites may not be connected to the existing street network and are unlikely to have obvious access arrangements; they may have awkward shapes that generate potential conflicts between fronts and backs. These kinds of site constraints are unlikely to lend themselves to standard design solutions, but conversely, could lead to radical, inventive, bespoke and ultimately high value schemes. So they require more design and development input to achieve meaningful design and to arrive at viable unit numbers. Landowners and developers must invest in design to achieve high quality planning consents.

Supporting changing patterns of use

London has continuously evolved in response to changing patterns of use and socio-economic shifts. Just as the concept of the mews house emerged when these spaces were no longer needed for stables and staff, across London, backland sites are being regenerated. In particular, this is a consequence of changing patterns of car-ownership and car-use, resulting in the redundancy or under-use of garages and car parks.

Elsewhere, back-land sites may have been commercial or light industrial uses, where change of use to housing may be appropriate. However, any potential loss of employment space or use should be carefully balanced with provision of new housing, as a mixed use or non residential scheme could provide local jobs, support local businesses or amenities, with benefits to local character and culture.

Responding to changing patterns of housing

It is important for Harrow to provide homes for varied and changing demographics. Smaller and more irregular, back-land sites are likely to be suitable for modest-sized houses and flats, laid out in creative, space-saving ways. These new homes, designed to contemporary regulations and high standards of accessibility, will be suitable equally for young families, who may not be able to afford large homes, and for older people down-sizing.

Working with neighbours

The development of backland sites can have a key benefit to neighbours by securing the rear boundaries of existing properties, which may be exposed and vulnerable. Party wall and boundary negotiations demand a flexible and site-specific approach of give and take. It is important to get to know and communicate with individual neighbours, which can also help galvanise a community on the basis of shared aims and values for the development.

Planning constraints, such as necessary separation between dwellings, overlooking and daylight and sunlight levels, can be lessened or overcome with thoughtful input from a high-quality design team.

Negotiating ad hoc uses

Negotiations with neighbours can extend to easements and rights of way, which have been created through underused back-land spaces. In practice, land use may not necessarily accord with approved functions and these more casual uses that have built up over time, such as access arrangements or air extraction, may still need to be addressed to gain community support of a backland scheme.

Supporting placemaking

Access to back-land sites and thresholds with the surrounding area may not be already established, so it is important that any new vehicle routes and parking, do not dominate the development. As the sites themselves are often largely obscured from the street network, how to signal the development and give it a positive presence or identity, needs to be carefully considered. Intuitively well-designed and integrated way-finding relies on massing and layout, careful planting and streetscape, rather than overly dominant signage, traffic engineering or forbidding gates.

Quirky pedestrian spaces in and around back-land sites, which may also be a through-route via footpaths and rights of way from high streets and town centres, can lend a positive character.

Delivering amenity space

The benefit of a back-land site not being on the formal street network is that calm, characterful, outdoor amenity spaces can be created.

The scale and awkward shapes of sites might not lend themselves to large private gardens, but this presents the opportunity for different kinds of shared amenity and informal play spaces.

If well-designed, these cultivate a particular character and sense of community. They can also help to manage rainwater run-off through sustainable urban drainage.

Recognising biodiversity

Existing mature trees and planting have screening value that helps reduce the impact of new developments on backland sites. They also provide visual amenity and allow for biodiversity.

Supporting delivery

Backland sites are often relatively modest and require careful, creative thinking and site-specific responses. They lend themselves to developers, contractors and designers, who are willing to put in the extra energy to make their mark and unlock additional value.

Equally, they can present great opportunities for co-housing models. With an increasing emphasis on the benefits of co-housing in creating good value, high quality homes with a close sense of community, the development of backland sites should be positively encouraged.



Pigeons overlooking backland © Philipp Ebeling



Local barber, Rayners Lane © Philipp Ebeling



Breakers Yard by Headstone Manor Recreational Ground © Philipp Ebeling



Multi-storey car park, Kymberley Road © Philipp Ebeling

Building form and character

Stephen Bates and Mark Tuff

Building on Harrow's heritage of suburban villas and Metroland blocks, we want to cultivate architecture specific to the place. What qualities could a new Harrow vernacular have?

Harrow's Metroland built heritage conjures optimistic visions of spacious living: the railway company's posters from the time illustrate large, rather grand homes. Referencing the Arts and Crafts period, buildings were identifiable through their familiar forms (large pitched roofs, gables and bay windows), the palette of materials (timber, brick and roughcast render) and the intensity of the landscape that surrounded them. The posters and the life they depicted attracted people seeking respite from city living. Five years after 'Metroland' was created in 1915, Harrow's population was rising five times faster than in the rest of Greater London.

Reinterpreting historic cues and models

A little over 100 years later, how might these qualities be interpreted and made relevant to a denser, more urban form of living? These resonant forms and materials still communicate a sense of the 'known'. However, low-density stand-alone and semi-detached houses are no longer appropriate – instead we must look for dwelling types that provide dense housing solutions whilst retaining the emotional connection of Harrow's historic buildings.

The mansion block provides a model for collective housing based upon a classical language, creating buildings that foster urban cohesion. Characterised by well-proportioned windows, elaborate facades and high quality construction, the mansion block is a building type that people now associate with aspiration. One of London's first mansion blocks, the Albert Hall Mansions designed by Richard Norman Shaw in 1879 introduced apartment living to the middle classes. Until then, buildings for communal living had been exclusively built by housing reform societies such as the Peabody Trust: the mansion block, with its grand-scale living quarters and picturesque facade compositions, changed those connotations.

A single building for collective living

Unlike a contemporary 'apartment building' where the democratic apportioning of amenity, windows and outlook create a sense of endless repetition, the mansion block identifies itself as a single building for collective living with a sense of a coherent, composed form. The ordering of the facade expresses base, middle and top so that the way the building meets the street is differentiated from the way it meets the sky. Amenity spaces are incorporated into the envelope so that they are integrated, not added, giving the building a specific composition. Loggias give depth to the facade and draw the viewer in from afar, creating a sense of exchange between the dwelling and the public realm, each enriching the other and reinforcing the coherence of the townscape.

The notion of commonality finds its expression in large, identifiable entrances to the street, while a grand hall and staircase give a certain ceremonial character to the way you move through the building. This spirit of generosity benefits not only the people who live in the mansion block, but so too the urban place in which it sits – a gift to the city and an important expression of civitas. The scale and elaboration of the entrance porticos are important

markers, breaking down the scale of the building as it meets the street and creating visual and spatial intensity.

Celebrating ornament and decoration

Early mansion blocks were characterised by decoration that celebrated the craft of construction. Stepped brickwork, faience banding and stone weathering were employed to give the facade a visual density based upon constructional logic, while highlighting the craftsmanship available at the time.

The erosion of confidence in craftsmanship within the construction industry over the last 60 years or so has led to the stripping away of these characteristics and the consequent impoverishment of the appearance of buildings. A recognition of that impoverishment and a willingness to explore what new technologies can achieve, has brought about a renewed opportunity for elaboration in construction. Ornamental construction comes out of the narrative of how elements are put together and the role that they play in the facade. A lintel that bears load – at least visually – might be deeply textured to catch light and create shadow. An architrave that reflects light might employ ceramic tiling to further brighten the interior. A balustrade that secures an outside space might do so in a way that creates pattern across the facade.

Delighting in materials

Ornamental construction can explore the capabilities of the materials the elements of a building are made from; timber that can be coloured, clay that can be pressed, concrete that can be moulded. The greater integration of three-dimensional intelligent drawing into the design process means that increasingly the relationship of intent to construction is tighter, with the potential to overcome the shortfall in the expertise of craftsmanship.

Through the railway revolution Metroland offered the chance to live outside London and yet be connected to it. Today, Harrow is 12 minutes from Euston and links to central London. The pressure to provide homes while densifying the parts of our city that are already developed means we need to explore building forms that hold the emotional draw of Harrow's historical fabric while meeting the needs for communal living. The mansion block is just such a dwelling type.



Extension, South Harrow © Philipp Ebeling



Harrow Spiritualist Church, Vaughan Road © Philipp Ebeling



Modified end-of-terrace, Wealdstone © Philipp Ebeling



South Harrow Market © Philipp Ebeling

Material Detail

Richard Lavington

Harrow wants well-made buildings, using high quality materials, which will make a lasting contribution to the Borough. What are the priorities for achieving this?

When considering materials, it's interesting that our housebuilding industry is still wedded to the same components as they were 100 years ago. Primarily brick, render, timber and tiles, with metal work for detailing. Nowadays we tend to use these materials differently, and perhaps with less of what we traditionally understand as craft.

The original architecture of 'Metroland' was rich in its Arts and Craft and Art Deco inspired detail and Garden City character. If we are to reinvigorate this vision and create a 'Metro-land' for our time, we need to ensure that those responsible for implementing these buildings are encouraged to work with the most capable architects and designers from the outset. The Design Review Process is a good way of assisting clients and their design teams to achieve appropriate design solutions and, if we are to build a lasting housing typology, this process must involve the intelligent use of materials.

Craftsmanship in its many forms is still alive within our building industry, however as designers we need to take time and care in choosing and working with appropriate materials, trades and techniques. We must be thinking about the materials we specify very carefully, how they will be used, will age, and weather.



Simple quality brick, Saxon Court, Kings Cross
© John Sturrock

The importance of detail and craft

The language of architecture is made from the way the elements and materials of a building are put together. The building industry as a whole, its architects, engineers, regulators, manufacturers and builders have evolved the many ways of combining materials and products to detail a building. However it is the craft and skill of the architect to determine, draw and specify the way a building will be put together.

For the design of a building to be successful the architect must have this stage in mind when developing the early stages of a buildings design. But this process is frustrating if there is no continuity of involvement of the architect from the planning stage.

In fact, when we come to the details of a building, it is fundamental that we understand that they need to accommodate all the necessities of the things that have to happen within that building - all the things that poke through the façade.

Architects should consider how normally overlooked elements poke through the façade - there are many ways to make it happen elegantly and cost effectively.



Gayton Road, Harrow
© Maccreeanor Lavington

With the Gayton Road project, on the edge of Harrow town centre, we researched materials that were robust and aged well. It was important to integrate variation and pattern into the building whilst working within a budget.

The richness of a building is in the detailing and those things that are necessary for a building to function should be an integrated and joyful part of the design. When designing residential buildings, there are certain ingredients that are essential.

Windows and Bays

The depth of reveal and the material of sills and lintels is key to the character of a window. Modern timber, metal and composite window systems provide high quality insulating and weathertight solutions that are flexible in the size and proportions. The thicker frame sections required to accommodate double glazing make these systems less adaptable to creating bay windows, or other similar special details, than traditional joinery. However, the bay has been a key element of the residential architecture of Harrow so ingenuity is required.

Doors and Entrances

Without care in design every entrance would come with a brown gas meter box, white electricity cabinet, a place for three large wheelie bins, a bike locker and lightweight canopy and oversized lamp. However the threshold is one of the most important aspects of a home and must be organised to create a welcoming place to enter. Equally care needs to be given to the many service entrances and bin and cycle stores to ensure these are each easy to use, robust and in their own way special.



Passivhaus standard bay window, Elephant Park
© Tim Crocker

Balconies

We need to think about how balconies will be used. Inset balconies feel comfortable to use, but may put the room behind into shade, whilst projecting balconies can feel exposed at high level. Detailing of steel balustrades should include how they are fixed and the required tolerances and joints for fabrication.



Decorative patterned balustrades,
Bromley-by-Bow © Tim Crocker

Wall penetrations and stuff fixed to the outside

Airbricks, vents, overflows, flues, sensors, alarms, aerials and satellite dishes, can so easily ruin the appearance of an otherwise well considered design. It often appears unplanned as if the person installing the services decided on site where these penetrations should occur. All such details need to be designed out or integrated into the design.

Incoming services

These can likewise easily appear ill considered, and it's easy to blame the utility companies. However, the aim should always be to get all incoming services to enter directly from the ground into an intake room or meter cupboard, or conceal them within landscape.

External Lighting and Signage

All too often large lamps are fixed all over the outside of buildings to light balconies, as this is required by code legislation, but exacerbates light pollution. Clarity of design should minimise the need for signage, which is often not fully considered in design stages.

Fences, gates and other boundaries

These can also so easily be neglected, both the soft and hard landscape are important to help sit the building into its context.

Material and detailing in the context of the planning

At the time planning permission is being granted, the detail described above is often not sufficiently defined. Moving forward there needs to be a process for the design to continue to evolve into a detailed design phase post planning, and most importantly for the architect to be retained to develop this design.

To create attractive buildings with material and detail carefully built-in, it is imperative that planning permission includes sufficient detail to ensure the applicant can be held accountable for the quality of a building promised to the community. This should happen in the negotiation stage and permission represented by including its illustrative material.

The Section 106 agreement or planning obligations can help provide alternative solutions and has proved very useful when we need to address the balance.

Local Authorities need to deliver a properly funded process to support this post planning development control whether it is through discharge of conditions, approval of details or other agreements.

There are various examples of how this can be dealt with and The Design Review can play a major part in this process. Inspiring the best design materials and raising the average level of the new home as a collective effort must ultimately be our aim.



Connaught Hotels, Newham © Maccreanor Lavington

1. Post planning change in ownership meant that the architects of Connaught Hotels were appointed in a supervision role by the Local Authority, something that was made possible by a clause in the 106 agreement. This process has been remarkably effective in controlling the appearance of the external elevations and accommodation necessary post planning design developments.



Net curtain display, Rayners Lane © Philipp Ebeling



Roxeth Library, Northolt Road © Philipp Ebeling



Grange Farm Estate © Philipp Ebeling



View along Alexandra Avenue © Philipp Ebeling

Mixed Use

Katy Marks

How can workspace best be incorporated into new residential development so that it is sustainable, and supports Harrow SMEs and entrepreneurs?

All over London, development space is squeezed, rental costs are rising and austerity bites. At the same time, we are building more new housing with ground floor spaces dominated by bike stores, bin stores and commercial units that are only suitable for supermarket chains or bath room store showrooms, and are often left unoccupied for months. This leaves street facades that are blank, empty or generic.

Meanwhile creative industries, tech start-ups and maker spaces seek out old warehouses, re-vamped 60s office blocks and railway arches, establishing co-working and start-up communities that can act as lightning rods for regeneration and economic growth.

There is a challenge to direct that atmosphere of regeneration and creative enterprise to new, outer London housing developments. There is a very real need for developing an approach specific to Harrow. Over 80% of businesses in the borough employ fewer than 10 people and there are high levels of self-employment. Harrow needs workspace and housing regeneration strategies that respond to this entrepreneurial spirit.

The lifecycle of a start-up

It can start with one or two people as an idea with a friend over coffee; a recurring thought while on maternity leave or in spare moments late at night, then quickly expand into a small team with a new project or commission, the project ends, it shrinks back, then a new commission comes in and with it, the demands of a larger team. But if the project goes on hold or goes slower than expected, and the team can't be sustained... it grows and shrinks. The co-working model grew up to nurture businesses very near the beginning of that process, yet there are few places that can respond to these inevitably changing needs in a more nimble way, by creating a genuine range of affordable spaces that allow social and collaborative communities to be maintained and strengthened throughout their life cycle.

We need to design workspace variety from scratch. Masterplans that are predicated upon buildings with deep floor plates and single aspect commercial units don't work for small and micro businesses. Commercial units should start from as little as 10sqm up to 150sqm and variations in between. Stacked maisonettes and townhouse types, as well as podium garden courtyard apartment blocks and many other approaches lend themselves to new ways of creating variety in commercial space.

Makers' yards, 'living above the shop' and micro retail concepts are all appropriate to Harrow and throw up huge potential for more characterful and diverse new communities. Projects such as Big Yard in Berlin by Zanderroth Architects, or older projects that have been reinvented such as Pullens Yards in South London, demonstrate the tantalising potential for small enterprise to play a huge part in housing regeneration and placemaking. From the Victorian workshop mews to the inhabited railway arch, every generation has developed a specific type of building for emerging enterprise. Our generation needs its own.

A new and genuinely civic Infrastructure

The co-working model was rapidly successful because it hit a zeitgeist in the emergence of new forms of fluidly collaborative, virtual working coupled with the human need for community. It offers the independence of freelancing with the social life of a larger office. Crucially, the co-working model is based on the acceptance that it's worth paying for high quality, good value shared facilities. Housing hasn't yet caught up. The cynical reading of this is to provide tiny rooms with a large communal lounge, charge a lot of money and call it a 'collective', but there is another version.

All over the country local authorities struggle with the challenge of providing decent public services; libraries are often the first to be sacrificed. New models of civic infrastructure are needed to create real shared spaces and to offer an alternative services such as leisure centres and libraries in particular, inevitably becoming glorified council service centres.

Well designed, affordable workspace could provide much needed revenue streams to these types of services and give them a less municipal character, distinctive to a new neighbourhood. Libraries of tools as well as books, with reprographics and graphics services alongside the quiet, free-to-access meeting and contemplation space of a library, or the health, wellbeing and physical outlet of a gym or swimming pool would provide exactly the type of high quality shared space that complements co-working (and living) environments. Bringing these services together, operated by the local authority at arm's length via Community Interest Companies, (CICs) could bring the co-working, maker space and start-up models to outer London while protecting and enhancing vital services.

Revisiting the live work community

Live-work units were largely abandoned as a type when it became clear that the model was abused – with the workspace element often becoming subsumed within the living area, to the leaseholders' financial advantage. The rapid increase in independent working however, suggests a revisit.

Rather than provide workspaces within each house, each development could include a modest number units with a 'Live and Work' typology – providing opportunities for tenure scenarios that pair living and working space through a simple lease agreement and intelligent design, rather than literally combining them in the same space. A shared ownership lease for a housing unit, coupled with a work unit, allows a leaseholder to use their workspace commercially either for themselves or by sub-letting, to subsidise the rental portion of their shared ownership lease. This also provides the opportunity to grow and shrink their business whilst retaining an income from the space.

More than meanwhile

It is now becoming commonplace to include 'meanwhile use' as a concept in regeneration strategies, to bring life to spaces during their development phase, but if designed carefully, temporary communities can become permanent communities, set the tone of a place and eventually move in. By creating a broad variety of retail and workspace, successful 'meanwhile' tenants are like gold dust – but too often, new developments don't provide the types of units suitable for meanwhile users to stay on. The value is lost – often to be replaced by resentment and hostility.

All this can be designed, harnessed, nurtured from the beginning, recognising the life cycle of small business and its inevitable value to new emerging communities.



Entrance to South Harrow Market © Philipp Ebeling



Metroland era midrise block, Wealdstone © Philipp Ebeling



Multi-storey car park, Gladstone Way © Philipp Ebeling



Harrow Zoroastrian Centre © Philipp Ebeling

Wellbeing: The secret to happiness

Tim Riley

*How can Harrow encourage inclusivity and wellbeing in new residential developments, to create a wider impact, particularly for older people?
Can new buildings and streets make us 'comfortable, healthy and happy'?
How? And how is it measured?*

The need to attain a state of wellbeing is universal, but for older generations it is often more challenging to achieve due to reduced independence, reduced mobility and diminishing social networks. According to the Jo Cox Commission 73% of older people described themselves as feeling lonely. We believe that policy makers, planners, developers and designers can play an important role in addressing wellbeing issues, and can do so through simple measures.

Architects, developers, planners and policy makers must address wellbeing thoughtfully. The housing market is such that there is little incentive for developers to engage with stakeholders and expectations for design quality are low – but it is exactly by meaningfully engaging we can develop designs that deliver better value for money and improved quality of life.

Shelter, security, social interaction, identity and self-fulfilment are key to wellbeing, and should be at the centre of Harrow's drive to build new, residential communities.

Shelter: it's not as simple as space = happiness

Space is the most important factor in determining satisfaction with a home, yet homes are getting smaller all the time. Research suggests that exceeding one bedroom per person has a positive effect on happiness with 1.5 bedrooms per person being the optimum. But space does not necessarily equal happiness; under-occupation – defined as a property with two or more spare rooms – can result in reduced social interaction and loneliness.

A large proportion of housing stock in Harrow does not currently meet the needs of the population. Some 18% of households live in over-crowded conditions and 26% of all households are under-occupied. This is more acute among pensioners where 44% of properties are under-occupied and they are six times less likely to move home compared to typical households, opting for adaptation instead. The majority of under-occupied dwellings are owner-occupied, with owners living in properties with too much space for want of a more appropriate alternative.

More homes are required across a variety of tenures and sizes to provide more choice. Innovations in alternative housing models – such as self-build – must be explored to meet need and to make house ownership more affordable. A concerted effort is required to encourage pensioners to 'right-size' into dwellings that better meet their long term needs and release their larger properties for family use: desirable homes in sustainable locations with an emphasis on inter-dependence.

Security: The best way to stay safe is to stay connected to the street

Security is the second most important factor in determining satisfaction with a dwelling, but excessive home security can be counter-productive, leading to properties being disconnected from the public realm, social isolation and an increased fear of crime.

Harrow has some of the highest levels of home ownership in London, with 75% of all housing stock being owner-occupied. There are many examples within Harrow where the protection of property and material wealth has resulted in properties retreating from the street with gated forecourts. While this provides a secure environment for the home it makes the street less secure.

All dwellings should benefit from defensible space, a defined extent of private ownership and degrees of shared ownership for personal control over neighbourly interactions. Secure environments should be created through passive surveillance, a clear hierarchy of space and wayfinding to reduce both crime and the perception of crime.

How else can we stay better connected to the streets and to our neighbours?

Sustainable social interaction: learning to share makes better neighbourhoods

Much of the borough could be described as typical of the Metroland suburban model of detached and semi-detached inter-war housing. This model is very low density at around 20 dwellings per hectare. At such low densities the provision of sustainable social infrastructure is particularly challenging.

Between 2010 and 2030 the general population of west London is predicted to increase by 12%; 25% for people over 60 years and 49% for people over 85 years. Clearly, more homes are needed at higher densities, particularly around amenity and transport hubs, and high density housing models should be explored that can sit comfortably in a suburban context. Extra-care developments for older people require densities of at least 100 dwellings per hectare to sustain care facilities and inter-dependant living. These are also best located in sustainable locations and have the potential to provide social infrastructure for the wider community. To achieve these densities, more debate is required about tall buildings, focusing on visual impact rather than number of storeys. Where appropriate the introduction of tall buildings should be supported, assuming that they are well designed, to reduce harmful visual impact and enhance neighbourhoods.

In suburban neighbourhoods the car becomes the principal mode of travel. Heavy reliance on the car is particularly harmful to health and wellbeing as it leads to disconnected communities and a general retreat from the public realm. In Harrow 53% of all journeys in the borough are by car and as a result car ownership in the borough is high at 1.4 vehicles per household, generally parked at the front of properties and often protected by boundary treatments which disengage the property from the street. Movement strategies that discourage car use and activate streets should be encouraged through measures such as increasing the distance between parked cars and front doors, communal parking areas, car sharing and better provision for cyclists and pedestrians.

The movement, spatial and ownership structures of suburban areas have become routine in that the linear street is principally for vehicular movement, lined on both sides with single ownership properties with no intermediate space between the two. This arrangement is similar to the typical hotel floor arrangement which leads to anonymity and social isolation. Spatial hierarchy and place-making is much needed with shared semi-private space to encourage incidental social interaction amongst neighbours. The monotony of the street and corridor can be combated with properties that activate boundaries and engage with the street. Better still, new spatial and ownership solutions can be introduced such as communal living rooms/squares/gardens/etc.

There is very little communal or shared space in suburbia and what there is relies on management and active participation to bring it into use. Integrating shared spaces with

movement strategies and spatial hierarchy will naturally bring these spaces into everyday incidental use. Communal space can play an important role in strengthening communities – a good example being Vauban in Freiburg where cars are separated from homes making the space for vehicular infrastructure available for small community groups to procure their own designs to meet the needs of the community.

Identity: New buildings can help build pride in Harrow's unique nature

The Metroland vision was to create neighbourhoods of privately owned modern homes, integrated with the natural environment and with a fast railway service into central London. It's fair to say that in parts of Harrow this vision has not quite come to fruition and much of suburban Harrow is lacking a strong identity, which can be harmful to self-esteem.

More design guidance is required to establish the types of development that can respect and enhance character, and expectations for good quality architectural design must be raised. *'Each lover of Metroland may well have his own favourite wood beech and coppice – all tremulous green loveliness in Spring and russet and gold in October'* – The Metroland Guide

Clearly the integration of homes within the natural environment was celebrated and its value was well understood, but over the years we have witnessed the loss of trees and the replacement of gardens with parking forecourts. The re-naturalisation of the suburbs will not only help re-establish the valuable Metroland identity, but bring wellbeing benefits as residents reconnect with the natural environment.

Self-fulfilment: Helping communities get stuck in

There is a huge latent resource within our communities, and with support local people could be empowered to shape their built environment, helping to forge more sustainable and cohesive communities. The planning, design, procurement and delivery process is a tool to engage citizens and ensure their wellbeing needs are met. This is not simply about the built product but about the process as a means to bring communities together and empower them to become authors and owners of the built environment. This could be in the form of developing Neighbourhood Plans, community design workshops for specific projects, allocation of resource for community procurement, self-build and so on.

We must provide the infrastructure to support self-fulfilment and support the appropriation of space for self-expression. Shared communal space provides the opportunity for community groups to be formed around the design and use of space, transforming it into genuinely public – and social – space.



Metro-land magazine poster © Public Domain



Oddfellows Arms, Pinner © Philipp Ebeling



Dance Studio on the Greenbelt, Harrow Arts Centre © Philipp Ebeling



George Gange Way roundabout, Wealdstone © Philipp Ebeling



Listed cottages, Waxwell Lane, Pinner © Philipp Ebeling

Public Realm and Landscape

Graeme Sutherland

How can public realm and landscape in new residential developments enrich Harrow's built environment and be sustainable and well used by residents and the wider community?

Looking out from the wooded northern ridge of Stanmore, on the edge of the Green Belt, or from under the ancient graveyard trees of historic Harrow-on-the-Hill, Harrow is revealed as a surprisingly hilly place, perched on the edge of the London Basin. Though the city centre is clearly visible in the near distance, this is an established outer borough landscape characterised by a carpet of suburban gardens.

Many fine, mature trees recall the thick ancient woods, the Saxon weald, and subsequent fields that once covered this part of rural Middlesex. Metroland – an idealized kind of country living for the city worker, both drew upon and eroded this landscape; what Betjeman, poet of the suburbs, described as 'our lost Elysium'.

Establishing a local green grid

'The various and unique landscapes of London are recognised as an asset that can reinforce character, identity and environmental resilience. An enhanced network of existing and new open spaces and green infrastructure can serve to shape and support new and existing communities, respond to the challenges of climate change, support economic development and deliver an improved quality of life.'

This manifesto from the Mayor's 'All London Green Grid', itself providing a useful wider context for long established local Green Grids, sets out a policy 'developed to provide a strategic interlinked network of high quality green infrastructure and open spaces that connect with local centre's, public transport nodes, the countryside in the urban fringe . . . and major employment and residential areas'. Even smaller projects, with a well-considered and legible public realm, can play an important strategic role in developing and connecting wider green infrastructure networks.

Integrating intensified residential development

One challenge in Harrow, as in all the outer London Boroughs, is how to successfully integrate, necessarily intensified residential development. High quality public space and landscape design are key tools to facilitate this. From the mysterious Grimm's Dyke along the borough's northern edge, and nascent field patterns to hidden watercourses, former orchards, recreation grounds in need of investment and specimen trees, there are many existing landscape features and narratives to value and work with.

Proximity to the urban fringe brings a mix of competing Green Belt characteristics: golf courses, large hospitals, 'horsiculture' and yards, jockeying with nature reserves, footpaths and the remnants of rich farmland, pasture and ancient woods. This mix of, sometimes 'untidy' and provisional land use, often exploiting low land values, and providing a kind of interstitial, 'in-between' character, serves an important metropolitan function.

In terms of biodiversity, it is interesting that Richard Mabey's seminal 1970's primer on appreciating wild urban landscape, 'The Unofficial Countryside', was inspired by the landscapes

of north-west London. The wider area also supports a nascent revival of urban agriculture, which could in turn support proposals for a more productive approach to new landscapes, large and small.

Becoming less car-dependent

Local centres, focused on railway connections – notably Harrow Town Centre and Wealdstone – are now developing as destinations in their own right, and nearby, virtually car free, new developments can draw on this, enhancing local pedestrian and cycle routes. Cars are an issue in their own right. Harrow is blighted by the paving over of front gardens, and the consequent impact on surface water mitigation, biodiversity and the quality of local streets. Sensitive and well-sited new development can demonstrate how successful urban living can be less dependent on the car.

Wide, mature tree-lined streets characterise the borough, and this typology should be respected by new development. A balance of on street parking with pedestrian and cycling amenity is important for active streets. However, the introduction of spatial strategies which include shared-space and car free, or limited car access space, can both lead to distinctive new suburban landscapes and accommodate higher densities.

Consolidating and improving green space

Generous public space is essential to successfully integrating new development and can also mitigate for significant changes in scale. A balance of public and private outdoor space is important, ensuring that new exclusive enclaves do not block the permeability of the city, but rather that new development enhances connectivity and local green amenity. Existing green spaces should be improved and consolidated by new development, not arbitrarily reassigned. Successful landscapes are a product of time and continuity.

New landscapes can also provide new or upgraded sustainable drainage networks, in places serving spaces beyond the proposed site. Swales, rain gardens and flood meadows can all bring character and identity, amenity, biodiversity and play value whilst delivering essential green infrastructure. A bio-diverse palette of predominately native species; broadleaved woodland trees, plants of the meadow, stream and copse, can all connect with, and in places reinstate, the underlying landscape.

Cities are increasingly important habitats for a range of wild flora and fauna. It is essential that tree planting be considered from the outset of a design process, and given appropriate and realistic space, rather than being subject to the vicissitudes of new or existing utilities or the means of construction. Addressing air quality across London is a primary consideration and Harrow should remain a green lung for the city.

Animating and enriching the public realm

Formal and informal play enlivens a successful public realm. Consideration of accessibility, where access for all is meaningfully integrated, again from the outset, within design proposals, also brings landscapes and public realm to life. Where appropriate, space or facilities should be provided for community activity whether park buildings, green gym, a place for a market or cultivation, or just places to sit. A wide range of activity brings meaning, value and natural surveillance.

The long-term maintenance of the public realm, in a climate of ever decreasing local authority resource, is an increasingly significant issue. Low maintenance landscapes are one part of a response to this, though no landscape or public realm can be maintenance free. Increasingly

developers are expected to maintain all parts of their developments into the future, not just the private areas. There are now many successful precedents of this across London, demonstrating the longer term value, and where appropriate engaging with local partnerships of new or existing communities or stakeholders. These relationships can be established and nurtured during the design and construction process.

The importance of place

A successful approach to delivering public realm and landscape will creatively synthesise such considerations with sensitivity to the specifics of local context, to create a convincing narrative and make strongly identifiable places of character and amenity. In an ever-denser city, easy access to a high quality public realm and delightful useable landscape, is essential to supporting healthy active living and a sustainable quality of urban life.



Underpass access to Vaughan Road car park © Philipp Ebeling



Grange Farm Housing Estate © Philipp Ebeling



Bentley Priory © Philipp Ebeling



Harrow Skate Park © Philipp Ebeling

Designing for Play

Dinah Bornat

Play is a fundamental aspect of a healthy society; it's what children do naturally as their 'default activity'¹(Voce 2015) and has other wider social gains. Play is often given the definition freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated, which essentially means that it should happen when, where and how a child chooses and that it should be neither organized for them nor supervised by others.

Since children spend most of their spare time at home, the spaces in their local neighbourhood are the most crucial for supporting play. For a number of varied and complex reasons however, the numbers of children able to play outside has dropped significantly over the last generation² (Hillman 1990, Shaw et al 2015). In Harrow for example, of those that use the borough's play spaces, only a quarter visit at least every two weeks and provision for teenage children is seen as poor³. The consequences are huge; from rising obesity levels to child development issues such as mental health and other physical and social problems.

When looked at from a positive point of view, providing a built environment that gives children the opportunity, and indeed the right, to play safely has many potentially positive outcomes.

Understanding how children play

Extended observation is the key to understanding how children and the rest of the community use space and forms the basis of our research into ten recently completed housing estates in England⁴. This and previous observational work⁵ (Biddulph, Wheway & Milward 1997) suggests that a network of car-free, shared spaces that are well overlooked and accessible from dwellings create the best condition for social use of space and the safest environment for children of all ages to play and get about safely. Play is also a social activity; what Jan Gehl calls a 'self reinforcing process' (Gehl 2011)⁶; in other words children attract other children who attract other children.

Documenting the diversity of activities

We've worked with the photographer Madeleine Waller to illustrate what is possible when play happens close to home. Waller's photographs, taken over the period of one year, document the rich variety of activities that can take place in a successfully planned neighbourhood; children playing quiet imaginary games, football and cycling, parents engaging in incidental conversations, organised parties, barbecues and firework displays.

Our research has found that providing for unsupervised play is the key to creating successful places. We have found that places which have more children playing outside independently tend to be used more by other members of the community, leading us to suggest that children are the generators of community life.

Play begins close to home

Current play strategies apply a rather crude, tick box approach, asking for dedicated play spaces within maximum walking distances from front doors; 100m for under 5s and 400m for 5 to 12s. More often this will require adult accompaniment and supervision, which tends to reduce children's playtime and also restricts their ability to take calculated risk, itself an essential part of healthy play.

Play needs to begin close to home, in order for children to get to know their own neighbourhood:

- When children are very young they test independence and will want to play outside, but within sight and sound of their parent or carer. For example on their doorstep or in shared communal space.
- As they grow older and gain confidence they will want to be able to visit friends in the same street or close by.
- Young people should be able to access spaces further away, such as open spaces and recreational facilities.
- Harrow has an abundance of green open spaces for all age groups to enjoy, although mainly concentrated in the north east of the borough. Older children and young people should grow up finding these spaces easy to visit so that they are well used and loved throughout their lifetimes.

Principles for developers and master planners

- Look at a neighbourhood through the eyes of child
- Aim for a series of spaces that will be well used. To support this, find other places you know that work well – are there signs of life, such as children's bicycles or well worn grass? Try to understand why.
- Consider children from the outset; set out for the development to be safe to play throughout. Design in safe connections and routes at outline planning stage.
- Make spaces welcoming for all age groups, rather than restricted to one; older children often take their younger siblings to the park or playground. Teenagers can enjoy playing too, and ought not to feel unwelcome in parks and green spaces.
- Find spaces for ball games that are well overlooked, with people passing by
- Older people may want more formal spaces for quiet contemplation or structured spaces for gardening. These spaces should offer interaction for all age groups within a culture that is both inclusive as well as inviting of stewardship and a greater level of care.
- Think about parking as well as traffic, as both restrict children's use of space. Aim to design out anti-social parking, as it is widespread and difficult to manage on unadopted streets; in these streets, our research has found motorists will park on pavements close to front doors, on public squares and even green spaces. This makes it unsafe for pedestrians, and in particular children, to be able to enjoy these spaces for play or meeting other residents.
- Continue principles through to detail and delivery; think about direct sight lines and circulation so that it is easy for children to play safely with a view of their home. Design straightforward security that children can operate.
- Set out for a successful management system for post completion.

These principles might lead to a variety of layouts; from more traditional streets with generous pavements and small local parks, through to denser courtyard arrangements with shared communal gardens.

In practice, architects and designers should be looking to promote the Child Friendly City concept and create more sustainable neighbourhoods for children and other members of the community.

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Squash court, Harrow Leisure Centre © Philipp Ebeling



South Harrow Market © Philipp Ebeling



Woodland, Pinner © Philipp Ebeling



Sam Maguire Public House, Wealdstone © Philipp Ebeling

Diversity: Please tick box

Pooja Agrawal

Can Harrow's ethnic and religious diversity help shape its new developments, fostering community cohesion, social sustainability and integration? How can new neighbourhoods, new public realm, new streets, new infrastructure and new homes be best integrated into the existing material and social fabric of the borough? Fill in this assessment to find out.

Harrow is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse local authorities in the country. It has a proportion of 30.9% 'White British' residents, which, compared to the national level of 80.5%, is really quite remarkable. Indians form the borough's largest minority ethnic group with a population of 26.4%, the second highest proportion nationally after Leicester. It is striking that Harrow is ranked top nationally for the highest proportion of residents who consider themselves to be solely British at 41.6% - the overall national proportion is 19.1%

No single ethnic group defines Harrow's diversity; it is estimated that Harrow's residents are born in 203 different countries. Harrow is not uniformly diverse in its composition of residents, there are concentrated pockets of Jewish, Tamil, Somali, Gujarati, and Romanian people and communities in different parts of the borough. Over the years, new waves of communities have made their homes in Harrow, bringing diverse ways of living into the neighbourhood.

We are living in a time when identity politics is making us question once again who we are, how we live and how we interact with one another. A high level of diversity doesn't necessarily reflect integration; despite the diversity of Greater London, if interactions between different groups are measured, the capital is considered the least integrated part of the UK. So when we are thinking about better design for Harrow, how do we design for ethnic and religious diversity and how can we design in ways to encourage social integration?

Designing for diversity can often be seen as a 'tick box exercise', but what if the boxes were meaningful, provocative and impactful? I have collated a checklist of diversity issues to consider whilst making design decisions. I propose that you not only tick the diversity box but add to the list.

The neighbourhood

Harrow should have a strong civil society where everyone feels they are able to participate in the design and regeneration of their neighbourhoods and where the benefits are shared by all people of the community.

Have you considered:

- What the ethnic and religious make-up is of the people you are impacting?
- How can you make decision-making more collaborative and ensure engagement truly represents the breadth of diversity of the local community?
- Collaborating with organisations who have established relationships with 'hard to reach' communities?
- Producing communications in simple English and other languages; and ensuring visualisations reflect the diversity of the local community?
- Measuring how a new residential development can offer social value along with economic and environmental benefits?

Public space

Public space is the stage where everyday culture is played out. It can engender a strong sense of community, common purpose and belonging. Different cultures have varying understandings of public and private boundaries and particular cultural norms. High quality public space should be able to adapt to accommodate changing demographics and instigate new forms of culture.

Have you considered:

- Studying how different cultural groups vary in their use of public space?
The barriers to using public space for different communities for each of Harrow's protected characteristics?:
 - Age _____
 - Disability _____
 - Gender Reassignment _____
 - Marriage and Civil Partnership _____
 - Pregnancy and Maternity _____
 - Race _____
 - Religion and Belief _____
 - Sex _____
 - Sexual Orientation _____
- Curating a programme of activity, events and festivals that represents different groups to encourage better understanding of diverse beliefs and practices?
- Designing public spaces to promote cross-cultural and intergenerational use?
- Using public art to celebrate local heritage and local culture?

Infrastructure

In London, the use of cars in ethnic minority groups is highest among Asian Londoners - 38% drive a car at least once a week. Asian Londoners in particular are the least likely to cycle, and only 1% of BAME women cycle weekly compared with the national average of 12%. This is reflected in the high car ownership in Harrow, which results in demands for parking space. Cycling and walking have a number of benefits, including health, the reduction of air pollution and improved physical environment. We should be designing for a more sustainable future and provide 'soft' infrastructure to shift cultural habits.

Have you considered:

- Pedestrianising town centres and encouraging alternative transport modes?
- Interrogating the barriers to walking and cycling within different communities?
- Changing the perception of the social status and aspiration of car ownership in particular communities through education and role models?
- Programmes and campaigns to promote the health benefits of walking and cycling targeting particular communities including second and third generation ethnic minorities?
- Tackling fears about safety through investment in infrastructure?

The high street

High streets are social spaces that cater to a diverse group of people. They not only offer possibilities for cultural exchange and social inclusion but also economic opportunities for small 'ethnic' businesses. More can be done to ensure Harrow's high streets are inclusive, representative and diverse.

Have you considered:

- Whether the local high street reflects the diversity of the area?
- If the high street caters to local need and what is lacking?
- Providing social infrastructure on high streets to capture diverse groups accessing their familiar space?
- What local partnerships can be forged to foster social cohesion and empower businesses to shape their future?
- Providing business support including access to new technologies for:
 - Ethnic minority enterprises
 - Residents with learning difficulties or disabilities
 - Residents of economically deprived areas

The home

Can new homes support diversity? Designing for specific cultures and religious practices for a minority group within a 'host country' can often be seen as patronising. The domestic habits of second and third generation ethnic minorities often differ from their parents. However, cultural practices persist and fundamentally impact our way of living. Harrow has the second highest average household size of all local authorities nationally, with multi-generational families common within the Asian community. Residential design standards are generic, and more should be done to understand the complexities of design for specific ethnic communities.

Have you considered:

- Ensuring a mix of ethnicities within residential developments to encourage integration?
- If the mix of housing typologies in Harrow reflects the diverse living needs of its residents?
- If there are particular religious or cultural spatial requirements that can be accommodated within the internal layout of homes?
- Whether the design of communal spaces within residential developments encourages interaction between diverse users?
- Providing shared facilities for community activities and cultural events?



The Kodak Factory © Philipp Ebeling



The Kodak Factory, on Harrow's biggest development site © Philipp Ebeling



Uxbridge Road, Pinner © Philipp Ebeling



Northolt Road, South Harrow © Philipp Ebeling

Viability: More than “market value”

Chris Brown

What are the design priorities for the creation of high quality, viable residential development in Harrow?

In the past, when we have built quickly to meet housing need, we have built badly. In the 1930s we built urban sprawl, destroying the English countryside and creating a need for cars that is now polluting the lungs of our children in the cities. In the 1960s we built mass produced concrete tower blocks with non-places in between them that created a fear of crime. These are now being demolished. Today we risk doing the same with a mindless shift to prefab construction.

Value is created in a number of ways when we regenerate places.

Seeing beyond short term profit

Most developers focus on short term financial profit. They try and build as cheaply as possible and then sell their often unloved speculative standard house types at the highest possible prices, often to absentee landlords, as an investment rather than a right. They only build at the pace of their often glacially slow sales rates even in a booming London market.

But there are other kinds of value. As home owners, we want long term value. Places and buildings that will stand the test of time. This is also the sort of value that long term institutional investors want to secure.

The problem is that this kind of value cannot pay as much for land as short term profit and so we continue to see poor quality modern developments that fail to create the kind of places people continue to want to live in years later.

Redefining value

And there is another kind of value completely. Non financial value. Sometimes referred to as social or environmental value.

This is the value we get when our air isn't polluted, when we can sit in the sun and hear the birds singing, when we know our neighbours, when we are healthy and feel good and aren't afraid of crime.

These are the basics that we should be demanding from our new buildings and regenerated neighbourhoods in Harrow. Countries like Holland or Denmark achieve them much more consistently, but there are also some good examples in the UK in places as diverse as inner city Newcastle and rural Dorchester.

And the joy is that non financial value and long term value usually go hand in hand.

Optimising value and viability

So how do we go about maximising the financial viability and non financial value of the places we develop in Harrow?

The starting point is to work, wherever possible, with organisations that have the proven track record of delivering these kinds of places and this kind of value. Great design requires both a great client and a great designer. However good our planning policies and however strong our design review processes, unless we have these two critical elements we will not achieve high quality.

Getting the right developer

There are things we can do to help. If we sell public land we can select developers on the basis of the best team or design rather than the highest cash offer. It's what we are supposed to do under Government rules that require us to maximise the total benefit, financial and non financial, but too often that gets forgotten.

We shouldn't always assume that developers are private short term profit driven organisations. In Germany, Berlin in particular, land is often sold to citizen and community groups for custom build or co-housing, on the basis of a fixed market price with the best proposal being selected. This almost invariably delivers outstanding places and buildings.

If the public sector acts as the developer, it can employ the most skilled people with experience and track record to ensure great outcomes.

Where the private sector is the developer we have to demand long term, social and environmental value. We have to set high standards for design and sustainability and have the skills in the planning department to interrogate the often biased reports that developers supply on aspects such as viability, sunlight and daylight, wind effect and noise.

The importance of details

And we have to insist on the importance of details. Great places have sheltered sunny corners where people can sit, often built into shop fronts or buildings themselves. They have streets that look like gardens and active frontages overlooked by windows. In town centres there are shops run by independent businesses and cafés with seating in sheltered squares.

This is not some kind of utopia. Most people intuitively know that these are the kind of places they like, recalling the places they visit on holiday. It is only a lack of motivation and skills that lead developers to ignore these important details. And it creates value, both financial and non financial, now and for future generations.

We can also be helpful to developers. We can encourage greater density close to public transport nodes. This will also help achieve more affordable housing.

Investing in cycling and walking

We can encourage investment in cycling and walking instead of for cars. In this way we can make best use of our limited street capacity and reduce noise and air pollution. In Denmark, pavements are designed to be continuous, not interrupted by side streets, so that cars joining or turning off a main road have to give way to pedestrians and cyclists. As a result many more children cycle and walk to school so they are healthier and more active, a sign of a healthy city.

Delivering affordable housing

We are never going to build our way out of unaffordable housing. That's a myth that generations of national politicians with a rudimentary grasp of economics have foisted on us. Housing is unaffordable to some because interest rates are low and deposits are the main barrier to first time buyers. House prices stay high because money flows in much faster than the speculative house builders will build.

Only if we tax housing properly (property taxes for expensive homes in New York are ten times higher than London) and direct public investment into places with the capacity for new housing supply, will we start to make a dent in the affordability problem and deliver places that are viable in the long term.

Biographies

Charles Holland

Charles Holland is the principal of Charles Holland Architects, a design and research practice based in London and Deal. The practice's current work includes a number of residential, civic and public art projects. Charles is a former Director of FAT where he was the partner in charge of a number of key projects including A House For Essex, the practice's collaboration with Grayson Perry.

Charles is a Professor of Architecture at the University of Brighton where his research focuses on housing, particularly in suburban and 'rurban' locations. He writes and lectures about architecture and the work of his practice regularly and contributes a monthly column to the RIBA Journal.

Neil Deely

Neil Deely is a Londoner, an Architect and a founding partner of Metropolitan Workshop LLP, Neil's expertise spans all scales of the built environment and he is leading some of the capital's most innovative housing projects.

He has designed major public buildings and large mixed-used projects in the UK and overseas (Sommerleyton Road, Brixton and Adamstown Central, Dublin). His broad range of experience with projects of national significance encompasses the disciplines of architecture, urban design, masterplanning and public realm design as well as design in sensitive heritage contexts. Neil has undertaken several major strategic roles for other European city councils such as Oslo, Bergen, Dublin and Swindon. The practice he leads are winners of the Architect of the Year Award 2017 (Masterplanning & Public Realm).

Neil has been a member of Design Council CABE's National Design Review Panel since 2005, and has been an Enabler/BEE since then also. He was appointed Chair of LB Newham's Design Review Panel in 2013 and is Vice-Chair of LLDC's Quality Review Panel. He is a chair of LB Croydon's Place Review Panel and is co-chair of LB Harrow's Design Review Panel.

Previously he was architectural advisor and independent member of London Thames Gateway Strategic Development Committee (LTGDC). Neil has taught and lectured at architectural schools and Universities in the UK including Oxford Brookes, Queens, and the Bartlett at both degree and post-graduate levels.

David Knight and Cristina Monteiro

David Knight and Cristina Monteiro are founding co-directors of DK-CM, an architecture, planning and research studio based in East London. Their design work emerges from rigorous, critical and imaginative research into the social, historical and formal context of a place. Their civic interventions in Barkingside were recently awarded a Special Mention in the 2016 European Prize for Urban Public Space and their work has been exhibited at the 13th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, the Shenzhen & Hong-Kong Biennale, the Berlage Institute (Rotterdam), Barbican Art Gallery (London). The practice is currently delivering a temporary pavilion, Erith Lighthouse, for Bexley Council, a residential project in suburban Moscow and public space interventions in Uxbridge. DK-CM's work has featured in The Architectural Review, Creative Review, The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, Domus and Frame, among others. David and Cristina are also active in teaching and academic research; David is unit master of ADS2 at the Royal College of Art School of Architecture (London), and an active member of the Society of Architectural Historians.

Judith Lösing and Julian Lewis

Judith Lösing and Julian Lewis are founding co-directors of architecture, urban design and landscape practice East, with an extensive experience of developing ideas, design and research as well as project implementation on a wide range of building, landscape and urban design projects. They have been teaching and lecturing widely, for example at the CASS in London and in Medrisio in Switzerland.

Recent high profile projects include the £8m Wood Green and Green Lanes Scheme ranging from redesign of public highways to shop front improvements, building conservation, wayfinding, lighting and public art works, and a new hotel and residential building on West Ham Lane.

Judith is a member of Hackney's Regeneration Design Panel and the Islington Design Review Panel and she is a supervisor for the MA Sustainable Urbanism at the Bartlett.

Julian is a current member of the Newham Design Advisor Panel and has also been selected as one of the Mayor of London Design Advocates; and will be advising Sadiq Khan on the Good Growth manifesto in terms of design quality.

Allies and Morrison

Allies and Morrison is an architecture and urban planning practice based in London and Cambridge. Since their founding in 1984, they have developed a reputation for well-crafted buildings and thoughtful place making.

They have completed projects throughout the UK and overseas, and are currently working on projects in the Middle East and in North America.

The work of the practice ranges from architecture, interior design and conservation to planning, consultation and research.

41 of their completed projects have won a RIBA Award and they have twice been shortlisted for the Stirling Prize – for the revitalisation of the Royal Festival Hall in 2008 and for New Court Rothschilds Bank in collaboration with OMA in 2012.

In 2015, they were awarded the AJ120 Practice of the Year.

Fiona Scott

Fiona Scott is a founding director of Gort Scott. She views the work of the practice as an ongoing enquiry into how cities work, through observation, analysis and design. Current design projects include a new Town Hall, urban strategy, streets, markets and housing projects, for local authorities in London. The practice also engages in research and teaching. Fiona is one of the London Mayor's Design Advocates and was on the Mayor's Design Advisory Group since 2013. She trained as an architect at Cambridge University and the Royal College of Art and the work of his practice regularly and contributes a monthly column to the RIBA Journal.

Mark Tuff

Mark Tuff graduated from the University of East London in 1994 and worked for Feilden Clegg Bradley before joining Sergison Bates architects in 1996. He was project architect on a number of Sergison Bates' award-winning projects before becoming a partner of the practice in 2006.

Based in the London office, Mark oversees the management of the practice, supervising the work of project architects and providing guidance on technical design and project procedure. He contributes to the creative direction of the practice and through his close involvement in the development of a wide range of projects from inception to completion he has explored the practical and theoretical aspects of construction in great depth.

He has been guest critic and lecturer at numerous schools of architecture in the UK and abroad, including Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology ETH, Zurich and the Universidade Autonoma de Lisboa. From 2011 to 2014 he ran a design studio at the University of Cambridge with Jonathan Hendry.

Richard Lavington

Richard Lavington established Maccreanor Lavington Architects with Gerard Maccreanor in 1991 in London. Working from offices in London and Rotterdam the experience of the practice is extensive, covering a wide range of sectors. Projects range in scale, and complexity, from individually designed houses to large-scale urban projects. He has led the practice on many award-winning projects including Accordia, Cambridge; Saxon Court and Roseberry Mansions, Kings Cross; the H10 Hotel Waterloo; the Lux, Hoxton Square and Garden Halls in Bloomsbury, LB Camden, as well as a number of housing projects in London and the Netherlands. He is a Mayor's Design Advocate, as well as a board member of Design for Homes and is on the steering group for the Housing Design Awards. He is currently a member of several London Design Review Panels and has previously served as a CABE enabler. Richard has been a Studio Leader at the University of Bath where he was responsible for running the final year Masters studio and has taught at many schools of architecture including Cambridge, Nottingham, Canterbury, Belfast and the Mackintosh School of Architecture.

Katy Marks

Katy Marks is an Architect and Director of Citizens Design Bureau. She studied at the Mackintosh School of Architecture in Glasgow, ETSA Madrid and Cambridge University, where she also completed a Masters in Environmental Design. Citizens Design Bureau was established in 2013 to increase access to Architecture and to explore new typologies for 'Civic Infrastructure'. As well as offering affordable design surgeries to individuals, small charities and SMEs, Citizens Design Bureau are currently developing business plans and concept designs for a new Library, workspace and Community Land Trust housing for the LLDC, the refurbishment and new extension for Grade II* Listed Manchester Jewish Museum and refurbishment of St. Peter's Church in Epping Forest.

Katy was previously co-founder and Architect of ImpactHub Islington in 2005. ImpactHub was a pioneer of the co-working model and has become the largest network of co-working spaces in the world. Katy went on to Haworth Tompkins Architects where she was a project Architect for the Stirling prize winning Liverpool Everyman Theatre and for the refurbishment of the National Theatre Studios and the Young Vic. Citizens Design Bureau have won multiple awards for their work in the short time they have been established.

Tim Riley

Tim Riley is interested in wellbeing, social wealth and how buildings can create places that are meaningful to communities.

Early in his career he delivered a broad range of regeneration projects including several collaborations with Urban Splash where the understanding of resident needs and desires were closely reflected in the developments. These projects involved the redevelopment of unloved 1960's tower blocks, overbearing in scale and with little provision for activity outside the apartments. The focus of the projects was to establish a valuable identity and to provide an infrastructure for communities to flourish in the communal areas and landscape through clear spatial hierarchies and movement strategies that encourage use and incidental social interaction.

In 2008 Tim formed RCKa with Russell Curtis and Dieter Kleiner to further develop his interest and approach which was subsequently recognised in being twice shortlisted for the Young Architect of the Year and winning the RIBA London Emerging Practice of the year award in 2014.

The approach has led the practice to deliver several award winning community buildings, prepare masterplans demonstrating the value of social infrastructure as a regeneration catalyst and produce innovative housing designs that encourage social interaction and support interdependent living.

Tim is visiting critic at a number of schools of architecture, on various design review panels and a member of the GLA Special Assistance Team providing regeneration advice to London Boroughs.

Graeme Sutherland

Graeme Sutherland is a co-founding director of Adams & Sutherland, an architectural practice best known for its work in the public realm, that brings together architectural, landscape and urban design skills. Clients are predominately from the public or third sectors. Adams & Sutherland won the AYA 2012 Public Realm Architect of the Year and were shortlisted for the AYA 2017 Public Realm and Masterplanning Architect of the Year.

Recently completed work includes a park and performance building in Harrow Town Centre, a community hub in northern Scotland – a project taken from feasibility to completion – and 'Growth on the High Road', a Mayors' initiative along Tottenham High Road, including a renewed Tottenham Green and Holcombe Market. Published work includes the 2012 Olympic Greenway and Bow Riverside projects.

Graeme authored the Colne and Crane area framework for the GLA All London Green Grid. He has been a design advisor for the GLA and Urban Design London, an invited critic to the Mayor's Design Advisory Group and a design enabler for The Glasshouse Community Led Design. He has taught in many schools of architecture, (including The Bartlett, 1993–2007), regularly lectures about the work of the practice, and is currently an External Examiner (2013–ongoing).

Dinah Bornat

Dinah Bornat is a researcher, teacher, writer and a co-founder of ZCD Architects in Hackney. She is a fellow of the RSA, a Design Advocate for the Mayor of London and a member of the Design Review Panel for Harrow Council.

Her work in practice includes master planning as well as the design of housing, education and single-family homes.

Dinah published Housing Design for Community Life; Researching how residents use external space in new developments, in 2016, which has been widely read online. With in-depth observational data, it answers a call for the built environment to better support the UN Convention's right of the child to play and provides evidence and urban design principles for developers, designers and practitioners.

Dinah is a contributor to publications, has presented papers on research in practice and is an advisor on a number of large schemes across London.

Pooja Agrawal

Pooja Agrawal is an architect and urban designer working in the Regeneration Team at the Greater London Authority. She is responsible for overseeing a number of projects in the north-west of London. Pooja is also launching a new social enterprise 'Public Practice' to embed talented planners within local authorities to build the public sector's capacity to build homes and support collaborative planning. She is a regular visiting critic and guest tutor at several leading architecture and planning schools in the UK and is a member of Design South East review panel. Pooja is also a keen advocate of diversity and inclusion in the built environment sector.

Chris Brown

Chris Brown is founder and executive chairman of responsible real estate developer, investor, partner, Igloo Regeneration, for People, Place and Planet. Chris is also either chair or non-executive director of:

- Igloo Regeneration Fund, the world's first responsible real estate fund, a £300 million fund backed by Aviva Investments which invests in the development of mixed use, environmentally sustainable, well designed, urban regeneration projects on the edge of the UK's top twenty city centres
- Blueprint, Igloo's partnership with Nottingham City Council undertaking sustainable mixed use regeneration in the East Midlands
- Creative Space, a leading provider of space for the creative, technology and digital media industries
- Chrysalis Fund which lends to job creating workspace and green development projects in Liverpool City Region
- Carillion igloo, an innovative residential developer and floating places promoter Home Made Homes the UK's leading Custom Build Enabler.

Chris is also a member of the UK Government's Property Advisory Panel, the UK Heritage Investment Working Group and a member of the editorial panel for the Journal of Regeneration and Renewal.

Chris speaks publicly on a range of issues connected with these roles and writes monthly columns for Planning and for Placemaking Resource. Chris tweets @chrisigloo.

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