

Test Valley

Citizens' Assembly

Urban Design
Principles



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Peter Baird

Urban Design, Associate

Peter Baird is a planner and designer who is passionate about enhancing the built environment through improved sense of place, walkability, and strengthening the role of integrated green and water sustainable design concepts. He advocates the analysis of, and sensitivity to, site context to establish transparent design decisions, improve problem solving, and create open dialogue with the community.

His experience has led to a strong understanding of the physical and space requirements, market realities and the social interactions required to create active streets inspiring campus and urban environments. His experience spans multiple master plans and facility programs across the United States, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand.

Brief theory of Urban Design

WHAT IS

Urban Design

It sits within a **wide range** of built environment professions such as architecture, landscape, quantity surveying, planning.

Sometimes considered the generalist of these fields because it covers a **holistic** set of considerations both physically wide, but also in the different elements it considers.

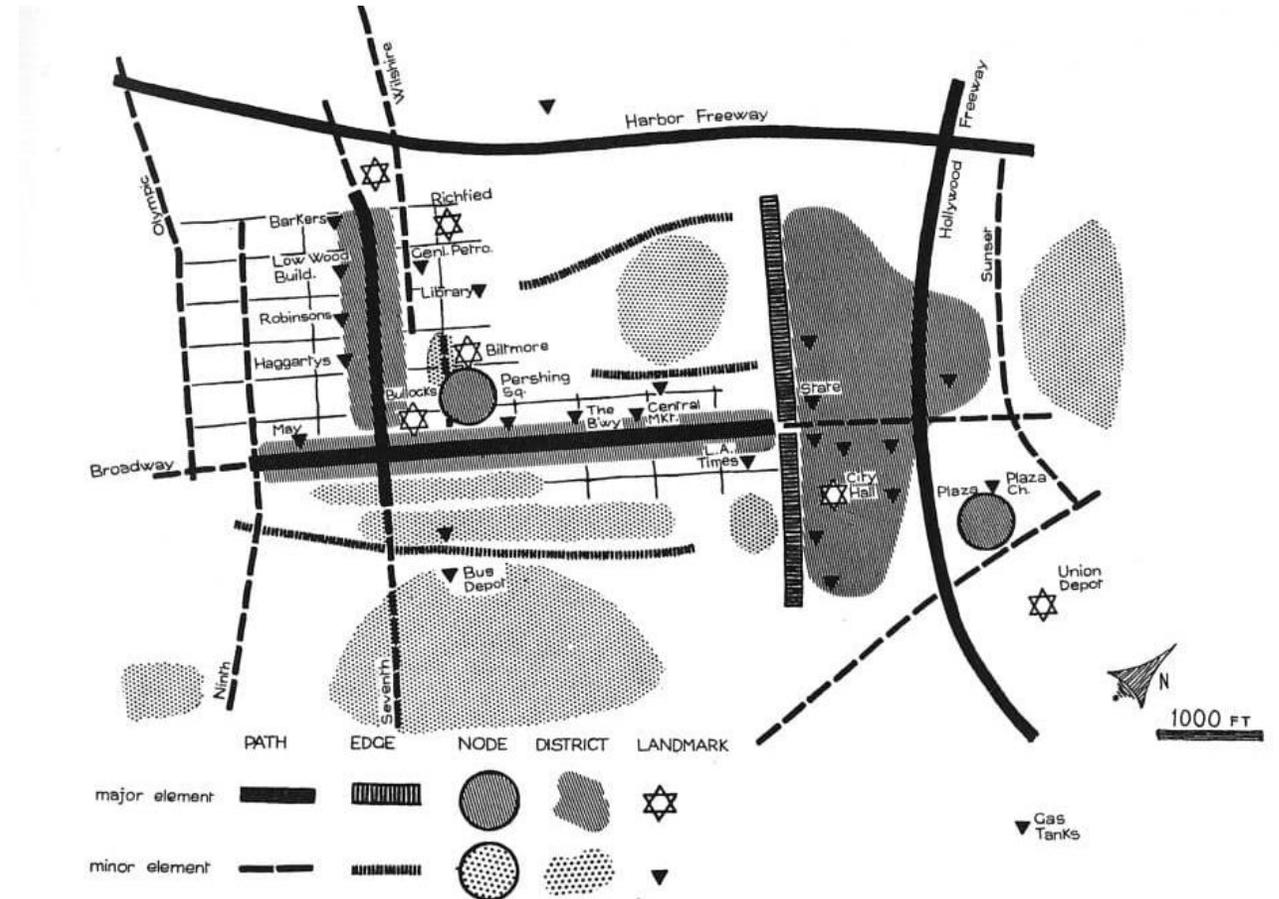


ORIGINS
OF

Urban Design

As a construct urban design emerged from various places in the early to mid 20th century but only really took hold in the 70s to 80s. And much in **response to brutalist architectural ideals** of the 60s.

From **Jane Jacobs** community voice, to **Christopher Alexander** understanding patterns in cities, to the way we picture the city image of the city by **Kevin Lynch**, responsive environments taking an adaptable practical approach to urban design, and more recent **Matt Carmona** leading what you may have head as placemaking - through the **Design Council** and **Place Alliance**.



PURPOSES OF

Urban Design

1. Some **definitions** that you can use to describe the nature of the place when thinking about urban design.
2. Some **questions** and what to look for when your place is doing well or could be better.

It is important to recognise here that while architecture and landscape and public realm design are intrinsically linked to urban design, in its simplest form, it does not prescribe:

- The nature and style of the architecture.
- The type of trees and planting.
- The type of paving stones.



Diagram illustrating the importance of the space between buildings

STRUCTURING ELEMENTS
OF

Urban Design

The prime focus of Urban Design is the structuring elements that **define a place** and underlying the **qualities of our experience**.

Character

Continuity &

Enclosure Quality &

Public Realm Ease

movement

Adaptability

Diversity

Character

[a place with its own identity]

URBAN DESIGN

Character

Successful places are **distinctive** and **memorable**. All the elements of the built environment work together to create a character that reflects the **identity** of the place and its **community**.

When new shops and houses are identical to those in every other town, a place risks weakening its connection with its history and losing the things that make it stand out when competing for investment and skilled people.



Character

- Is the place's distinctive character reflected in the way it is laid out and landscaped?
- Does it respond to and reinforce locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture?
- Do buildings, public spaces, landscaping, street furniture and public artwork together present a coherent image and identity?



Continuity & Enclosure

[a place where public and private are clearly distinguished]

Continuity & Enclosure

Buildings can **define** open spaces by **enclosing** them. The **activities** inside buildings can bring life and activity to the **edges** of public spaces. And buildings can secure **private** open spaces by closing them off and **overlooking** them.

In places where the distinction between public and private open space is blurred, responsibility for looking after open spaces is uncertain and privacy can be compromised. Successful places therefore need a **clear relationship** between the public fronts and private backs of buildings.



Continuity & Enclosure

- Is the street lively? Do people come and go from buildings and are they drawn to the activities inside buildings (retail, for example)?
- Are streets made up of continuous frontages of buildings and open spaces, or are there unintentional gaps that leave the street lifeless or uninteresting?
- Do buildings enclose space and separate private and public areas?
- Do buildings overlook public spaces to improve surveillance and security?
- In residential developments, are back garden fences accessible to intruders or are they closed off by other homes?



Quality & Public Realm

[a place with attractive and well-used outdoor areas]

Quality & Public Realm

Successful places have outdoor spaces that are attractive and **comfortable**. These places will have invested in the public realm as a demonstration of **civic pride** and the **value** attached to **public life**.

Outdoor spaces are important for the health of local people, encouraging sports and healthy **lifestyles**. Public spaces can include parks, allotments and nature reserves, as well as more formal squares and paved areas.

Streets are also part of the **public realm**.

Designed with people in mind, they offer opportunities to meet and **socialise**, bringing **vitality** to a place.



Quality & Public Realm

- Does the place have public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe and uncluttered?
- Does the place provide open space that is easy for everyone to use, including children, disabled and elderly people?
- Does the public realm provide a setting for important buildings or public art?
- Are the choices of materials durable and easy to maintain? Will they weather well over time?



Ease of movement

[a place that is easy to get to move through]

URBAN DESIGN

Ease of movement

A place should always be easy for **everyone** who uses it, whether they are on **foot** or by **bicycle**, car or **public transport**.

Pedestrians in particular should be able to get around **safely** and **conveniently**. Making a place more walkable and accessible will help **reduce car use** and in turn reduce congestion and air pollution and improve public **health**.



Ease of movement

- Are places connected with each other and easy to move through?
- Does the place provide a choice of routes, especially for pedestrians?
- Does it prioritise pedestrians over vehicles?
- Does the layout of the place uses minimise the need to travel and exploit any proximity to public transport?
- Do you need pedestrian subways or bridges to get over or under roads when a crossing at street level would be more convenient?



Legibility

[a place that is easy to navigate]

Legibility

Successful places are **easy to find**. Knowing where you are and how to **get around** is essential to enjoying a place and all its attractions. We intuitively use all sorts of **clues** to **navigate**. The size and type of buildings tell us whether we are on an **important route** or a side street. Buildings, landscape or public **art** can stand out from the everyday fabric of a place, making its location more **memorable**. This is important for people who are **visiting** for the **first time** and want to feel confident and relaxed in order to enjoy a place and all its **attractions**, and not **anxious** about **getting lost**. But it is also very important for people with learning **disabilities**, who do not necessarily find ordinary **signage** helpful.



Legibility

- Does the place have recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around?
- Are landmark buildings visible at street level?
- Do landmarks stand out from their surroundings - and are they memorable?
- Can public art or landmarks help you find your way around?
- Do the scale of the buildings and the design of the street, its furniture, lighting and surfaces tell you about the importance of a route?



Adaptability

[a place that is can change easily]

Adaptability

Places should be able to accommodate **change** over time, create continuity with the past and respond to **new** social, market or environmental **demands**. Climate change means the design of places should be **flexible** enough to be able to **respond** to **changes** in weather **patterns**.

When places do not **include** different ownerships and uses, more effort will be needed to accommodate change in future. It may be best to avoid blocks that have just one use, as they will be difficult to **adapt** in **future**.



Adaptability

- Can buildings be adapted to meet changing social, technological and economic conditions?
- Can existing buildings be adapted to new uses rather than replaced with new buildings?
- Can the design of the place be modified over time to cope with a changing climate?
- Does the design of major developments allow for incremental change instead of wholesale demolition?
- In homes adapt to changing family needs including the needs of people with disabilities?



Diversity

[a place with variety and choice]

URBAN DESIGN

Diversity

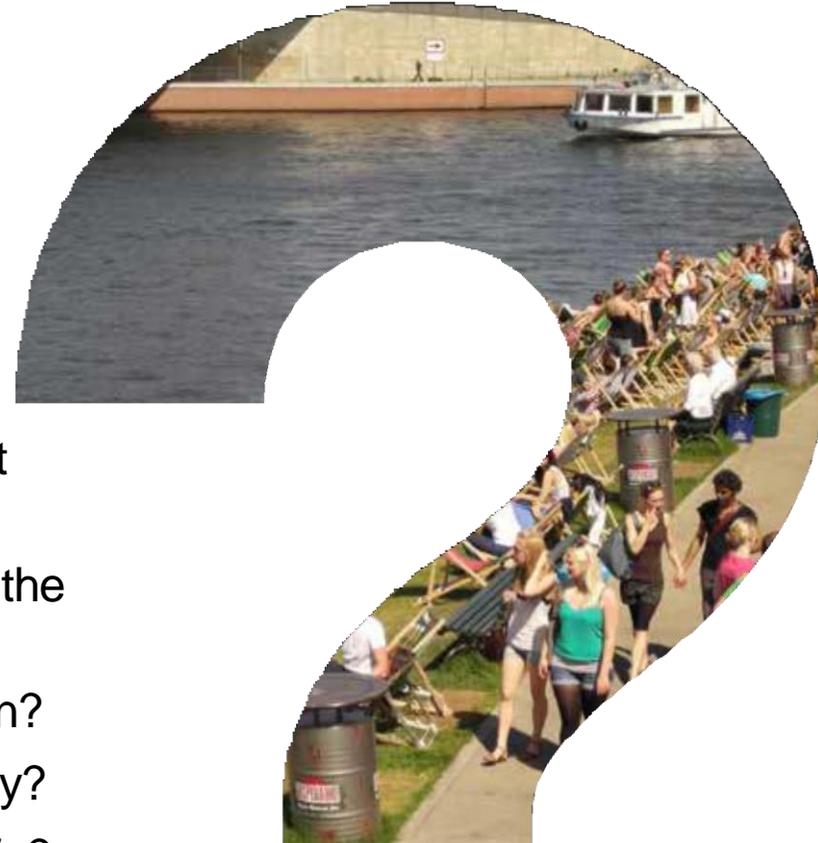
A place is successfully designed if it can be used by as **many** people as possible, regardless of their physical ability or **background**. It needs to be **accessible**.

A range of **different** architecture adds **interest** and can reflect the diversity of the local **community**. **Variety** in landscape treatment and wildlife habitats can help support **biodiversity**.



Diversity

- Can the mix of uses work together to create viable places that respond to local needs?
- Will the ranges of activities and uses of the area contribute to the vitality of the place at different times of the day and week?
- Is there a variety of building forms and architectural expression?
- Can everyone use the place, regardless of their physical ability?
- Does it promote biodiversity and a variety of habitats for wildlife?
- Does it provide people with a choice of housing, shopping, employment and entertainment?
- Does the place reflect the diversity of the local community and its culture?
- Can the development provide new local employment opportunities, for instance with live-work units?





**Thank
You!**