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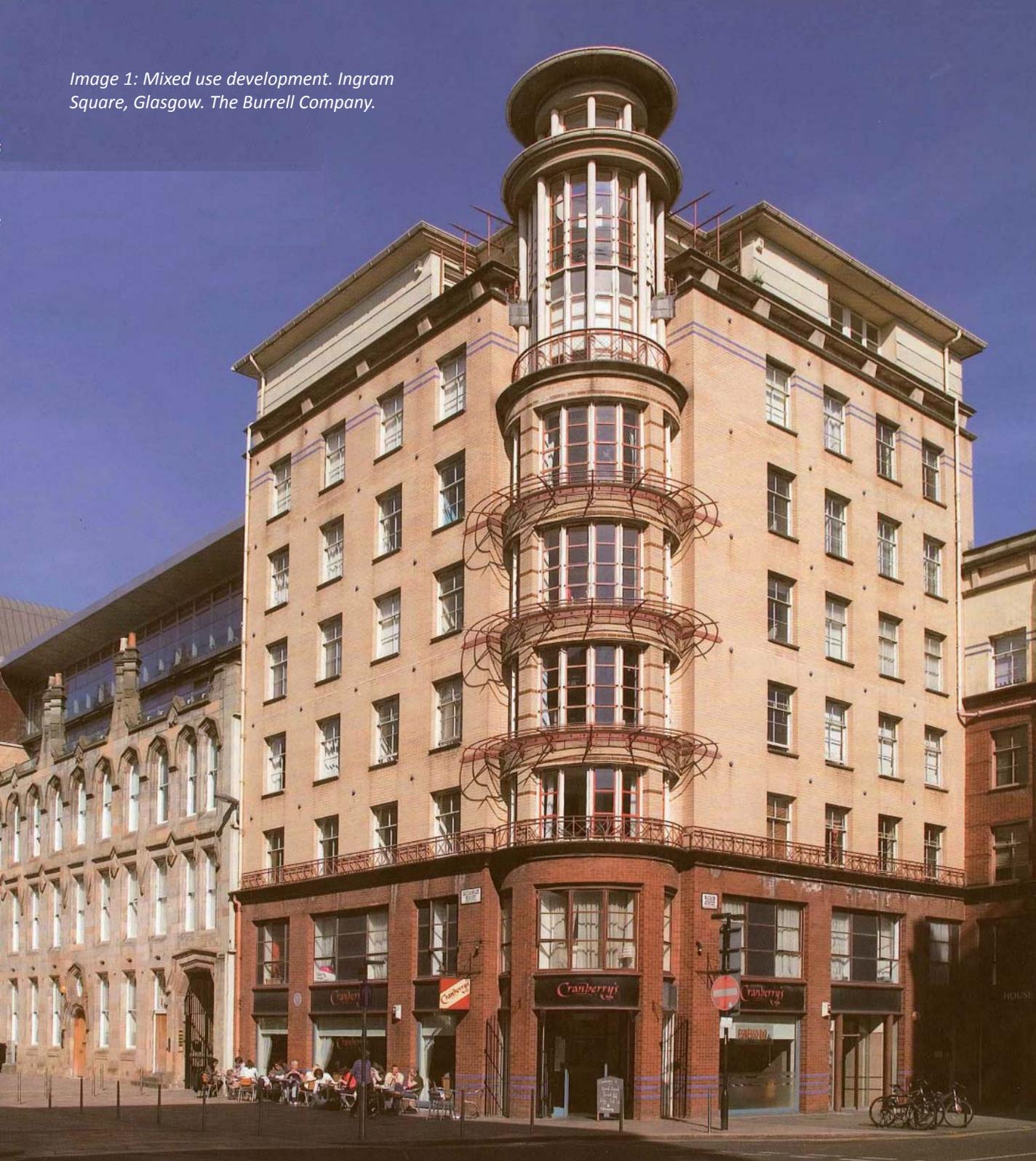
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This report has been produced by A+DS, with Douglas Wheeler Associates, in partnership with the Scottish Centre for Regeneration



**Architecture+DesignScotland**  
Aitheachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

Image 1: Mixed use development. Ingram Square, Glasgow. The Burrell Company.



## INTRODUCTION

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### WHAT ARE LEARNING POINTS?

Learning points share what people have learned from their experience in regeneration – from people working or talking together, or from research into issues and evaluation of what is happening. Learning points can help people and organisations to improve their practice through identifying what works and what doesn't.

The views described in learning points do not mean that the Scottish Government necessarily support them. They simply reflect what has been debated and what those involved at the event considered useful learning and lessons from their perspectives.

### WHAT IS THIS LEARNING POINT ABOUT?

This learning point summarises the learning from the Architecture+Design Scotland/Scottish Centre for Regeneration Learning Event: **Delivering Mixed Use Development** that was held at the Lighthouse, Glasgow on 18 January 2011 and attended by an invited group of twenty people from a range of different disciplines. The disciplines included: planners; urban designers; architects; chartered surveyors; funding specialists; lawyers and an engineer and facilitated by Douglas Wheeler.

# POLICY CONTEXT

Delivering reform of the planning system in Scotland has created a strong foundation of national guidance on mixed-use development. There is already a general acceptance that mixing uses both at the scales of the neighbourhood, street block and individual building can be valuable in producing vibrant, adaptable and pleasant environments. Mixed use can play a positive role in meeting challenges posed by the Climate Change Act by minimising travel, continuing to improve health and wellbeing and support demand for local goods and services.

Clearly mixed use is about making the best of resources and fits well with Scottish Government's National Outcomes for example the intention that 'we live in well-designed sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need'. Mixed use can be focused on **street blocks** which bring together public and private investments at **neighbourhood level** to enable better services for people. At the **plot and individual building scale** it can be about mixing public functions and a range of private functions, retail, commercial, residential and **industrial** uses. In this way mixed use can spread investment risk among different components and uses. Clearly it is a concept which goes beyond simply a shop at ground floor level and residential above. It is a concept which is about creatively looking at physical assets, businesses and services and can deliver a range of different very positive places.

Yet a recurrent theme in the debate about mixed-use development is the suggestion that there exist a series of barriers or obstacles to intervening in urban

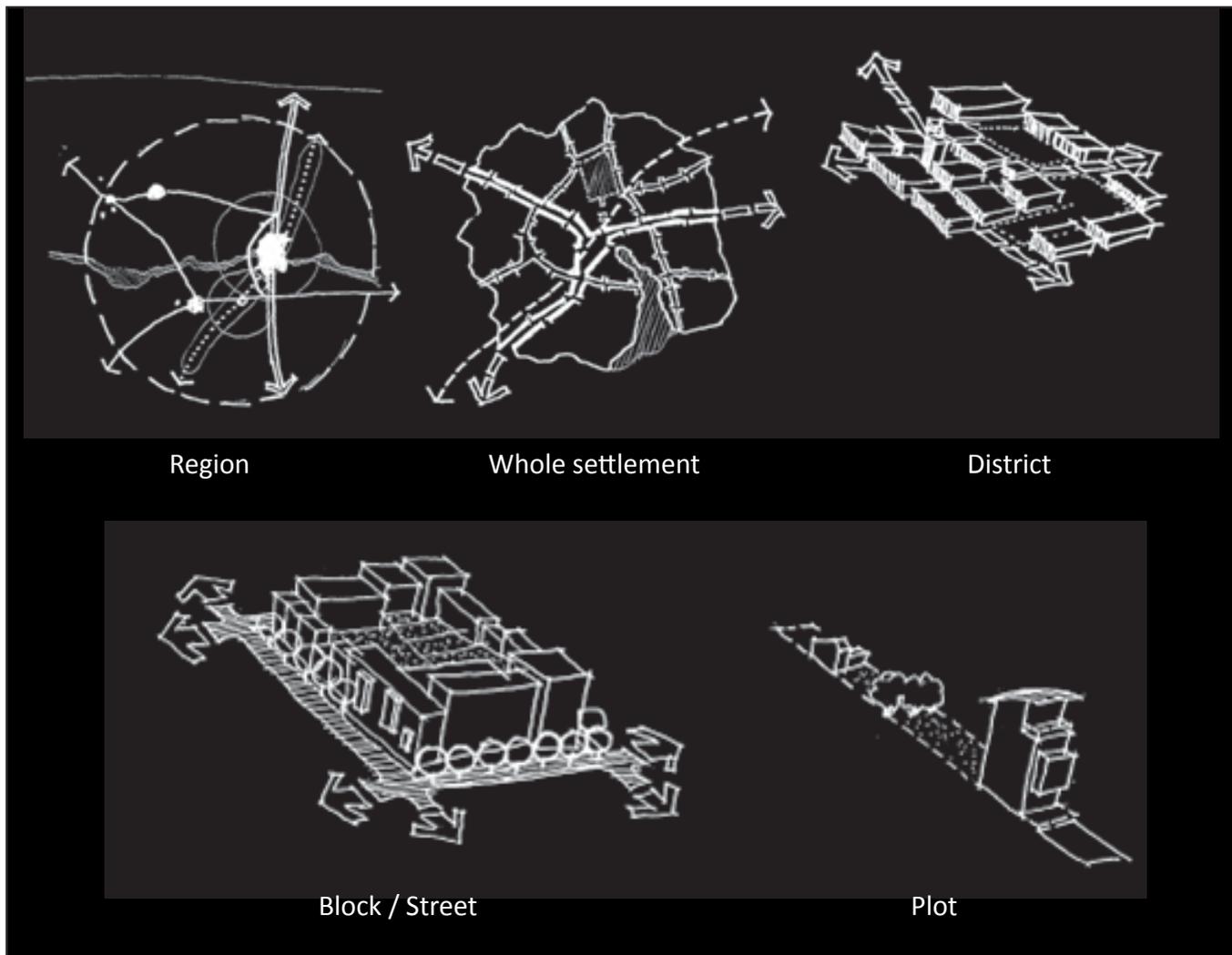


Image 2: Mixed use needs to be considered across all the scales of place

structure and built form which are believed to prevent or inhibit delivery. This learning point identifies some of the barriers to delivering mixed use development

at the **scale of the neighbourhood and street block** and establishes **delivery principles to overcome the specific barriers.**

# BARRIERS AND KEY ISSUES

The following barriers and key issues were identified:

**Variation in Definition:** The term 'mixed use' is very loosely defined and for the avoidance of doubt a working definition of mixed use development is:

- Includes two or more revenue producing uses / activities including housing;
- Includes significant physical and functional integration including real physical connections between uses within a five minute walk; and
- The overall place-making result is a higher density, multi functional environment with vitality and attractiveness.<sup>(1)</sup>

**Local Development Plans: Clarity** Mixed use development should be focused in particular well connected locations that should be identified from capacity and market studies. Therefore Local Development Plans need to be more specific by identifying and justifying the appropriate locations and applying policies with more sophistication. Planning policies aiming to promote mixed use need to be more precise, realistic and again justified by robust market studies.

**Land Ownership:** Land ownership, fiscal and investment boundaries should not lead to separation of elements and uses, rather the aim should be to identify and address the street block and building plots in a comprehensive way so as to take account of the wider place making context and strategic opportunities that arise. The willingness of landowners to see a high quality mixed use place on land they own is crucial.



Image 3: Fonhill Rd underbridge. Mixed use in an urban setting requires collaboration between all the stakeholders who make better places from infrastructure, movement and urban form to finance and delivery

**Market Appraisal & Making Markets:** Evidence from the last two years has demonstrated that development activity fuelled by rising land and property prices and funded via debt finance is not sustainable. Therefore now existing and potential demand as well as the scale of intervention needs to be considered very early in the process. It was appreciated that there are conventional 'backward looking' assessments of the different property markets that are based on historical property data and trends for example prior to the 2008 recession. For some mixed use development a more unconventional approach may also be required where the focus is often on 'making markets' over a longer time period. A longer term view is essential and there are different opinions on 'value' and an appreciation of the opportunity to grow value.

**Collaboration Outside Professional Interests:** As the number of professional disciplines and the consultees within the planning process for mixed use development increases, then there is an increased risk that individual technical 'silos' magnify the significance of minor design issues. This can create a disproportionate impact upon the emerging project and programme. Early collaboration and the ability to get together all interested parties in creative and cross disciplinary discussions are essential. These kinds of discussions can assist in resolving problems quickly and developing a shared understanding of the complex inter-relationships.

# LEARNING POINTS

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## How To Overcome Barriers: Delivery Principles

### **Wider Area Evaluation: Survey: Data Collection & Analysis**

Promoting mixed use at the neighbourhood, street block and plot/building scale require an early detailed analysis that gets ‘under the skin’ of the wider locality and assesses the relationship with say the adjoining town centre and the communities involved. This requires effective area planning (appraising structure, movement, uses, nodes, demographics, businesses base) as well as meaningful engagement with local communities.

### **Evaluate & Lead The Market**

Important to challenge market assumptions particularly if they are based on past assumptions and this is even more difficult now in an ‘era of austerity’. The focus may have to be on ‘making markets’ since over time successful mixed use developments will become self-sustaining and even more attractive in market terms.

### **Assess Feasibility & Deliverability**

It is not practical or desirable for everywhere to be ‘mixed use’ and therefore mixed use development is only appropriate in certain locations that need to be identified and justified with robust place making and market analysis. Assessing feasibility and the ability to deliver the scheme in a realistic timescale is essential. The ideal mixed use locations will promote a higher density, multi functional environment with real physical connections between uses within a five minute walk.

## **Spatial Planning & Placemaking Framework: Seven Key Principles**

- **Good leadership** and a **project champion** is essential to drive forward to establish political/community/business support **around a compelling vision** of a sustainable and well connected place that can cope with change;
- Need a high level strategic **coordinating spatial/place making framework** to shape the kind of **quality places people want to use**. This would include inherited structures/routes and ‘desire lines’, **infrastructure** like streets, spaces, community facilities, **blocks, plots and buildings**, some lower value uses and phases.
- A **simple diagram** to capture the spatial and placemaking principles can help explain the thinking to a wider audience;
- **As a next stage prepare a development brief/framework** at a more detailed scale (1:2000) to include clear principles but one that is adaptable and can accommodate change;
- Look to **establish plots/building blocks** at the appropriate scale (1:2000);
- **Good public realm design** can demonstrate how to organise and locate many different uses and can highlight the advantages of mixed use and the disadvantages of keeping uses separate;
- Mixed use developments need to be designed for **flexibility of function over time** and to enable this kind of temporal flexibility the built fabric needs to be robust and adaptable, with the **critical technical design factors** being; structure, services strategy, sound insulation, floor plan depth and section heights.

## **Marketing & Promotion**

Marketing a mixed use development needs to begin early in the development process with a **strategy for the overall project highlighting synergies** and the individual components but also needs to evolve as the project progresses. The challenge is to devise an approach that balances the need to promote the project as a whole as well as the individual components.

## **Management & Maintenance**

Proactive management ensures that the quality of the mixed use place is maintained and continually enhanced so that it remains a vibrant, pleasant and sustainable environment and as a result most property values increase. There are often some difficulties in reconciling **different building regulations and environmental health requirements** within a mixed use development. Addressing these issues at the early development framework stage through ‘cross disciplinary design team’ discussions is crucial. As a result of the more **intensive use and extended use patterns, regular and high quality maintenance is even more important** with mixed use development.

## WHAT NEXT?

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### What needs further exploration?

**Policy:** For mixed use development, planning in the traditional land use sense is not flexible enough and still tends to encourage fixed proportions of single uses: explore introducing a new planning designation in the form of a 'flexible' land use category: presumption in favour of a good idea as opposed to presumption in favour of retail/shops

**Practice:** The Scottish Government and the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) are working closely with a number of local authorities to deliver the National Housing Trust initiative (NHT). The NHT will give councils an additional tool to help make more new affordable homes available for below market rent in areas where there is not enough affordable housing to meet current demand. Is the focus only on housing too narrow?

**Research:** The Building (Scotland) Amendment Regulations may have made for example sound/thermal insulation more onerous for mixed use and therefore resulted in additional costs. Should these unintended consequences be researched further?

### Next Steps

The issues identified at this event will form part of a programme for follow up events to provide support and help people to exchange information and ideas about delivering mixed use development. If you would like to find out more contact [Diarmaid.lawlor@ads.org.uk](mailto:Diarmaid.lawlor@ads.org.uk), [Geraldine.mcateer@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Geraldine.mcateer@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) or view [www.douglaswheelerassociates.com](http://www.douglaswheelerassociates.com)

## FIND OUT MORE

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### Scottish Centre for Regeneration

This document is published by the Scottish Centre for Regeneration, which is part of the Scottish Government. We support our public, private and voluntary sector delivery partners to become more effective at:

- regenerating communities and tackling poverty
- developing more successful town centres and local high streets
- creating and managing mixed and sustainable communities
- making housing more energy efficient
- managing housing more efficiently and effectively

We do this through:

- coordinating learning networks which bring people together to identify the challenges they face and to support them to tackle these through events, networking and capacity building programmes
- identifying and sharing innovation and practice through publishing documents detailing examples of projects and programmes and highlighting lessons learned
- developing partnerships with key players in the housing and regeneration sector to ensure that our activities meet their needs and support their work

Scottish Centre for Regeneration, Scottish Government, Highlander House, 58 Waterloo Street, Glasgow, G2 7DA

Tel: 0141 271 3736

Email: [contactscr@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:contactscr@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

Website: [www.partnersinregeneration.com](http://www.partnersinregeneration.com)

The views expressed in case studies are not necessarily shared by the Scottish Centre for Regeneration or the Scottish Government.

### References

(1) Scottish Government Directorate for the Built Environment research on '**Barriers to Delivering Mixed Use Development**' by Douglas Wheeler Associates, With Ann Flint Associates, Austin-Smith: Lord, Edinburgh College of Art (School of Architecture-ScotMark)