

'OPEN SOURCE' PLACE-MAKING

A COLLECTIVE APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES IN AN AGE OF BIG SOCIETY, DIGITAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Author — David Barrie
September 2010

David Barrie & Associates
davidbarrie.typepad.com

- project design & delivery
- creative/economic planning
- public involvement
- social ventures

david@davidbarrie.net

This essay was commissioned by [Architecture + Design Scotland](#), Scotland's national champion for good architecture, design and planning in the built environment.

There is a growing appetite in industrialised countries for enterprises that merge profit-making with morality and a dramatic rise in the use of digital online technology for social networking.

The two trends highlight an increasing attachment to social value in business and thirst for a new social layer to everyday life. They mark a change in the way in which we choose to organize and live our lives, with implications for for-profit and non-profit businesses alike.

The two trends recommend a new emphasis in urban policy and planning towards embracing 'citizen demand', aggregating and using it to make places that unfold over time, through programmes of low-cost capital investment.

They suggest that there's value in taking a more interactive approach to the design and development of our cities, one geared to multiple groups, relationships, entrepreneurial networks and modular use of sites.

Think of it as 'venture urbanism'. Call it 'open source' place-making.

THE RISE OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Throughout the world, social enterprise is on the rise. Dubbed the new 'fourth sector', this hybrid form of for-profit/non-profit business is forecast to have a global value of over £300bn-a-year within 5-10 years.¹ Specialist social enterprise financial institutions like Charity Bank and Triodos report levels of lending in the first half of 2010 equivalent to all of 2009.² This is against a backdrop of investment by Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) Funds in the UK: an estimated £764bn.³

The political message of the new Coalition Government in the UK is to *put more power and opportunity into people's hands*, in part by supporting co-operatives, charities and social enterprises; and by Autumn 2010, a framework has emerged for this that features the rolling back of regional government, formation of a Big Society Bank, funding support for community organizing and promotion of the idea of Open Source Planning.⁴

Upward trends in obesity, chronic disease and demographic ageing in the industrial countries have long drawn attention to the fact that the biggest sectors of Western economies by 2020, both by value and employment, will not be cars, ships, steel, computer manufacturing or personal finance but the social sectors of health, education and care.⁵

The rise of social investment, the policy programme known as 'Big Society' and cuts in expenditure on public management seek to enhance the role of social business in the provision of these services in the UK.

1 — 'Open source' place-making

If social enterprise is to assume a greater role in the supply of public goods and services, how might it change the way in which we deliver a key public service: the built environment?

When linked with the rise of the internet as a model for doing business, a modal shift in demand to localism in response to climate change and increasing awareness of the value of community to sustainable development, a form of business that promotes people, moral resource and alternative forms of shareholder value starts to look way more than just ‘flavour of the month’.

If social enterprise is to assume a greater role in the supply of public goods and services, how might it change the way in which we deliver a key public service: the built environment?

AN ARMY OF NEW ENTREPRENEURS

As social enterprise has grown around the world, an army of new entrepreneurs has amassed in the shadows of the ‘creative class’ of professionals, knowledge workers and ‘Bobos’ championed by real estate developers and city administrators in their bid to turn around post-industrial cities.⁶

This is an army that is committed to what Jerr Boschee, President and CEO of the Social Enterprise Alliance in the United States calls *merging the profit motive and moral imperative* – and they are foot-soldiers to a cause that is an hybrid of capitalism and ethics, rather than economic clustering, Richard Florida’s ‘Gay Index’ or the capacity of culture, principally the visual arts and the excess capital that follows it, to re-purpose redundant urban environment.⁷

According to Boschee, an early explosion of activity took place across the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, *as entrepreneurs, small businesses and major corporations discovered social markets and started social enterprises*, and they were inspired by isolated incidents of private sector corporations addressing social need:

*They began to run adult day-care centres; educational programs for small children, high-school drop-outs, and adult students; low-cost housing projects; vocational training and job-placement efforts; home-care services for the disabled and elderly; hospice care; outpatient mental-health and rehabilitation services; prisons; wind farms; psychiatric and substance-abuse centres; and dozens of other businesses that delivered products and services previously provided by non-profits or government agencies.*⁸

The response of agencies in the United States at the time was to push more of the responsibility for meeting social needs on to the non-profit sector, while simultaneously slashing federal and state funding for human services.

In the UK, a country with a powerful tradition of mutualism and state provision but weak culture of philanthropy, a similar but less rapid and individuated trend has taken place. In recent times, it has witnessed the trebling in value of the charities sector, the rise of development trusts to support regeneration and renewal – for example, the Royds Community Association – social enterprise provision of social care – for example, Turning Point – the birth of social businesses such as the Big Issue, ethical attractions such as the Eden Project and the fostering of devolved neighbourhood and community schemes by municipal authorities.⁹

Social entrepreneurs such as John Bird, founder of the Big Issue and Jamie Oliver, co-founder of the Fifteen chain of training restaurants have become lions of popular culture – with an emphasis upon them as charismatics, rather than CEOs like Geoffrey Canada of Harlem Children’s Zone in the United States.¹⁰

Ideas for social business grown in the UK have been successfully exported abroad – with versions of the Big Issue now available in nine countries around the world and The Hub, *a multi-sited incubator for social innovation*, in twelve.¹¹

In parallel with growing numbers of new social businesses in the UK, there has been a growing influence of ‘citizen-driven partnership’ as an alternative to the central design and delivery of governmental services.¹²

Certain policy thinkers have had a key influence upon this, such as Professor Stephen Goldsmith at Harvard Kennedy School, sociologist Amitai Etzioni, economist Richard Thaler, David Halpern of the Institute for Government, Geoff Mulgan of the Young Foundation and writer Charles Leadbeater.¹³

Initiatives that emphasise community involvement have captured the public imagination, such as Time Banking UK and The Big Lunch.¹⁴

Public institutions and Government have been impressed by the participation of people in the social sector in initiatives such as the Balsall Heath Forum, Southwark Circle, Teach First, NHS Choices and the St Giles Trust.¹⁵

With a persistent lack of trust in politics, social problems, inequality and unprecedented challenges to public finance, these initiatives and others have impressed strategists in public policy and emphasised the value of user-driven and user-focussed involvement as forces for change.

This has been accompanied by an ideological shift in political culture away from social security to ‘social productivity’: a trend emphasised by the new Coalition Government and its proposals to limit benefits, implement ‘open source’ planning, introduce ‘social income bonds’, support public sector co-operatives, boost volunteering and turn the ‘civil service’ in to the ‘civic service’.¹⁶

The rise of social enterprise and ‘social productivity’ has important implications for regeneration and renewal in the UK

The rise of social enterprise and ‘social productivity’ has important implications for regeneration and renewal in the UK. They prioritise human relationships, transactions of social, not just commercial value and shift the narrative of renewal from the provision of space to services, with sites acting as places that enable change, rather than dictate them via a masterplan.¹⁷

The rise of social enterprise and ‘social productivity’ presses for a new narrative in urban development; but before opening up this story, there’s a parallel phenomenon in contemporary culture that needs to be considered.

THE INTERNET AND RISE OF THE ‘RELATIONSHIP ECONOMY’

The appetite is insatiable just now for using the internet for social networking and as a tool for creating fertile communities and new entrepreneurial networks.

At present, there are 51m users of the internet in the UK – 82% of the population. One in every four and a half minutes spent by people online is on social networks and blog sites. In July 2010, the social networking website Facebook passed its 500 millionth user – 24.2m in the UK. Five of the ten fastest-growing online brands over the last year in the UK, in terms of unique audience, relate to social and professional networking. A new member joins the business-orientated site LinkedIn approximately every second.¹⁸

the rise of online social networking looks set to change the value we attach to physical place

This data suggests that people increasingly want a layer of information on top of daily life and enjoy the ‘mass mingling’ offered by the internet. They like to connect, keep tabs on one another and socialize online.¹⁹

Historically, the idea of ‘what makes a successful place’ has been a mixture of physical sociability, uses and activities, access and linkages, comfort and image – and many of these values still hold true. It is these values that drive appreciation of traditional neighbourhood design and encourage people to flock to new urban development, such as Chicago’s Millennium Park or London’s South Bank.²⁰

Historically, it has been social networks that have made places – be it the first settlers of the Delaware Valley, the creation of new communities in the East End of London, the jewellery manufacturers of Birmingham or digital media producers who have settled around Old Street, London – winning a grim roundabout the name ‘Silicon Roundabout’!²¹

However, the rise of online social networking looks set to change the value we attach to physical place – and forge a new requirement that is more adaptive and flexible than before.

In online social networks, people have multiple independent groups of friends, often linked to family, ‘lifestage’, shared experience and hobbies. Temporary ties are common-place. People rely upon the recommendation of ‘friends’ to make decisions – and historically, these are drivers of human association with public space and it has been the physical public realm that has made a market in these relations.²²

Increasingly, minds copy the workings of the Internet and flit sharply from one idea to another, addicted to the breadth of everything, rather than the depth of something – what cultural critic Peter Apsden has called the ‘hyperlink syndrome’ and others have cast at the centre of ‘digital swarming’. This is at odds with one of the traditional functions of places and place-making: to create fixed opportunities for human interactions and narrative.²³

What’s more, analysis of the consumption of news media on the Net suggests that people ‘modal switch’ from platform-to-platform – from Twitter, to Facebook, to BBC News, to Four Square – underlining that they are no longer loyal to the platform, application, delivery system or brand but the need for data and experience. They ‘follow the money’ and assemble and re-assemble the content they require, rather than react to that which is broadcast to them.²⁴

All of this points to a different structure and content of human relations and interaction. As internet guru Clay Shirky says:

Instead of having one company own and operate the whole system, the internet is just a set of agreements about how to move data between two points. Anyone who abides by these agreements, from an individual working from a mobile telephone to a huge company, can be a full-fledged member of the network.²⁵

An outcome of these developments is to challenge the view of humanity in the information age as a lumpen mass of inert ‘couch-potatoes’ – and if you look at the scale and rate of public participation in online social networks and volume of material being shared, you see people as creative animals hell bent on combining the production and the sharing of content.²⁶

In this context, physical places start to look like either passing scenery or locations that host uses that act as applications that enable people to fulfil a task.

MAKING PLACES THAT ARE SOCIAL

There is nothing new about designing places that embrace the sociability and social value of business or human relations. They have been at the centre of designing effective cities and communities since Athenian times.

There has also been no shortage of effort invested around the world in promoting the value of making the most of citizen's potential, as sustainability, social return on investment and 'co-production' have risen up the agenda of policy 'mavens' and professionals working in the built environment.²⁷

However, the making of places that explicitly integrate the unfolding development of social ventures or could be described as *living rooms for a networked society* has been thin on the ground – no doubt because of the risks associated with social enterprise paying rent, the failure to find a profitable operating model for municipal wi-fi, the perception of social business as a means of addressing market failure, rather than creating wealth, and the obsession of the built environment sector with designing frameworks for economic development, rather than adaptive, flexible stages for entrepreneurial networks and fertile communities to grow.²⁸

There have been many examples of citizen-backed development in the UK that have supported community enterprise – and they're more than impressive

There have been many examples of citizen-backed development in the UK that have supported community enterprise – and they're more than impressive. In 1977, after a real estate developer announced plans to build on a site in Coin Street, London, the Coin Street Action Group was formed to campaign against them. In time, a social enterprise and development trust was started, acquired the freehold to the site and has since created a thriving mixed-use neighbourhood, featuring homes, facilities, providing childcare and enterprise support programmes.²⁹

Coin Street Community Builders has formed the South Bank Employers' Group, bringing together local employers such as Shell, IBM and the local hospital. The group have contributed to funds to improve the local public realm and the organization has also realized one of its key objectives: grown its land assets to win residents direct access to the boardwalk, adjacent to the River Thames.³⁰

In 1971, the North Kensington Amenity Trust was born out of a series of citizens' concerns for highways development, lack of amenities and derelict land in West London. Now known as the Westway Development Trust, the organization has an asset base of over £18m, runs sports, health and fitness facilities and has expanded to offer subsidized workspace for charities and businesses.³¹

In 2004, a group of residents in Neilston in the central lowlands of Scotland called a public meeting to suggest the formation of a new village group to press for improvement of the area. They have since founded an initiative called 'Space to Live' and three years on, the Neilston Development Trust has acquired a redundant local bank for community use and proposed the joint venture development of a wind farm to serve the village. What's more, a new 'Town Charter' expresses a vision to turn an historic mill in to a business centre and create a village-wide wi-fi 'hotspot'.³²

There are also several examples in the UK of themed developments that emphasise the social value of the public realm and building native communities.

In 2006, Jonathan Robinson and a group of entrepreneurs opened The Hub in Kings Cross, London: the conversion of an historic building in to a business workspace that seeks to foster social entrepreneurship and new networks of entrepreneurs through rentalisation of office space and the provision of collaborative spaces, all in the context of *non-polished design*.³³

Until its liquidation earlier this year, the Sherwood Energy Village in Ollerton, East Midlands operated as an Industrial and Provident Society and turned a 36ha former colliery site in to a facility offering housing, offices, workspace, open spaces and a bistro.³⁴

In Glasgow, there is the Maryhill Burgh Halls development, a modern public hall, new community studio and business units that is linked to the adjacent development by Glasgow City Council of a new swimming pool and leisure facility – all designed to act as a ‘community hub’.³⁵

There is also the Molendinar Park Housing Association – recent winner of an RIBA Award for the design of the Moore Street Housing Development in the East End of the city of Glasgow – with its innovative approach to allocations in which one third of residents are required to be local, one third ‘priority’ and the final third are individuals or families who can bring something of benefit to the area.³⁶

Around the world, there have also been several area-based initiatives that through concerted social, economic and cultural action have sought to change places – and done it in a way that starts to mirror the dispersed association and innovation of the internet.

Recent examples include the development by a public-private partnership of a former freight line in the West Side of Manhattan in to a park called the High Line. Since the first phase opened in June 2009, the park has been a spectacular success, spawning plans for copies in Detroit, Philadelphia and Chicago and fuelling a decision by the Whitney Museum of American Art to locate a new satellite institution adjacent to its tracks.³⁷

In London, through a hydra-headed programme of improvement of public spaces, support for community activity and investment in social enterprise, the Shoreditch Trust charity has been instrumental to realising the economic regeneration of the areas of Shoreditch, Hoxton and Clerkenwell, dramatically shifting the focus of creative enterprise in London from the West to the East of the city.³⁸

Similar mixed-use, mixed-purpose, public/private initiatives have taken place in The Wimby! Project (Hooglviet, Netherlands), Glasgow 1999 (Glasgow, Scotland), Renew Newcastle (Newcastle, New South Wales), Making Space in Dalston (London Borough of Hackney, London), The Castleford Project (West Yorkshire) and in the work of organisations such as the Madison Square Park Conservancy (New York) and Balsall Heath Forum (Balsall Heath, Birmingham).³⁹

All of these approaches to urban development have sought to trigger or build networks of people and spaces, linking them in such a way as to provoke new civic or social enterprise and aggregate both physical assets and ‘social capital’.

All of these initiatives have tended to require a ‘nudge’ to activate and the ‘do or die’ leadership of a civic entrepreneur.

However, they remain at the fringe of urban development: marginalized as maverick curiosities associated with mixed-use and medium density settlement, rather than models of development applicable to the millions of hectares given over to the building of houses or industrial estates.

Around the world, there have also been several area-based initiatives that through concerted social, economic and cultural action have sought to change places – and done it in a way that starts to mirror the dispersed association and innovation of the internet

Their development ethos also tends to hard-wire public use, bearing little relation to the way in which our connected age aggregates and disaggregates engagement over time – what Jonathan Zittran, Professor of Law at Harvard University calls the *generosity* of the internet and its capacity to *produce unanticipated change through unfiltered contributions from broad and varied audiences*.⁴⁰

DEVELOPMENT NEEDS A NEW AGENDA

The traditional approach of urban regeneration and renewal in the UK is to treat development and procurement of the public realm like a war game

The traditional approach of urban regeneration and renewal in the UK is to treat development and procurement of the public realm like a war game

Conventionally, tectonic (and titanic) plates of funding from central Government have been manoeuvred in to position and a process of master planning has followed. Development frameworks, spatial, business, action, entry and exit plans have been drawn up. Experts and institutions have come together and a document trail created that establishes priorities, provenances, value for money and return on investment.⁴¹

On one level, this is simply effective and diligent professionalism and business planning – and there is nothing wrong in that. But in next to no time, regeneration has tended to become a complex bureaucratic process, a closed system of proposal, appraisal, planning, revised planning and *Cobra*-style discussions and negotiations away from the limelight.

This has been an approach that engenders caution, ‘analysis paralysis’, opaque external communications and an asymmetry of information between producer and audience that has created mistrust and done little to recruit, sustain and evolve momentum.

This is also a ‘closed circuit’: the direct opposite of the open systems ethos that drives our age, the effective research and development of modern corporations and the crowd-sourcing of ideas, relationships and taste that is monetised online.⁴²

This is a problem.

For if the purpose of urban renewal is to increase prosperity, this relies upon a contract of trust between resident, worker, occupier, tenant and the service provider, be they in the public or private sectors.

If the purpose of renewal is to uplift values, there needs to be a contract between diverse transactional parties, be it the retailer and consumer, investor and resident community or employers and workforce.

If the purpose of renewal is to enable the creation of more sustainable, resource-rich communities, our towns and cities need to become, to quote writer Herbert Girardet, *energy- and resource-efficient, people-friendly, and culturally rich, with active democracies assuring the best uses of human energies*.⁴³

And if a key value in economic uplift is innovation, this standard procedure supports protectionism and exclusivity, rather than an open and inclusive programme of community-building, institutional re-alignment and the mobilization and attraction of effective alliances between small organisations, enterprises and big organisations that makes innovation take place and grow.⁴⁴

As people find increasing meaning in maintaining multiple relationships in multiple spaces online, follow ‘flows’ of information rather than single sources and ‘modal switch’ between creating and sharing experiences and if writer Kevin Kelly is right when he says that in the information age, ‘*Wherever attention flows, money will follow*’, this standard procedure, predicated on control, looks destined for nuclear winter.⁴⁵

Economic and social change suggests that mindsets need to loosen and urban development assume a more open, adaptable and flexible approach to places

EMBRACING THE NEW SOCIAL AND NET ECONOMY

Economic and social change suggests that mindsets need to loosen and urban development assume a more open, adaptable and flexible approach to places.

The rise of partnership working, public-private partnerships and local asset-backed vehicles may have established an ethos of collaborative working.

Privatization and outsourcing of public services, the rise of ‘joined-up’ government, consumer choice and technological innovation may have started to shift hierarchical organisation of government to more networked forms of public management.

The rise of ‘place’ as an organizing principle of local government and city planning may acknowledge that the built environment is more than just the organisation of the interests of land-owners and users but a web of experiences and physical, social, cultural and financial relationships.

Government may emphasise community engagement, the Third Sector, democratic governance and inclusive economics as having a role in the provision of public services, including the built environment.

Social and cultural entrepreneurs may increasingly have a seat at the table of urban renewal, alongside landowners, speculators, planners and architects; bringing to urban renewal a new cast of characters who have an acute, populist mindset and combine skills in enterprise, thought leadership, stakeholder management and project delivery.

The rise of online social media may also have revealed a consumer appetite for informal, purposeful and semi-visible public networks.

But how to bring the social economy and internet model of relationships to the centre of the story of renewal and the way in which we generate value from land?

Two initiatives in Glasgow and London may hold useful clues.

SPEIRS LOCKS, GLASGOW

Speirs Locks is a development site close to the city centre of Glasgow, Scotland.⁴⁶

The 140,000 sq m. site is being brought forward for development by a joint-venture agreement between property developer ISIS Waterside Regeneration and Glasgow City Council, known as the Glasgow Canal Regeneration Partnership.⁴⁷

At present, the site is used for a variety of purposes.

It is home to support services of the Scottish Opera, rehearsal spaces for the National Theatre of Scotland and a Chinese supermarket.⁴⁸

A building on site is being refurbished as a 'creative campus' for the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama, featuring a new dance school for young people.⁴⁹

A factory space that once produced adhesives has been refurbished as a temporary space for the exhibition of art and sculpture – to be followed soon by the possible conversion of a Whisky Bond warehouse in to creative studios.

The site features a canal – part of the Glasgow branch of the Forth and Clyde – canal-side paths, spaces and several large and pocket plots of empty land.

The promoters of the site aspire to it becoming a world-class creative and 'cultural quarter' for Glasgow – a mixed use development, inspired by the creative and cultural industries that will become one of Europe's most active and energetic centres of culture, creativity and innovation.

The current architectural masterplan for Speirs Locks identifies a mix of uses of the site for private and public housing, commercial, cultural, community and leisure.⁵⁰

The excitement of Speirs Locks in Glasgow is its scale, location and the commitment of its developers and tenants to innovation and sustainable development. They want to foster popular enjoyment and use of the site, and the long tradition of creative excellence in Glasgow – home to Travis, Franz Ferdinand, architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh, novelist James Kelman, Sir Alex Ferguson, European Capital of Culture and the Commonwealth Games in 2014.

As part of the Scottish Government's commitment to the development of sustainable communities, a programme of work was commissioned and carried out in Spring 2010 that was designed to address two key questions:

- How can Speirs Locks become a 'beacon' for the creative and cultural sectors, neighbourhoods and other communities in Glasgow?
- What small things might be implemented in the area in the coming years that would make a big difference to the sustainable development of the social and creative economy of the city?⁵¹

The programme resulted in a place-making plan for the site that was less about war-gaming and more about incremental occupation, less about shopping the creative classes and more about cultivating the site as a harbinger of a new age of social economy – a programme of organic development that takes an informal, 'open source' approach to occupation, enterprise and the building of collective identity.^{52 53}

The plan for Speirs Locks seeks to build upon the activity of its existing tenants and turn the site in to a place about 'making' and 'doing': the production of goods and services that have social and creative value, a place for new social businesses, manufacturing workshops and new community enterprise.⁵⁴

The plan recommends that across three years, a sequence of connected social, economic and environmental activities are implemented that 'make a market' for settlement of the area, build its attractiveness and over time develop the capacity and will of certain 'buyers' to commit to and occupy the site.

The excitement of Speirs Locks in Glasgow is its scale, location and the commitment of its developers and tenants to innovation and sustainable development

The proposed activities flow through three channels of work:

- Channel 1: Strategic entrepreneurship
- Channel 2: Social entrepreneurship
- Channel 3: Community entrepreneurship

And eight strands of action:

- Action 1: Form a 'Speirs Locks Cultural Improvement District'⁵⁵
- Action 2: Review the administrative contexts of the site⁵⁶
- Action 3: Turn a discussed adhesives factory in to a low-cost, shared workspace
- Action 4: Create workshops to the rear of this space and promote use of the Whisky warehouse as a creative space
- Action 5: Support urban agriculture in leftover spaces
- Action 6: Open up existing buildings on site through programmes of community education and involvement
- Action 7: Create and run a public use and entertainment programme
- Action 8: Create community spaces behind built structures on the site

The plan recommends management of the programme by a curator or creative director – what Professor Stephen Goldsmith of Harvard Kennedy School has called a 'network integrator'.⁵⁷

It is suggested that design and delivery of the programme is sub-contracted to voluntary, Third and creative organisations and over time governance is devolved fully to these parties.

All activities are to be financed on the basis of a combination of private funding, commercial funding (from value uplift pot and ticketing sales), gift, exchange, 'sweat equity', donations and public sector grant.

Rather than create facilities for fixed long-term occupation, Speirs Locks would be treated as a utility, made available to communities – creative, social and business – to populate, create and re-purpose. Over time, this incremental occupation by different actors will mobilise demand and create a narrative and personality for the place.

In effect, the plan for Speirs Locks in Glasgow recommends that the property owner grants permission to people and organisations to do things on site but acts like a theatrical manager – a creative impresario who aggregates uses and talents to seed the creation of a new neighbourhood.

the plan for Speirs Locks in Glasgow recommends that the property owner grants permission to people and organisations to do things on site but acts like a theatrical manager

'OPEN SOURCE' PLACE-MAKING

The programme for Speirs Locks is designed to maximize opportunities for self-organization and interactive use of the site. Call it 'open source' place-making.

In terms of social economy, the programme prioritises the re-use of existing spaces, the origination of new uses that support new business – social business in particular – and allows 'ad-hoc' occupation. Key features include creating opportunities for co-operative management of the site and the development of a non-currency-based market in which tenants can exchange goods and services for mutual benefit.^{58 59}

In many ways, the design of the programme is inspired by how people use and interact with the internet, seeing the physical space as a form of 'sovereign real estate', events as 'transient interrupts' and maximizing opportunities for users to make their own spaces and relationships on site through self-build, casual occupation and trading systems between tenants.

The programme provides prospective users and the wider public with eight strands of action, interfaces that trigger engagement with the site and successive opportunities to shape its further development and self-organize.

The theme of 'doing' and 'making' is designed to foster over time an idiomatic understanding of the use of the site.⁶⁰

By designing occupation of the site in this more open-ended, emergent way – as a catalyst to making markets, rather than battle plans – there are several key questions:

Can the landowner realise more value from their investment?

Can the formation of new businesses and the development of capacity that is implicit in this approach generate increased values?⁶¹

Can this approach offer the real estate developer an opportunity to capture value not just from the site but also land beyond its boundary, generating revenue from equity investment in the activity of tenants in the wider economy?⁶²

Could a more open-source approach to development heighten values, so long as the landowner could protect certain key assets – more valuable tracts of land?

Many in the development sector might hesitate at the thought of the private sector performing this function – as urban charismatic, not just speculator. However, take a look at one example of innovative social enterprise in the UK just now and you see not just a different form of corporate entity but a phenomenon that generates and interfaces with consumer markets, spaces and experiences in a totally different way.

Could a more open-source approach to development heighten values, so long as the landowner could protect certain key assets – more valuable tracts of land?

THE PEOPLE'S SUPERMARKET

The issue of health inequality is one of the most pressing social challenges in the UK. Diet-related ill health is responsible for about 10 per cent of deaths in the UK and estimated to cost the National Health Service some £6 billion every year. Around 1.4m people in UK are diagnosed diabetic and it is estimated that 30,000 deaths a year are related to obesity.⁶³

It is generally accepted that food poverty demands a policy offensive on several fronts – and beyond education. Bias in urban planning towards out-of-town shopping, the growth of premium-priced, mercantilist forms of agricultural production and a national food distribution network that concentrates on points of sale and contributes to the creation of 'food deserts' in cities need to be addressed.⁶⁴

At the same time, our towns and cities are pockmarked by vacant retail units, due to the impact of recession, shopping malls on local markets and the combined impacts of property and food price inflation.⁶⁵

In 2009, inspired by the Park Slope Coop in Brooklyn, New York and the opportunity afforded by vacant retail premises due to recession, a group of social entrepreneurs came together in London to address health inequality and these issues by re-purposing an empty shop.⁶⁶

In June 2010, The People's Supermarket opened on Lamb's Conduit Street in the London Borough of Camden.⁶⁷

The People's Supermarket is an Industrial & Provident Society – a social venture – that sells food and produce to the general public but in exchange for a commitment of four hours time every month and a small annual fee, people can become members and earn a discount at the checkout.

A key objective of the venture is to support families and low income groups in the community win access to food that is affordable, more locally sourced and it is through volunteer time, expert sourcing of product and maximum use of recycled fixtures and fittings, as well as efficient management of waste, that the enterprise can afford to match, if not undercut the prices of its for-profit competitors.

Over half of the enterprise's start-up costs have been covered by donations of goods and services, by local residents as much as companies large or small, and almost 100% of its trading space is fitted out with recycled equipment.

Alongside a small number of paid staff, the supermarket is managed by members, volunteers enlisted by local organisations and 18-24-year-old employees participating in a Government welfare to work programme.⁶⁸

THE CITY AS A STORE OF 'URBAN APPS'

In the context of urban development, The People's Supermarket expresses several innovations.

In terms of social innovation, the enterprise is a co-operative venture very similar to the original ideas of the Rochdale Pioneers in 1844 but for one key difference: people exchange their time for a discount on their shopping.

In terms of social and economic regeneration, The People's Supermarket generates value by establishing a hub for association by local people. It is distinctive for a social enterprise to seek to operate at the centre of the consumer economy but increasingly common for ventures to act as 'network agents' or 'trading systems' for human relations or systems – described by some as 'open organisations'.⁶⁹

One example is Southwark Circle, a membership organization in South London that connects members to each other to share interests and enjoy themselves and members to local, skilled people called Neighbourhood Helpers, who provide flexible help with things like DIY tasks, gardening or Internet lessons. Created by Participle, a social innovation company, the Circle is designed to allow people to be 'each other's solution'.⁷⁰

Another example is a social enterprise in London called Livity – a youth communications agency that co-creates with young people campaigns and content for brands, broadcasters, charities and local and central government with young people. Projects include the award-winning Dubplate Drama, an interactive TV series, Live Magazine and clients include Coca Cola, O2, Playstation and Channel 4 Television.⁷¹

The People's Supermarket generates value by establishing a hub for association by local people

These enterprises are more than just either businesses or acts of resilience. They are 'engines of participation', fertile communities in which citizen involvement is implicit – a kind of social media or 'app' that helps people fulfil a task in life.

The edge to The People's Supermarket and these other enterprises is that they engage with all aspects of the economy – commercial, social and public.⁷²

In terms of public economy, they reduce public expenditure on goods and services by engaging people in the production and consumption of their own care and education.

In terms of social economy, they support their local economies by providing them with goods or services, generating revenue and circulating income within a tight consumer group.

In terms of commercial economy, they generate commercial turnover within their physical or demographic community and through new forms of mutualism and collaborative purchasing, generate local employment.

But as phenomena in urban economies, these enterprises are more than just either businesses or acts of resilience. They are 'engines of participation', fertile communities in which citizen involvement is implicit – a kind of social media or 'app' that helps people fulfil a task in life.

A NEW FRONTIER

Social enterprise and the non-profit sector are held in the highest regard and an increasing focus of attention for Government in the UK.

We live in an age in which public engagement in the internet is running at record highs, determining choices, augmenting the way in which we relate to one another and changing the way in which we do business.

There are many examples of social places in the industrialised countries but the development sector remains a closed, not an open process, and tends historically to lead rather than follow the ways in which people cluster, share, relate and value.

The strategies for Speirs Locks and non-profit enterprises that exchange goods and services like The People's Supermarket create fertile ways for people to collaborate. They are forms of community-building and entrepreneurship that engage with the ordinary and daily, creative and social lives of people.

The plan for Speirs Locks offers a strategy for growing people, as well as place. The People's Supermarket: an example of an agent of change. Can the two approaches now be combined and expanded?

Can a large urban site be brought forward for development in a way that takes a more open attitude towards its future community and let's them dictate land-use planning?

Are we on the edge of making a place that features a community owned and managed supermarket, bookshop, restaurant and housing for the elderly – a social market offer that operates alongside branches of Zara and Tesco Express but is led by residents, businesses and the local workforce and venture-funded by service charges or local taxation?

URBAN REGENERATION IN SCOTLAND

To emphasise these values in urban regeneration and renewal is to seek to open a discussion about the direction and value of master-planning, sustainable development and the way in which we are renewing and repurposing our country

Since one of the returns of participating in social enterprise is personal fulfilment and a key value in the internet economy rests in relationships and the distribution of data, to engage with these issues is to press for knowledge and its uplift as an element of ‘development value’.

Since climate change and carbon efficiency is a priority of the Scottish Government and increased sourcing of local products and lower lifecycle emissions are a modal shift in demand and changed driver of competitive advantage in a world countering climate change, is now the time to experiment with innovative, resilient local systems of trading, mutualism and community enterprise? Is now the time to see entrepreneurship and collective action, not computer-aided design and masterplanning as the key frame for the development of large sites?

And if the rise of social enterprise expresses a dissatisfaction with conventional models of profit-making and profit-taking, and a key reason for the popularity of the internet is the experience it provides people and the opportunity it affords them to be who they want to be, shouldn't this be the starting point for development of the built environment if what we are seeking to do is create popular successful places?

In other words, is now the moment for regeneration and renewal to think of itself as less of an industry slave to a pre-meditated plan and one more committed to making places that support the unfolding needs and narrative of people's lives? In other words, an industry that's in business to build audiences, not just control them.

With its investment in sustainability, commitment to reducing carbon emissions and tradition of social entrepreneurship, with an Economic Recovery Plan focussed upon reducing health inequalities and its early piloting of Tax Increment Finance, Scotland has committed itself to a future of inclusion, innovation and carbon-efficient routes to employment.

This paper has sought to evidence examples of development in Scotland, the UK and abroad that suggest new ways to fulfil these commitments, ways in which Scotland might seed its own distinct version of a sustainable, good or Big Society.

In other words, is now the moment for regeneration and renewal to think of itself as less of an industry slave to a pre-meditated plan and one more committed to making places that support the unfolding needs and narrative of people's lives?

About the author

David Barrie is principal consultant at David Barrie & Associates. The company is an economic development/creative consultancy that specialises in designing and delivering projects and programmes that support the regeneration of towns and cities. The company has delivered projects valued at over £16m and credited with raising over £250m of new investment in the physical, economic, social and cultural development of cities, often working in highly deprived communities. Barrie was commissioned by Architecture + Design Scotland to create a forward plan for the Speirs Locks development site in Glasgow. He is a co-founder and advisor to The People's Supermarket, a venture that will be the subject of a series of television programmes on Channel 4 in 2011. In 2009, Barrie's work in the former coal mining town of Castleford won the Grand Prix, Regeneration & Renewal, RIBA CABE Public Space and Civic Trust Partnership Awards. More on David's work can be found at <http://davidbarrie.typepad.com>

References

- 1 Feiss, C. (2009), 'Social Enterprise – the fledgling fourth sector', *Financial Times*, 15 June
- 2 Giotis, C. (2010), 'Charity Bank and Triodos on track for record loans', *Social Enterprise*, 20 July
- 3 Social Investment Task Force (2010), 'Social Investment Ten Years on', London
- 4 Quotation is from Cabinet Office (2010), 'Building the Big Society', 18 May, available at <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/latest-news/2010/05/big-society-50248>. For Open Source Planning, see The Conservative Party (2010), 'Green Paper – Open Source Planning', available at http://www.conservatives.com/News/News_stories/2010/02/New_homes_and_jobs_through_Open_Source_Planning.aspx
- 5 Murray, R. (2009), 'Danger and Opportunity: Crisis and the New Social Economy', available at http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/reports/assets/features/danger_and_opportunity_crisis_and_the_new_social_economy
- 6 For more on Bobos, see Brooks, D. (2000), 'Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There', Simon & Schuster, New York. 'Creative milieu' is the phrase of Landry, C. (2008), 'The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators', Earthscan, London
- 7 Boschee, J. (2010), 'Merging Profit Motive and Moral Imperative' in Localis, 'Small State, Big Society', available at <http://www.localis.org>. The key reference book of Richard Florida is, Florida R. (2002), 'The Rise of the Creative Class', Basic Books, New York
- 8 Boschee, J. op cit.
- 9 Royds Community Association, <http://www.royds.org.uk/>; Turning Point, <http://www.turning-point.co.uk/>; Big Issue, <http://www.bigissue.com/>; Eden Project, <http://www.edenproject.com/>. For summary of initiatives by Birmingham City Council, see Smith, T. (2010), 'The Enabling State', in Localis, 'Small State, Big Society', op.cit.
- 10 Fifteen, <http://www.fifteen.net/>; Harlem Children's Zone, <http://www.hcz.org/>; Geoffrey Canada, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_Canada
- 11 The Hub, <http://the-hub.net/>
- 12 See Lord Wei of Shorditch (2010), Presentation to Institute of Government, 'Building the Big Society' 6 June, available at <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/content/150/preview>
- 13 The author recommends, Goldsmith S. (2004), 'Governing by Network', Brookings Institution Press & (2010), 'The Power of Social Innovation', Josey-Bass, San Francisco; Halpern, D. (2010), 'The Hidden Wealth of Nations', Polity Press, Cambridge; Mulgan, G. (2010), 'The Art of Public Strategy', Oxford; Leadbeater, C. (2008), 'We-think: The power of mass creativity', Leadbeater, London.
- 14 Time Banking UK, <http://www.timebanking.org/>; The Big Lunch, <http://www.thebiglunch.com/>
- 15 Balsall Heath Forum, <http://www.balsallheathforum.org.uk/>; Southwark Circle, <http://www.southwarkcircle.org.uk/>; Teach First, <http://www.teachfirst.org.uk/>; NHS Choices, <http://www.nhs.uk/>; St Giles Trust, <http://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/>
- 16 More on 'Open Source Planning' at Conservatives (2010), 'New homes and jobs through 'Open Source Planning'', 22 February, available at http://www.conservatives.com/News/News_stories/2010/02/New_homes_and_jobs_through_Open_Source_Planning.aspx and Localis (2010), 'Policy Platform: Accountable Planning', 21 May, available at <http://www.localis.org.uk/article/681/Accountable-Planning.htm>; more on Social Income Bonds, Social Finance (2010), 'Towards a new social economy', available to view at <http://bit.ly/9oyHhZ>
- 17 Author is using the word 'platform' in its computing context. See Wikipedia – Computing Platform, available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computing_platform
- 18 Internet UK Stats, <http://www.internetworldstats.com/eu/uk.htm>; BBC News (2010), 'Britons spend nearly 'one day a month online'', 19 May, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10122834>; Zuckerberg, M. (2010), '500 Million Stories', 21 July, available at <http://blog.facebook.com/blog.php?post=409753352130>; Burmaster A. (2007), 'Facebook Accounts for Three Fastest-Growing Online Brands in UK', available at <http://www.marketingcharts.com/interactive/facebook-accounts-for-three-fastest-growing-online-brands-in-uk-2591/nielsen-online-uk-fastest-growing-online-brandsjpg/>; LinkedIn: About Us, available at <http://press.linkedin.com/>
- 19 For 'mass mingling', see Trendwatching.com (2010), 'Mass Mingling', June – July, available at <http://trendwatching.com/trends/massmingling/>
- 20 For the traditional analysis of what makes a successful place, see Project for Public Spaces, Place-making Tools, 'What Makes a Successful Place?', available at <http://www.pps.org/grplacefeat/>
- 21 For 'Silicon Roundabout', see Bradshaw, T. (2008), 'Silicon Roundabout: is this the heart of the UK's new dotcom book', *Financial Times*, July 29 and Silicon Roundabout Ning, available at <http://siliconroundabout.ning.com/>
- 22 A good reference for the nature of online networking, see Paul Adams, User Experience Researcher, Google Inc., (2010), Presentation at Voices That Matter Web Design Conference, San Francisco, 'The Real Life Social Network v2', June, available at <http://www.slideshare.net/padday/the-real-life-social-network-v2>

- 23 Apsden, P. (2008), 'What did you do on the internet today?', Financial Times, September 6. For 'digital swarming', see Stanley, J.D. (2008), 'Digital Swarming: The Next Model for Distributed Collaboration and Decision Making', Cisco Internet Business Solutions, San Jose
- 24 For analysis of news consumption, see Nieman Journalism Lab (2010), 'Step Aside, brand loyalty', June, available at <http://www.niemanlab.org/2010/06/step-aside-brand-loyalty-were-loyal-to-information-now/>
- 25 Shirky, C (2010), 'Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age', Penguin Press, New York
- 26 The idea of content sharing and production links to the Aula community, Helsinki, a 'smartmob' who ran a community in 2002 and outlined their ideas of an 'urban living room for the networked society' in a paper. More on Aula at Rheingold, H. (2002), 'Helsinki's Aula', July, available at http://thefeaturearchives.com/topic/Culture/Helsinki_s_Aula.html
- 27 The most powerful expression of this in Government was DCLG (2008), 'Communities in Control: real people, real power - White Paper', July, available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/communityempowerment/communitiesincontrol/>; for more on 'social return on investment', see bookmarks filed by author at http://delicious.com/addictive_picasso/sroi; for definition and references for 'co-production', see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coproduction_of_public_services_by_service_users_and_communities
- 28 For the opportunity of municipal wi-fi, see Mitchell, W. (1999), 'E-topia', MIT Press, Cambridge MA; for analysis on why municipal wi-fi has been a failure, see Wu, T. (2007), 'Where's my Free Wi-Fi?', Slate, 27 September, available at <http://www.slate.com/id/2174858>
- 29 Coin Street Community Builders, <http://www.coinstreet.org/>
- 30 South Bank Employers' Group, <http://www.sbeg.co.uk/>
- 31 Westway Development Trust, <http://www.westway.org/>
- 32 Neilston Bank, <http://www.neilstontrust.co.uk/bank.php>; Neilston Community Wind Farm Project, <http://neilstonwindfarm.org/ourwindfarm.html>; Neilston is part of the Scottish Renaissance Towns Initiative, <http://www.scottishrenaissancetowns.com/>
- 33 The Hub, London. op.cit.
- 34 Sherwood Energy Village, <http://www.sev.org.uk/>
- 35 Maryhill Burgh Halls, see Scottish Government, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/town-centres/tcrf/CaseStudies/MaryhillBurghHallsGlasgow>
- 36 For Moore Street Housing scheme, see <http://www.richardmurphyarchitects.com/projects/374/>
- 37 The High Line, <http://www.thehighline.org/>; Lindquist, K. (2010), 'New Whitney Museum Coming to the High Line', High Line Blog, 26 May, available at <http://www.thehighline.org/blog/2010/05/26/new-whitney-museum-coming-to-the-high-line>
- 38 Shoreditch Trust, <http://www.shoreditchtrust.org.uk/>
- 39 WiMBY! Hoogvliet, see WiMBY/Rottenberg (2001), 'The Big Wimby Book', NAI Publishers, Rotterdam; Renew Newcastle, <http://renewnewcastle.org/>; Making Space in Dalston, <http://www.designforlondon.gov.uk/what-we-do/all/dalston-town-centre/>; The Castleford Project, <http://www.channel4.com/4homes/on-tv/kevin-s-big-town-plan/>; Madison Square Park Conservancy, <http://madisonsquarepark.org/>
- 40 Zittrain, J. (2008), 'The Future of the Internet - and how to stop it.', Allen Lane, New York
- 41 For the scale of the process (but a way to do it in a more community-friendly way), see Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (2010), 'Large Scale Urban Design', July, available at <http://bit.ly/9PY5Hc>
- 42 Definitions of 'open systems' are available at <http://bit.ly/9zMbGB>
- 43 Girardet, H. (2007), 'Schumacher Briefings 2: Creating Sustainable Cities', Green Books, Totnes
- 44 For more on this culture of innovation, see Goldsmith, S. (2010), 'The Power of Social Innovation', John Wiley, San Francisco.
- 45 Kevin Kelly, quoted Quittner, J. (2010), 'The Future of Reading', Fortune Magazine, 11 February
- 46 Speirs Locks, Glasgow Canal Regeneration Project, <http://www.glasgowcanal.co.uk/news7.html>
- 47 Glasgow Canal Regeneration Project, <http://www.glasgowcanal.co.uk/>
- 48 Scottish Opera, <http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/>; National Theatre of Scotland, <http://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/>
- 49 RSAMD Speirs Locks Studios, http://www.rsamd.ac.uk/academy/Speirs_Locks/
- 50 7N Architects, RankinFraser, KoAN3, Ramboll Whutbybird, Kevin Murray Associates, Glasgow Canal Partnership (2008), 'Speirs Locks Masterplan', Design Report
- 51 Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/AandP/Projects/SSCI>

- 52** The project was commissioned by Architecture + Design Scotland, in partnership with the Scottish Centre for Regeneration and with additional support from the British Council. It was carried out by the author and his company, David Barrie & Associates, <http://www.ads.org.uk/>, <http://www.britishcouncil.org/scotland-science-spiers-lock-regeneration-project.htm>, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Barrie and <http://davidbarrie.typepad.com>
- 53** For definition of social economy, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_economy and a series of publications: Murray R. (2009), 'Danger and Opportunity: Crisis and the new social economy', NESTA, London, available at http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/reports/assets/features/danger_and_opportunity_crisis_and_the_new_social_economy; Mulgan, G., Tucker, S., Ali, R & Sanders, B. (2006), 'Social Innovation: what is it, why it matters, how can it be accelerated', Young Foundation, London, available at <http://www.youngfoundation.org/publications/reports/social-innovation-what-it-matters-how-it-can-be-accelerated-march-2007>; Murray, R., Caulier-Grice, J., Mulgan, G. (2009), 'Social Venturing', Young Foundation/NESTA, London
- 54** The narrative was arrived at after extensive consultation of the creative community in the city, exposure to the exceptional artisan skills of performing arts companies resident on site and keen demand from stakeholders that the site act as a utility for creativity and learning.
- 55** Modelled on a Business Improvement District, the concept of a Cultural Improvement District is a development vehicle, endorsed and funded by contributions from stakeholders and ever-growing number of partners and tenants in the site.
- 56** Spiers Locks is located part way between the City Centre and North Glasgow. As a result, it doesn't benefit from either close proximity to the centre, with its emphasis upon cultural development and North Glasgow, with its emphasis upon social development
- 57** Goldsmith, S. & Eggers, W.D. (2004), 'Governing by Network: The New Shape of the Public Sector', Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC
- 58** For an insight in to the range and diverse character of 'social enterprise', 'social business' and 'social investment' see Clearlyso: <http://www.clearlyso.com/>
- 59** This could feature the use of local currencies. For more on this, see North, P. (2010), 'Local Money', Transition Books, Totnes
- 60** For basics of interaction design see Cooper, A. (2007), 'About Face 3', Wiley, Indianapolis
- 61** There has been considerable academic study in to social sustainability and urban regeneration, seeking to measure its impact upon skills, knowledge, well-being etc. to which this statement links. See Colantonio, A., Dixon, T. (2009), 'Measuring Socially Sustainable Urban Regeneration in Europe', Oxford Brookes University & The Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development, Oxford
- 62** The piloting of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in the UK, a method of public financing of redevelopment on the basis of uplift in tax values is principally geared to bringing forward public finance in the infrastructure costs of development. However, it acknowledges the larger spatial impact of development beyond the boundaries of site and starts to expose the developer to the benefits of their investment to adjacent areas. The prospective TIF in the context of Edinburgh Waterfront puts the country at the front of innovation in this area. See Johnstone, N. (2010), 'Scotland leads way in tax increment finance', Public Property.com, 26 March, available at <http://www.publicpropertyuk.com/2010/03/26/scotland-leads-way-in-tax-increment-finance/>
- 63** Statistics sourced from Statistics Office.
- 64** Definitions and data on 'food deserts': <http://www.fooddeserts.org/>
- 65** The best data and analysis of vacant retail units is carried out by Colliers CRE. Bulletins for 2009 are uploaded to Meanwhile Project Ning, available at <http://meanwhilespace.ning.com/profiles/blogs/colliers-cre-research-on>
- 66** Park Slope Food Coop, Brooklyn, <http://foodcoop.com/>
- 67** People's Supermarket, <http://www.peoplessupermarket.org>
- 68** The venture is directly supported by the London Borough of Camden, Development Trusts Association and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation. It is also partnered with Social Enterprise London and Transition Bloomsbury.
- 69** Murray, R., Caulier-Grice, J., Mulgan, G. (2009), 'Social Venturing', Young Foundation/NESTA, London
- 70** Southwark Circle, op.cit.
- 71** Livity, <http://www.livity.co.uk/>. For other examples of trading/exchange based social enterprise, see Barrie, D. (2010), 'Venturing not marketing: 10 Big Society Projects', 19 July, available at <http://davidbarrie.typepad.com/davidbarrie/2010/07/building-public-association-build-the-big-society.html>
- 72** References to public economy, social economy and commercial economy link to the Centre for Local Economic Strategies work on models of 'resilience' in recession. See CLES (2009), 'How resilient is your local economy? A pilot research project', available for download at www.cles.org.uk/files/104270/.../Localresiliencepilotsfinal3.pdf