

Issue

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# Delivering Better Places

Design Skills Symposium 2011

Hosted by Architecture and Design Scotland, Stirling Council and Historic Scotland with support from Scottish Government Architecture and Place Division, Improvement Services, The Academy of Urbanism, and the Key Agencies Group

Newsletter, Sep 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011

## Engaging with possibilities

Whereas Day 1 highlighted challenges, Day 2 focuses on possibilities.

In terms of the speakers, a key theme emerging was the relationship between the state and individual. Understanding this relationship is essential. In terms of the workshops two key theme merged. The first is that every minute of every day we spend and make decisions on existing places. The issue is about how we prioritise resources, how we make more of what we already have. The second is that working together, talking together in short timeframes generates excellent briefs. The clarity of what we do and why in a place is clearer when we discuss a place in terms of what might be.

**“The future depends on what you do today”**

Ghandi

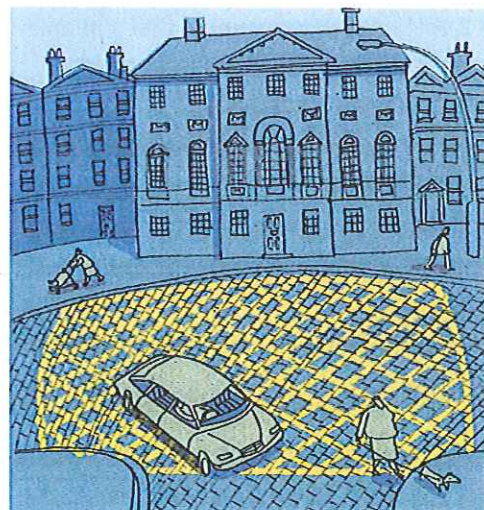
## Cabinet Secretary promotes collaboration to achieve better places

Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs opened Day 2 and launched 'New Design in Historic Settings'. Her speech emphasises the issue of understanding place context. Successful new design often grows out of a careful study of

their form and history. This helps identify the 'dna' of a place

## Re-claiming streets: putting people at the heart of negotiating space

**Ben Hamilton Baillie** spoke about street networks and public space. He talked about being in an interesting time where we are starting to accept and understand the complexity of human behaviour as a means of organising and managing public spaces. Throughout the presentation, Ben emphasised the issue of allowing people to better engage with their environment, to enable people to inform themselves of the issues and risks in a place and behave accordingly.



He spoke about the relationships that matter to better public space, and the language needed to



understand and express these relationships. This language is tied up with the idea of values. He illustrated this idea through the concept of how we treat the spaces we value, and the issues that arise when we standardise our approach to valueable spaces.

A key aspect of Ben's presentation related to the purpose of public spaces. Functionally, we can now get what we want anywhere. We don't need towns. We use them because we desire to be there. This shifts the purpose of public space in these places. Risk, and the positive feedback that can emerge when people engage with risk was emphasised. We need a new relationship with risk. Part of this is about encouraging everybody to take responsibility for themselves. We need to rebuild civility in our public spaces.

Stephen Hill laid out a challenging presentation about purpose, and values. Stephen argued that our generations will be the generations to deliver on major challenges like climate change. Our values, and our behaviours matter in meeting these challenges. This requires us to test the language we use mire carefully and develop a better awareness of what models will achieve sustainable living.

Using the idea of co-housing as a basis for illustrating what a community that shares and interacts with other might look like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a number of key issues emerged.

- The first relates to policy intent: if the policy intent is a sustainable community, that's people doing things together. What does this look like, and how is it actually achieved.
- Second relates to motivation: why would a person be in a place?
- The third relates to markets. Early adopters and 'pioneers' market a place by being there. This is positive marketing.

## Developing concepts: the workshop sessions

Some of the key issues merging from the workshops and presentations were summarised as follows:

- Good design works
- Getting behind a pattern
- Re-thinking relationship with traffic
- New language for streets
- Change our approach to risk
- Don't treat driver as a zombie
- Dare to be insubordinate, disreputable
- Managing our co-existence of shared space
- Translate values into action
- Create a river city on Forth
- New quarter for families, demographic range
- Where are my bits? (for investment)
- Effect on existing uses?
- People prioritised over cars
- Capitalise on Stirling views and identity
- Entry point that does justice to a 'city'
- Stirling is a very 3-dimensional place
- Community capacity and ownership
- Legible identity
- Gateways, arrival thresholds
- Generate positive footfall
- Authored book
- Shared focus – whole city centre management
- Time changes place
- Challenge of value and viability

## Dragon's Den feedback

There are different approaches being pursued by the different study area groups. In broad terms, some of the Dragon feedback on issues to consider in developing the concepts include:

- Use 3-D information to express concepts: sections
- Clearly express the proposed experience
- Sharper discussion on feasibility
- What are the investment concepts and return periods?
- Lay out some structuring principles and trade offs for issues such as land use and density
- Who would champion these projects, and how would reputational risk be managed?
- Explain some of the public spend priorities
- Challenge assumed 'fixes' in the existing context
- Consider reference to precedent studies to explain some of the ideas: other places