Rethinking Masterplanning: Creating Quality Places

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Forewords

I came to the task of writing this foreword with some trepidation. This is because I have spent the last 20 years trying to avoid the word ‘Masterplanning’ and more particular, as I have often seen it written – particularly on the websites of architects, funnily enough – ‘Master planning’; the latter evoking the great ‘master’ creating his (note the masculine association) grand vision.

To a large degree, this encapsulates why I remain so reticent. Indeed, as the editors themselves articulate, masterplanning is still, in many minds, associated with the production of fixed blueprints for places. So while a masterplan might persuasively capture the grand vision of its author, it also suggests something that is rigid and unbendable, not open to discussion or meaningful engagement, and that (at least in the UK where plans often take a very long time to get built out) will quickly become out of date and discredited as society and the market moves on.

But perhaps it is time (as the title of the books suggests) for me to rethink my position and get over my reticence. As this book demonstrates, there is clearly an awful lot of masterplanning going on, and, as we see, the term covers a very wide array of urban design tools. Masterplans range from:

- flexible urban design frameworks that are two dimensional and diagrammatic (the tool of choice for me), to three dimensional aerial renderings in which every building and space seems to be designed
- propositional tools that set out the design of a project, to tools of design governance, used by public authorities to guide the projects of others
- tools of a very local spatial scale (that of the site), to tools covering whole neighbourhoods and districts of cities, and even, occasionally, cities in their entirety
- tools that, in effect, establish a process towards a designed end, to those that define that designed end at the start and never veer again from that path
- tools of incremental urbanism and collaborative design, to tools of big bang urbanism where what you see is what you get.

For me, the masterplan needs to be flexible and adaptable, and should set out only the essential urbanistic framework (or trellis as David Rudlin and Nick Falk have called it) on which the city grows. The urban DNA as I have referred to it elsewhere.

In the UK (and elsewhere) designers, often encouraged by planners who seem to wish to nail everything down, too often insist on trying to design everything. This is an approach that treats the city like a single building rather than a living, evolving thing. A consequence is that masterplans are all too quickly discredited, little or nothing happens, leading to more and more masterplans being prepared. In recent years some sites have been masterplanned to death.

In the chapters that follow, masterplans and masterplanning are clearly seen as, respectively, imperfect tools and imperfect practices that need to be challenged and re-conceptualised to make them more relevant to today’s needs; this, the collection of essays does admirably based on the research and practice of a host of highly experienced and respected practitioners with many very important insights to offer.

So having read the book, have I overcome my reticence for masterplanning as a planning/ design/development tool? Not entirely, I would have to say. However, that only puts me in exactly the same boat as all of the other contributors to this excellent book.

We have been masterplanning for many hundreds, even thousands, of years, and, as a diverse series of practices, masterplanning is not going to disappear anytime soon. It is therefore incumbent on us to recognise the limitations of the tool and to continue the search to improve our practice. This book represents a major contribution towards that end. The search goes on . . .

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London, UK
April 2017

When the proverbial person at a party asks what we do for a living, it can be slightly uncomfortable to admit to being a masterplanner. It can sound Napoleonic, fascist, even state socialist and, as Joe Ravetz points out in these pages, it is hardly gender neutral. How has such a politically incorrect term become so central to the process of urban design and indeed urbanism?

This book goes a little way to explaining this, but its main objective is to propose new forms of masterplanning that are less authoritarian, rigid and top down. Many of the authors in this book seek to deconstruct the idea of a masterplan and to rethink it as something that is more inclusive, holistic and sustainable; moving from the blueprint to the systems approach, from the top down to the co-created.

In doing so many of the authors (if not perhaps all) recognise the paradox in this argument. Masterplanning is in many ways the antithesis of the loose-fit, evolutionary, participative city for which many of the authors argue. For all of the talk of co-creation and bottom-up process, a masterplan is nothing unless it is fixed through some form of collective authority that can only really be top down.

Through the Academy of Urbanism's awards scheme we have assessed 180 places. From this we can observe that masterplans have played a pivotal framing role in many of the great places that we have assessed; from the tiny town of Westport in Ireland to Cerdà's Eixample in Barcelona, from James Craig's masterplan for Edinburgh New Town to Richard Grainger's Grainger town in Newcastle and Mayfair in London. The same is true of newly built neighbourhoods, be they Aarhus Western Harbour, Freiburg's Reissfeldt or Glasgow's Crown Street.

All of these great places have strong masterplans and few were created through a collaborative bottom-up process. Yet these imposed, even authoritarian, plans have created diverse lively urban areas. It is a puzzle that is explained in this book in chapters by Jonathan Tarbatt and Ombretta Romice (together with her colleagues in Glasgow). The masterplan is some kind of holding frame – which the two of us have identified as a 'trellis' or a 'lattice'. The framework might be fixed, but this very rigidity creates the conditions for spontaneity and for places to evolve over time. Time is the component that is missing from many modern masterplans that have been conceived as end-state visions. It is almost as if they can be wished into existence and emerge fully formed overnight. Good masterplans are never complete. They create a framework, both physical and regulatory, on which places can grow and evolve.

This book is an important contribution to the understanding of this process, resurrecting the tarnished idea of the masterplan and illustrating its relevance to the modern city. With an ever-expanding global urban population, there is an urgency to understand this process. The skyscraper and the mega structure are not the inevitable result of rapid urbanisation that they can sometimes seem. If we can re-teach ourselves the art of masterplanning, we can accommodate rapid population growth while also creating lively, resilient towns and cities. This book is a valuable starting point to begin this relearning.

David Rudlin and Kevin Murray
The Academy of Urbanism

London, UK
April 2017

The Academy of Urbanism is a self-funded, politically independent organisation led by over 500 leaders, thinkers and practitioners involved in the social, cultural, economic, political and physical development of our villages, towns and cities. The Academy was formed in 2006 to recognise, learn from and promote excellence in placemaking. Since then the Academy has grown to work proactively with places to nurture and help them become more resilient.

Acknowledgements

This book was inspired by our involvement in a series of participatory events on the theme of ‘Placemaking, Professionals and the Public’ held at the University of Dundee in collaboration with the Scottish Government, the Academy of Urbanism, Architecture Design Scotland and other key agencies and partners. These events, attended by academics, decision-makers, built environment professionals and community representatives from the UK and beyond, stimulated debate and generated innovative thinking, challenging many of the assumptions underpinning the traditional approach to masterplanning. We would like to thank all of the authors who agreed to join us in seeking to address these challenges and whose contributions reflect their expert knowledge and insights into masterplanning today. We very much appreciate the constructive comments and suggestions made by the expert reviewers at the early stage of this book. We are also very grateful to those who have contributed images, giving permission for their use. We wish to thank the staff at ICE for their enthusiasm, advice and assistance and our families for their constant encouragement and support throughout the process.

Husam AlWaer and Barbara Illsley

About the editors **Husam AlWaer**

Husam AlWaer is an urbanist, with a background in architecture, urban planning and sustainability, who writes intensively and speaks regularly on making better places. He is a senior lecturer in Sustainable Urban Design and Evaluation at the School of Social Sciences (Architecture and Urban Planning), University of Dundee, having previously researched and taught at Reading and Liverpool universities.

Husam's work has had a demonstrable impact in academia as well as on practice. He has a passionate interest in the future of sustainable places and towns, in particular the development of new thinking on processes and methods to unlock sustainable urbanism. His research on sustainable urban design and assessment links well with the challenge of securing sustainable growth strategies for large and medium-sized urban developments. Currently, he is investigating how masterplanning and urban design practice (nationally and internationally) can contribute to promoting sustainable development and, in particular, the use of assessment methodologies in urban development decision-making.

Husam has gained recognition for providing intellectual leadership in sustainable placemaking and masterplanning, contributing to emerging theory, practice and technical developments. This is evidenced by his contribution to the Scottish Government's Planning Review (with Kevin Murray Associates), and a recent invitation by the Scottish Government's Architecture and Planning Unit to sit on its expert panel to assess a range of 'charrette' and 'activating ideas' funding options. This reflects positively on the quality of his insight on key planning techniques, as well as validating his integrity and professional judgment. The RTPI East Scotland Chapter recently invited him to join their committee. Also, his 'thought leadership' contributions have included presentations/workshops to national and international organisations, firms and governments, including: United Nations Programme for Human Settlements III, PlaceMaking Leadership Forum, Scottish Government, Saudi Government, RTPI Scotland, Urban Design London and Urban Design Group. He has published over 30 peer-reviewed international journal papers, professional reports and books relating to the broad topic of urban design and sustainability, including *Site and Composition: Design Strategies in Architecture and Urbanism* with Soumyen Bandyopadhyay and Enis Aldallal (Routledge, 2016). He was awarded the 2014 Reed and Mallik Ltd Prize for the best paper published in the *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Urban Design and Planning*.

Although primarily an academic, he believes it is important to make his work relevant and useful to practice. For the past five years, he has collaborated with planning and urban design professionals, decision-makers, communities and others with an interest in the built environment on a series of participatory events around the theme of 'Professionals, Placemaking and the Public'. These events have provided a 'neutral platform' for mutual support and exchange and have led to the co-production of new knowledge and understanding. Drawing on his experience as a masterplanner, he has worked with Kevin Murray Associates to progress multi-disciplinary, place-based planning using a holistic, 'place momentum' approach. This has involved delivery of innovative charrette/placemaking projects in Scotland, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. He is a BREEAM Accredited Professional, demonstrating specialist skills in sustainability and environmental design, a Chartered Town Planner, an Urban Design Group Recognised Practitioner, and an Academician in the Academy of Urbanism.

Barbara Illsley

Barbara Illsley has a long-standing interest in promoting collaborative approaches to planning and placemaking. With a background in geography, which she studied at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, and Queen's University, Canada, she gained an MSc in urban and regional planning at the University of Strathclyde before taking up a post as a professional planning officer with Dundee District Council. It was here, very early in her career, that she first sought to assist communities to have their voice heard in the planning process, initiating an innovative environmental education project linked to the preparation of a local plan for the city's peripheral estates. She became a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute in 1981. Following a number of years in local government she joined the academic staff of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Dundee in 1994.

Over the next 20 years, Barbara has held a number of leadership roles within the University. She was Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences from 2004 to 2006 and Head of Town and Regional Planning from 2006 to 2009. Her research interests, which grew out of her experiences in practice, are in the fields of community governance, homelessness, strategic environmental assessment and land-use planning practice. In 2014, she was presented with the CASS Teaching and Good Practice Award for Transformational Teaching: Creating Wider Impact and the University of Dundee Chancellor's Award for Lifetime Contribution to Teaching. Barbara is currently an Honorary Research Fellow of the Geddes Institute for Urban Research, University of Dundee, a Trustee of Dundee Historic Environment Trust, Chair of Dundee Civic Trust and a volunteer for PAS (Planning Aid Scotland).

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Professor Robert Adam is well known in the UK and internationally as a major figure in the development of traditional and classical architecture, as a pioneer of contextual urban design, a designer of furniture, an author and a scholar.

He works with clients on a range of projects, including major private houses, extensions to historic buildings, and public and commercial buildings. He has extensive experience in masterplanning and speculative housing, has pioneered objective coding and is visiting professor of Urban Design at Strathclyde University.

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Robert lectures internationally and writes on theory and practice. His books include *Classical Architecture: A Complete Handbook* and *The Globalisation of Modern Architecture*. Research that he has initiated and published includes: *Kerb Appeal* (1998); *Privacy and Density* (2003); *A Study of the Energy Performance of Two Buildings with Lightweight and Heavyweight Facades* (2007); *Four Facades*, on public preference in commercial and public architecture (2009); *Identifying Trends in Masterplanning* (2014); and social trends in the 18 to 34 age cohort, *Tomorrow's Home: Emerging Social Trends and the Built Environment* (2014).

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Professor Samer Bagaeen is Associate Director with 100 Resilient Cities, pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation. Before joining 100 Resilient Cities, Samer worked in academia and in the private, public and voluntary sectors across Europe and the Middle East. Most recently, Samer led graduate urban planning education at the University of Brighton, UK, and was Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Jordan. He also holds a position as Visiting Professor of Real Estate at the Institute of Urban Economy in Lima, Peru. He previously served as Director of Urban Studies at the National Resources Investment and Development Cooperation (MAWARED) in Jordan with responsibility for masterplanning former military sites. Prior to that, he served as Training Programme and Master Plan Coordinator with the Welfare Association in Jerusalem. Samer has vast experience in urban policy, specifically in issues related to community planning, regeneration, housing and inclusive design. Samer is a prolific writer and some of his recent published works include *Sustainable Regeneration of Former Military Sites* (2016) and *Beyond Gated Communities* (foreword by Saskia Sassen) (2015). Samer is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a Trustee of two leading urban planning organisations in London, the Town and Country Planning Association and the Royal Town Planning Institute. Samer holds a BA in Architecture from University College London (UCL), a Masters of Urban Design in Developing Countries from UCL, and a Diploma in International Cooperation from the Universidad Politecnica de Madrid. He also holds a PhD in Planning Studies from UCL and an MBA from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, UK.

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Lucy Bullivant

Dr Lucy Bullivant is a curator, award-winning author, consultant, founder and Creative Director of *urbanista.org*, her webzine on liveable urbanism, and Built Environment Expert at Design Council Cobe, London. She is the Place Vision Strategist for Meridian Water, a 65 hectare mixed-use scheme in north London led by Enfield Council, and publications director for the Sustainable Urbanism: New Directions project (Qatar University) and Tallinn Architecture Biennale 2017 (bioTallinn). She has written many books, including: *Recoded City: Co-creating Urban Futures* (co-author Thomas Ermacora, 2015); *Masterplanning Futures* (Routledge, 2012), *Book of the Year, Urban Design Group Awards, 2014*; and *New Arcadians: Emerging UK Architects* (Merrell, 2012), and is guest editor of *4d Hyperlocal* (Wiley, 2017).

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Dr Ian Cooper originally qualified as an architect, but he has spent most of his working life as a researcher, primarily focused on the sustainable production and consumption of the built environment. Since 1984, he has been a partner in Eclipse Research Consultants, a small Cambridge-based consultancy specialising in research design and management, monitoring and evaluation, sustainable development and climate change, knowledge capture and exchange, stakeholder engagement, and workshop design and facilitation. He was the co-editor, with Martin Symes, of *Changing Professional Practice* (2009), the fourth volume in the Routledge *Sustainable Urban Development* series.

He has a long-standing relationship with UK Research Council programmes on sustainable urban design. He was the third-party evaluator for the Planning Director of the Department of the Environment in 1998 of the policy relevance of the outputs from the Engineering and Physical Research Council's (EPSRC) 'Sustainable Cities Programme'. In 2014, he was a member of the EPSRC's review panel for its long-running 'Sustainable Urban Environment' and 'Adaptation and Resilience for Climate Change' research programmes.

Ian is a tutor on the Interdisciplinary Design for the Built Environment master's course at Cambridge University, an associate of Cambridge Architectural Research Ltd and on the

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Joanna Eley is an architect and RIBA-accredited Client Adviser with extensive experience in space planning and advising organisations on strategies for briefing, space use, post-occupancy evaluation and facilities management.

She is a facilitator for the HEDQF (Higher Education Design Quality Forum) post-occupancy review process. Recent projects include the development of masterplans, space strategies, project briefs, design specification and interior planning for commercial and institutional clients and in universities to introduce new learning spaces. Her clients have included local and central government, BBC Worldwide, University College London and London South Bank University.

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Joe has worked with: UN Industrial Development Organization and UN Habitat, Institute for Alternative Futures, Rockefeller Foundation, WWF-International, Finland Environment Institute, Institute of Innovation Research, European Commission DG Regio/DG Research/ECOSOC, Department of the Environment, regional development agencies, Government Office of Science, Environment Agency, UK research councils, and many professional bodies. With a background as an architect/planner, he is a keen visual thinker and graphic facilitator in foresight/futures/sustainability processes. He is a board member of the *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, *Foresight* and *Sustainable Mediterranean Construction*. He is also a Principal at SAMI Consulting and delivers training, seminars, keynotes and visual thinking in many countries.

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Carol Somper

Carol Somper's planning policy and development experience spans over 30 years, within the public, NGO and commercial consultancy sectors. This includes having led the development of the former Countryside Agency's 'Landscape Character' initiative and working for Jonathon Porritt's leading sustainability charity Forum for the Future on a series of area-wide sustainable land-use initiatives. For the past 10 years she has worked for commercial consultancies on a wide range of development projects, comprising regional approaches to sustainable land-use and development planning, rail infrastructure, neighbourhood planning, urban infill and new community development. She has also led and worked on carbon footprinting projects to assess the low-to-zero carbon credentials of new windfarm and rail infrastructure and commercial buildings. Carol has been a freelance sustainability specialist since early 2014.

In addition to becoming a BREEAM Communities Assessor in 2008 – working on six development schemes to date, including one in Mauritius – she also has experience in conducting strategic area-wide reviews and sustainability appraisals for local authority and commercial clients. Carol understands the sustainability challenges facing developers, asset-owners and communities. As a trained facilitator, she is also experienced in stakeholder engagement aimed at exploring opportunities for organisations and communities to improve new development and neighbourhood sustainability. Recent and current projects include: working as part of the team appointed by ACRE to evaluate the performance of the Village SOS support programme, funded by the Big Lottery Fund; and being part of Kevin Murray Associates' stakeholder engagement team for the new town proposed for Otterpool, Kent.

Jonathan Tarbatt

Jonathan Tarbatt is an urban designer, architect and town planner with over 20 years' experience in the public and private sectors in the UK, Australia and Ireland. The depth and breadth of his experience and education in these three disciplines, together with his academic background in urban geography and sociology, has given him a multi-disciplinary perspective and a unique level of expertise in the built environment. He is a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Academy of Urbanism.

He is the author of *The Plot: Designing Diversity in the Built Environment: A manual for architects and urban designers*, which was published by the RIBA in 2012 and shortlisted for an award by the Urban Design Group that same year. He is a regular speaker at conferences – including the inaugural Summit on Plot-Based Urbanism hosted by the Urban Design Studies Unit at the University of Strathclyde in 2014 – and recognised as one of the leading contributors to the field of plot-based approaches to masterplanning. He also acts as occasional tutor, lecturer and visiting critic to the University for the Creative Arts in Canterbury and the Kent School of Architecture. He currently specialises in masterplanning, with a particular interest in plot-based approaches to the design of new local centres.

Steven Tomlinson

Steven Tomlinson studied Civil Engineering with Architecture at Leeds University and holds a Master of Urban Design from the University of Westminster. He taught English in Japan and Russia before moving to London, where he started his career working on public space design for Transport for London, including the pedestrianisation of

Trafalgar Square. He worked in architecture and engineering practice, then went on to work for Design for London, where he turned his focus to the regeneration of East London following the successful London Olympics bid. In particular, he was tasked with integrating the areas bordering the Olympics site, known as ‘the Olympic fringe’, steering emerging masterplans and developments and improving public realm and connectivity.

Steven now works as Principal Designer for the London Legacy Development Corporation, the organisation in charge of the physical legacy of the London 2012 Games through the creation of an integrated piece of city. He is responsible for design, development and regeneration projects and is lead design adviser for all external developments. He has taught Urban Design at Westminster University and lectured in Miami, Cambridge and Copenhagen, and in London at the Architectural Association.

David Walters

David Walters is an architect and urban designer. A native of England, David graduated with architecture degrees from Newcastle University, and has taught and practised architecture, urban design and town planning in Britain, Europe and the USA since 1971.

After moving to the USA in 1983, David taught and practised in Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas and Oklahoma before joining the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 1990. From 1990 to 2000 he was a freelance urban designer, creating masterplans and form-based codes for several North Carolina communities, and from 2000 to 2014 was Senior Urban Designer at the Carolinas’ office of The Lawrence Group, based out of St Louis, where he helped lead teams that garnered two national and 10 state awards for sustainable urban design and community planning.

David has published two books on urban design and planning, *Design First: Design-based Planning for Communities*, co-authored with his wife, Linda Luise Brown, and *Designing Community: Charrettes, Masterplans and Form-based Codes*, both published by the Architectural Press. *Design First* has also been translated into Chinese. His third book, *The Future Office*, co-edited with Chris Grech and published by Routledge, explored trends in office development from the scale of sustainable community planning to changes in information technology and workplace design. David is also a primary author of the award-winning *Mountain Landscapes Initiative Toolbox*, a comprehensive handbook of progressive policies and precedents for building and developing sustainably in the mountain regions of North Carolina.

David is currently Professor Emeritus of Architecture and Urban Design at UNC Charlotte and a consultant urban designer with the Stantec Urban Places Group.

Atiq U. Zaman

Dr Atiq Zaman is a Research Associate at the School of Built Environment, Curtin University, Western Australia. Prior to gaining this position, Zaman completed his PhD at the Zero Waste Research Centre for Sustainable Design and Behaviour at the University of South Australia. He has more than five years of research experience in the area of sustainable waste management and assessment and is an active advocate for zero waste philosophy and activities. Zaman served as a guest editor on *Urban Planning* open-access journal’s Sustainable Planning and Technologies special edition (vol. 1, issue 3, published by Cogitatio Press). He has written three book chapters and over

30 peer-reviewed academic journal papers. He also served as a reviewer for more than 50 peer-reviewed academic papers. Zaman's research interests include collaborative consumption, circular economy, urban metabolism, future cities, environmental planning, management and assessment, especially in waste minimisation, management and performance evaluation. Zaman has demonstrated professional experience in cross-disciplinary working areas, including environmental engineering, environmental compliance, auditing, monitoring, health and safety and cleaner production. He has worked with a number of international organisations, such as the United Nations and H&M.