

GUERILLA  
TACTICS

# EXPANDING PRACTICE

Navigating the architecture  
of planning, procurement  
and property



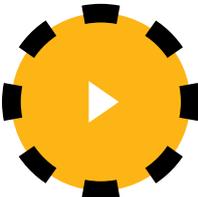
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# How to use

Welcome to your interactive Delegate Resource Pack. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for attending the RIBA Guerrilla Tactics Conference 2018. This document offers a summary of the insights shared throughout the conference day and provides links to recordings of all presentations should you wish to watch them again.

Clicking on this icon will take you to the video recording.



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# WELCOME

Pooja Agrawal and Finn Williams, Co-Founders, Public Practice



## Expanding Practice

- Designing is only a small part of architectural practice. The majority consists of bureaucracy: navigating the planning process; maximising project budgets; negotiating tender portals; and trying to win work.
- Most important decisions about a project are taken before the architect becomes involved. The NPPF, the Local Plan, the imperatives of land assembly and marketing define what will be built, where it will be built and how it will be constructed.
- Too often, architects are responding to the market rather than their creative and social conscience.
- Architects need to regain wider agency in order to build better, build more beautifully and build for everyone.
- To do so, they need to engage with the processes and decisions further upstream, and treat them as opportunities rather than barriers to creativity.
- By engaging as early as possible with planners and councillors, and by understanding the financial drivers of development, architectural practices can increase their agency and influence.
- Finding solutions that make a positive impact on the quality of public projects is an art in itself. Creatively engaging with policies, politics and processes enable architects to have more input upstream.

[Pooja Agrawal and Finn Williams, Public Practice](#)

# KEYNOTE 1: DESIGNING STRUCTURES

Sadie Morgan, Director, dRMM and Chair of the High Speed 2 (HS2) Design Panel



## Changing the conversation about design

- Too many architects talk just to other architects; they need to convey their relevance to the wider world.
- For politicians, value is measured in quantifiable metrics and votes, so architects must find ways to express their design's relevance in those terms.
- Focus on the design's impact on people and place, and the timing of its delivery.
- Instead of the word 'design', talk about problem-solving. Architects are good at the kind of lateral thinking fundamental to solving problems.

## Making an impact on infrastructure projects

- Architects need to get involved in the UK's large infrastructure strategies. Currently the design and

architecture community is notably absent from strategic discussions with politicians.

- Offer constructive critiques to clients. Politicians value honesty, as long as it is positive.
- Good design depends on good procurement and clients need to be convinced of this.
- Too often, design documents at the pre-design stage only consist of words. Architects can contribute a visual expression of the design intent at a crucial early point to help guide the whole process.
- Show clients what happens when good intentions result in bad design when architects are not involved.

### Design outcomes are shaped at 'Stage -1'

- Locate hard evidence of instances where good design has led to cost savings.
- Requirements specified early in the process by lawyers and bureaucrats who do not understand their wider implications can fatally compromise the project's later design.
- Unintended consequences may include noise barriers that fail to consider their greater visual or structural impact.
- Architects and designers should therefore seek to be involved right from the start.

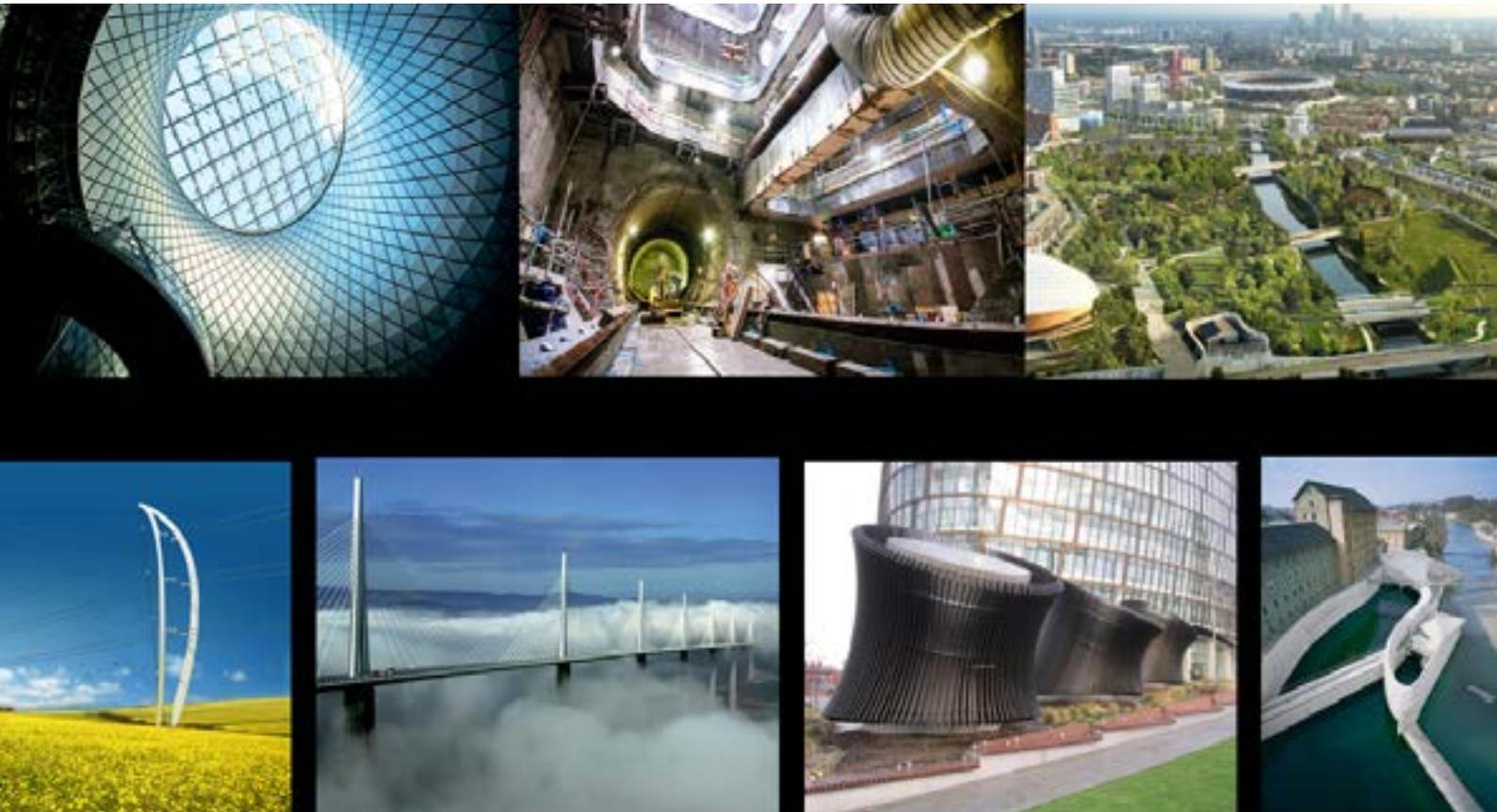
### Strategic approach to infrastructure design

- Large, complex problems can always be broken down into simple ones, even in a national infrastructure project as big as Crossrail 1.
- Think strategically about short-, medium- and long-term solutions.
- For each, identify three great ideas that are feasible and achievable.

### Ensuring quality of outcomes

- If clients publish specimen designs or design codes, they are then committed to upholding them and the quality of the project is less liable to compromise.

[Sadie Morgan, dRMM](#)



## KEYNOTE 2: DESIGNING SYSTEMS

Dan Hill, Associate Director and Head of ARUP Digital Studio



### **Before the project begins and after the project ends**

- Design decisions are being taken at 'RIBA -1', pre-empting the architect's input.
- Architects can also learn vital lessons after completion and during occupancy.

### **Designing for the city and its communities**

- Once, 50% of architects worked in the public sector, where 'upstream' decisions are made. Today that figure is only 0.9%.
- Design is about impact on people. The key questions for the built environment are not technical but societal issues of politics, ownership, identity and culture.

- Real urban transformation is not about designing individual buildings, it is about engaging with the 'dark matter': the structures, institutions and building codes.

### **The human scale**

- Architects regularly move between the human to the city-wide scale when designing.
- Designers and architects should get down to the human scale in their drawings at the 'RIBA -1' stage, providing specific examples of how people use buildings.
- Creating short videos is an effective tool to illustrate how humans interact with buildings. They can be made quickly and easily on a smartphone.

- Architects or designers can take the lead in providing such details at an early stage.

#### **The architect's responsibility and influence**

- Architects have a role to play in helping ensure that decisions about transport and the built environment are made for the public good, not just for private profit.
- Try to find the right tool to unlock the right conversation in the right context: this might be a drawing, a video, a presentation, or an event.

#### **Positioning architects further upstream**

- Create the job in the first place: identify the clients working in the field you are interested in and go to them.
- Architects should re-position themselves as essential agents in the improvement of a city's quality of life.
- By doing so, architects will be invited in earlier in the process and their contributions valued more highly.
- The public realm, energy and mobility problems all require design thinking; architects should get involved.

[Dan Hill, ARUP Digital Studio](#)



# NAVIGATING THE PLANNING SYSTEM

Akil Scafe-Smith, LB Croydon  
Rachel Hearn, LB Havering

Jennifer Gutteridge, Royal Docks Team  
Lucía Cerrada Morato, LB Tower Hamlets



## **Consultation and Engagement**

Akil Scafe-Smith (LB Croydon)

### **Engagement with local authorities**

- Engage with planning departments as early as possible.
- At a 'pre-pre-application stage', many will appreciate the possibility of working collaboratively with a potential applicant on design, conservation and planning issues; especially on sites of high importance.

### **Community engagement**

- Evidence of proactive community engagement plays an important part of a successful planning application.

- Engagement is a continual process. Croydon Council encourages focused engagement at pre-application stage and considers Post Occupancy Evaluation of great importance.
- 'Meanwhile spaces' can be powerful ways of testing the potential for permanent developments and are not the sole preserve of large developments.
- Engagement can range from the barest minimum of a planning notice to the provision of 'meanwhile spaces'.
- Creative use of technology such as apps can set some applications apart.

- Documenting physical meetings in situ with residents is a positive way of demonstrating engagement and researching what makes a successful place.

#### **Identifying the stakeholders**

- Existing stakeholders such as residents' associations and councillors should be consulted, while anticipating the stakeholders of the future.
- Proposals should also respond to the needs of children, showing how they will experience and navigate the building.

#### **Pre-Application**

Rachel Hearn (LB Havering)

#### **The importance of a pre-application meeting**

- Pre-applications are a good opportunity to build positive relationships with planning officers and help them to understand your vision.
- Engage with planning departments as early as possible: the more complex the scheme, the earlier architects should reach out.
- Attempts at negotiation during submission stages will not be favourably viewed if architects did not submit a pre-application.

#### **Be organised, economical and articulate**

- Produce a structured, collated document rather than a series of individual PDFs to provide a good first impression before the meeting.
- Do not write an excessive amount. Be realistic about how much time a Design Officer or case officer can spend on your proposal.
- Use 3D drawings where possible and be transparent in describing and illustrating constraints.

#### **Make the most of your meeting**

- Bring the client to the pre-app meeting; the summary letter a client receives will lack much of the detail.
- Structure the meeting: an agenda will not have been set. Take this opportunity to steer the conversation.
- Agree what the initial site findings were, discuss constraints and suggest possible solutions.
- Pay attention to how specific policies might be applied to your site. Do not assume you know everything.
- Agree what the principles of community engagement should be; agree the design principles. Aim to leave the meeting with much more than a statement on the applicable planning regulations.

#### **From Submission to Determination**

Jennifer Gutteridge (Royal Docks Team)

#### **Negotiation**

- During negotiation, try to ascertain your case officer's main concerns.
- Try to get to know the case officer's manager in case you are not assigned the same officer at application stage as at pre-app stage.
- Make the most of any opportunities that arise for negotiation: if a planner phones, be as cooperative as possible.
- Seek opportunities for feedback. Touch base with your case officer at strategic points in the determination period (8 weeks for small projects).
- The telephone is a good tool for informal conversations; officers are much more guarded about what is put in writing

### **Amendments**

- While attitudes to amendments vary between boroughs, they are generally kept to a minimum as they drag out the process and tend not to produce amazing schemes.
- Requests for small amendments usually mean a scheme is likely to lead to a consent.
- Sometimes requests for amendments indicate a 'borderline' scheme. Planners seek to avoid the uncertainties of an appeals process.

### **Withdrawals**

- If you are asked to withdraw your application by a case officer, consider what stage of the process you are at. If it is late in the determination process, you have little to lose in proceeding.
- Be aware of your right to appeal: if you withdraw your application, you lose the opportunity to appeal.
- Complying with a request to withdraw can be the best course of action. Going back to the pre-application process may be better than facing a robust negative report that will stand up at any appeal.

### **Post-Permission Stage**

Lucía Cerrada Morato (LB Tower Hamlets)

### **Pre-commencement Conditions**

- The Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017) is trying to reduce the number of pre-commencement conditions. While conditions are still front-loaded

at the start of projects, their discharge can be staggered across the project.

- Applicants may ask to be sent draft conditions at pre-app stage in order to address them in their application.

### **Section 106**

- Local authorities can insert Section 106 clauses to insist on the retention of the architect on a project; architects may enquire if they were intending to do so.

### **Discharge of conditions**

- Submit simple, concise information regarding the discharge of conditions that is easy for a case officer new to your application to understand.
- Ask your client to consider taking on a planning consultant to help with the discharge of conditions.

### **Amendments**

- The criteria for material or non-material amendments vary between local authorities.
- Some boroughs base their decision on whether an amendment creates a public benefit; others are more stringent and will regard amendments to height or volume as material.
- Avoid requesting many minor amendments, as they may be perceived by officers as having a material cumulative effect. Group them together and try to arrange a meeting with an officer to discuss them.

[Public Practice Associates](#)

## PLANNING COMMITTEE – BEHIND THE SCENES

Duncan Blackmore, Director, Arrant Land

Alice Lester, Head of Planning, Transport and Licensing, LB Brent

Murray Kerr, Director, Denizen Works

Selasi Setufe, RIBA Co-Vice President for Students and Associates

Cllr Mark Brunt, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council Conservatives

Cllr Pippa Goldfinger, Independents for Frome



### Before the meeting

- Pre-application discussions provide a great deal of opportunities for gains on both sides.
- Interact with your parish council; more architects should seek to become local councillors.
- Find out about previous concerns expressed in planning committee meetings via online research.

### Planning committee tips

- Affordable housing provision is a key issue for politicians, given the current housing market. Politicians will always query a lack of its provision within a scheme.

- Agreeing to small changes (such as improving refuse storage) can make a big impact and turn objectors into supporters.
- Do not, as an applicant, tell the committee what the case officer has already explained.
- Do not overly focus on design: good design is desirable but will probably not be one of the committee's prime concerns.

[Duncan Blackmore, Alice Lester, Murray Kerr, Selasi Setufe, Mark Brunt, Pippa Goldfinger](#)

# WHY DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS MATTER

Tony Travers, Director, LSE London



## Conditions for development in the UK

- The economics of development are affected not just by direct financial considerations but by the public mood, which influences what developers are expected to pay for.
- Large projects incur developer contributions towards public realm, transport and infrastructure.
- Taxing development is an expedient way of funding what would previously have been bought with public money.
- The UK's short- and long-term GDP projections affect the viability of development. The Brexit vote continues to have a big impact.

- Political stability and the rule of law are also significant factors. Development depends on contract security and is fearful of sudden changes to the tax regime (such as alterations to stamp duty).

## Financial considerations of developers

- Conventional considerations include the costs of land, land improvement, architectural design, construction, marketing, selling or letting.
- The recent Community Infrastructure Levy, which taxes development and is area specific.
- Section 106 requirements covering infrastructure funding and other contributions.
- 'License to Operate': civic contributions to get public support for a development.

#### **The relationship between architects and developers**

- Architects need to be aware of the economic and political pressures on developers.
- Developers are greatly dependant on government power, in having to operate within rules set both nationally and locally.
- The involvement of architects and investment in good design is more likely to get a scheme through the planning system.

#### **The relationship between architects and communities**

- Architects can be positive agents in securing local and community objectives but need to genuinely seek to understand an area.

- The public has a better understanding of what an architect does than of what planners do. This is a good basis for more public engagement from architects.
- The more architects engage with local stakeholders (such as community groups or councillors), the easier it will become to resolve issues concerning planning and development.
- Co-ordinated communication from architects, developers, politicians and planners to the public is required in order to make development more popular.

[Tony Travers, LSE London](#)



## DECONSTRUCTING FINANCE: PANEL DISCUSSION

Russell Curtis, Director, RCKa architects

John Nordon, Director, ROME

Albert Hill, Director, The Modern House

Michelle Hannah, Associate Director,  
Cast Real Estate Agency

Archika Kumar, Senior Development  
Manager, Westminster Council



### **Understanding developers and investors**

- Developers have no money. They are financed by other people's money and are answerable to their investors.
- They do not want to pay upfront for design before receiving planning permission.
- Architects need to appreciate this business model to understand how financial pressures drive the behaviour of clients.

### **How architects can add value**

- With an understanding of the business model, architects can offer flexibility and project-

management instead of merely providing the cheapest and quickest service.

- Good design can add value when maximising the space efficiency of buildings, achieving higher profits and faster sales.
- Social value plays an increasing role in business investment. Architects make investors more aware of the potential for achieving social value through good design.

### **The 'dark art' of viability assessments**

- Viability assessment is often seen as a dark art

because the financial value of comparable buildings in the same area may be very differently judged.

- An assessment is made on the capital value of a building, based on the market value of that day. No growth assumptions are included in calculating the value.
- Assessing and agreeing the value of the land is the most problematic aspect.

#### **Shifts in market values during the process**

- When a developer receives planning permission, the land value might be lower or higher than the price they paid for it. If it is lower, a developer may seek to provide less affordable housing.
- Although the planning authority may believe the developer overpaid for the site, it could be that the market has simply shifted downwards.

#### **The priorities of local authorities**

- Local authorities want to invest in high-quality design but face challenges due to a lack of recent experience in commissioning and financing projects.
- Residents have a long-term interest in the quality and longevity of housing. Architects should take a similarly long-term view, prioritising the needs of future occupants, and designing with procurement and delivery in mind.
- Social value is the single most important objective in housing schemes: they want to deliver quality housing, create employment and provide better public realm.

- Local authorities need to demonstrate a responsible spending of public money. Too often good design is seen as counter to good value for money; architects need to prove that design investment is cost-effective in the long-term.

#### **Opportunities and strategies**

- Choose your battles: architects should make clear which aspects of a design are non-negotiable and which are subject to compromise.
- Local authorities are diversifying their offerings and the growth of Build To Rent provides opportunities for good design to thrive.

#### **Good design and real estate values**

- Good design provides value, not only from a wellbeing but from a monetary perspective. It consistently adds an average of 12% to the value of residential projects on the market.
- Development is a high-risk enterprise, so architects must prove with hard numbers that good design has value.
- Purchasers may not be able to precisely articulate what good design is, but they acknowledge it intuitively through their purchasing decisions.
- Developers conduct surprisingly little customer research. They tend to build and hope the building sells, which has worked in a rising market but will not work indefinitely.

[Russell Curtis, John Nordon, Albert Hill, Michelle Hannah, Archika Kumar](#)

# PROCUREMENT MASTERCLASS

Tina Jadav, Senior Projects Officer Regeneration, Greater London Authority

Rae Whittow-Williams, Senior Project Officer, Regeneration and Economic Development, Greater London Authority



## Public procurement principles for local authorities

- All public-sector organisations must adhere to policy requirements that insist on value for money.
- Value for money is defined as providing the best mix of quality and effectiveness, not simply the cheapest bid.
- Public procurement should be a competitive process unless there are compelling reasons why not.

## Opportunities in public procurement in London

- The GLA group spends around £11bn every year on procurement activities.
- The new draft London Plan is a blueprint for

future development within London, aiming to achieve sustainable, inclusive growth with an emphasis on quality in the built environment.

- Architects should read the Responsible Procurement Policy document published in 2017, which addresses social value considerations such as fair employment practices for organisations working with the GLA.
- Smaller projects (£10,000-15,000) are generally procured directly, while the larger ones (£150,000 or more) are advertised via open tender processes.

## How to respond to an Invitation To Tender (ITT)

- Read the ITT in detail and prepare a submission that responds clearly to the specific requirements.
- Communicate your proposed methodology concisely and make sure it is achievable.
- Understand your audience: research your clients and what their priorities are.
- Use plain English, avoiding long words, complicated phrases and 'archi-speak'.
- Do not overload the page: use a combination of text and images.
- Headers and bullet points provide key information in a punchy, communicative style.

#### **Demonstrating social value**

- Take the time to understand the site and its context.
- Show that you are designing with an understanding of the existing and future needs of the local community with particular regard to physical, social and economic accessibility
- Try to provide opportunities for participation and co-design for the local community.
- Acknowledge any local underrepresented groups and try to identify opportunities for outreach,

apprenticeships, mentoring and training.

- Seek to use the local supply chain for procurement and local workers for subcontracting.

#### **Communicating your experience**

- Make sure the experience you cite is relevant to the brief.
- Focus on any overlaps with projects you have worked on, using the brief's scope, client type and budget as a starting point.
- Demonstrate an appropriate range of skills from the team you are putting forward, including any consultants you may be using.
- If you are asked to provide CVs, present them in terms of relevance, highlighting strengths in design, research and capability.
- Smaller practices can gain experience of working on local authority projects as part of a framework team.

#### **Interviews during the tender process**

- At interview, do not regurgitate your proposal but clearly provide any required clarifications.
- Engage the whole panel and try to communicate what enthuses you about the project.

[Tina Jadav and Rae Whittow-Williams, GLA](#)

## PROCUREMENT BEHIND THE SCENES

Tina Jadav, Senior Projects Officer Regeneration, GLA

Rae Whittow-Williams, Senior Project Officer, Regeneration and Economic Development, GLA

Ros Dunn, Independent Chair, South Kilburn Trust

Emma Sweeney, Capital Projects Manager, LB Brent



The panel gave their responses to three submissions to an Invitation to Tender, pointing out the successful and less successful aspects of each one. The brief was to provide a permanent home for the Granville Centre in South Kilburn, London, a community-focused artists' studios.

### **Approach to the brief and proposed methodology**

- Provide evidence of consultation with local residents, demonstrating understanding of the context and the client.
- Scrutinise all aspects of design for potential repercussions for residents, such as noise or accessibility issues internally and externally.

- Communicate an enthusiasm for the project
- Acknowledge the budget and show evidence of an ability to adapt.

### **Relevant experience**

- Demonstrate proof of working with community stakeholders.

- Provide examples of projects of similar building scales and budgets.
- Experience of working with public-sector clients is a plus; if this is lacking, then cite relevant work with comparable bodies.
- Involving external consultants in a scheme can be both a positive and a negative aspect: it demonstrates problem-solving skills but raises potential problems in project-management.

#### **The programme and schedule of the project**

- Provide a detailed and clear programme, avoiding any illustrations or diagrams that are not self-explanatory.
- Phased developments are a distinct plus, enabling use prior to completion.

- Ensure sufficient time is allocated for consultation.
- Consider the practicalities of your delivery programme and strike a balance between speed and feasibility.

#### **Key takeaways**

- Demonstrating an understanding of the brief and the context is key.
- Research and consult on the ground in order to understand the context of the place and the concerns of stakeholders.
- Put yourself in the position of the client to identify their specific needs.

**The slides for this session are not available for sharing**



## CPD Day Presentations

Fee Proposals: How to Get Them Right; Stephen Brookhouse

How to Minimise your PI Insurance Risk; Peter Godfrey

The Essentials of Making Successful Planning Applications in Today's Planning World; Colin Haylock

What you Need to Know about Listed Building Consent; Sarah Khan

Age-friendly Design to Live Well at Home; Emma Luddington

What Does it Mean to be a Good Employer?; Virginia Newman

Understanding and Measuring the Social Value of Design; Flora Samuel and Riette Oosthuizen

Understanding Viability Assessments in Planning; John Wachter