

Better Places



A Matrix for Measuring & Delivering Placemaking Quality

Ike Ijeh

Foreword by Rt Hon Michael Gove MP



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Foreword

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Successful nations know that what matters most in the lives of their citizens are relationships. They recognise that individuals flourish when their communities are strong, and that the strength of communities lies in their deep and durable pattern of connections.

Successful societies also know that place matters. The affection we feel for the place we were born and where our family grew up, and where our contribution to the lives of others is made and recognised, is central to the common good.

And nowhere is this sense of place, the link between the individual and the community, between our lives and others', more important than in housing. Homes make communities – my department is dedicated to that proposition.

And as we face the urgent need to build many more homes to accommodate a growing population, so we must think hard about where we build them. With its new proposals to help measure and assess 'placemaking', which flow from its influential *Building Beautiful* work, Policy Exchange is again helping to shape the debate about how best to deliver a place we call home.

Love thy neighbourhood

If we think of housing purely in numbers, we risk forgetting that we are building not 'units' and 'public open spaces', but homes and settlements for future generations. A dash for quantity does not resolve the central challenge of 'placemaking': how to ensure that these places will be beautiful, inviting neighbourhoods that foster a sense of community through human-scale buildings, plentiful green spaces and trees, and walkable streets that mix residential use with shops and businesses. These are the features that we know residents value. They encourage civility and respect for our fellow citizens, reduce alienation and enhance the environment we share.

And we ignore this evidence at our peril. In the second half of the twentieth century, many western nations made building new homes a priority, but quality was often lost. In throwing up poorly designed and constructed housing that lacked the community infrastructure that families need, we created the conditions for social injustice. As Secretary of State at DLUHC, I have made it my mission to deal with past housing failures – unsafe high-rise blocks, homes riddled with damp and mould, families deprived of their rights – and I am determined we must do better when we build the homes and communities of the future. More new homes are

a priority, but so is quality. The need for one reinforces the need for the other.

Effective placemaking is about creating communities. It is about improving the quality of the places in which we live and work and go to visit. While a new, well-designed house offers benefits locally, a new, well-designed place is a local and national asset. Making better places, revitalising local economies and rebooting productivity, is at the heart of levelling up.

And it is because placemaking is crucial to the country's long-term health that Policy Exchange's newly devised Placemaking Matrix promises to be an indispensable resource. A universal tool that can be used to score a range of elements seen in new and existing developments, it can help build confidence in the wider social value of new residential schemes during the planning process and so unlock much-needed new housing supply.

The Matrix has been developed at a time when the relevance of placemaking to the political and public debate on housing could not be more acute. Good placemaking ensures longevity. It is environmentally wasteful to construct and then demolish houses every few decades because sustainability and quality were not built in from the beginning. Making sure that our next generation of residential infrastructure is fit for purpose and is built to last is not a political choice; it is a social responsibility.

At the crux of this covenant are good placemaking decisions. A key purpose of our planning system, they are also a vital responsibility of councillors that we want to see them grip through local plans. Will the streets be well-lit at night? Is there seating for older people and the infirm in our town centres? Safe areas for children to play in freedom? Do our buildings and public spaces add to human flourishing and prosperity, or act as barriers? These are issues that have long preoccupied Policy Exchange, which has ensured that issues of housing quality, aesthetics and choice remain at the forefront of the housing debate.

Yet placemaking is not only about physical elements of our environment. It's also about the intangible qualities that we cannot see but that we can certainly feel and sense, and which have a significant impact on our sense of place. Elements such as civic pride, local memory and communal acts of celebration and commemoration may be harder to define than brick types and storey-heights but are a vital part of our shared citizenship. Importantly, the Placemaking Matrix offers a way to define and score these all-important intangible elements, as well as the physical qualities traditionally assessed by planners.

It is often said that the state's responsibility to people seeking new homes ends when those homes are built. In fact, that is when the state's responsibility begins. Those places will form new villages, suburbs and towns. It is their collective heritage that determines whether the wider community has been enriched or undermined, and the development has made the positive contribution to our national life that is the legacy of excellent policy-making.

If we can move beyond the poor-quality developments that still blight too much of our urban environment, we can increase public confidence in both our planning system and placemaking design standards. That will make it easier to boost our housing supply.

For too long, quality has been viewed by many as a planning impediment. The Placemaking Matrix could help transform it into an incentive. Ike Ijeh's brilliant new paper for Policy Exchange is no less than a detailed instruction manual for how we can create the good places of the future. I hope it receives the welcome it deserves.

Executive Summary

- A New Assessment Standard for Placemaking
- Embedding Placemaking into Planning
- Design Codes
- Empowering Communities
- A Localised Universal Tool

How do we create better places? This has been an essential human challenge for countless civilisations throughout the ages and the greatest fruits of these labours have been cities, towns, villages and streets that are loved and revered by either their local communities or, in some cases, by a captive audience around the world.

In Britain in 2023 this question assumes a unique political urgency because the Government has placed the revitalisation of places at the heart of its flagship levelling up agenda. But if places are to be the litmus test of socio-economic renewal and if, to a large extent, we are to judge the success of levelling up on the quality and condition of the places it has affected, this initial question begs another equally complex one: how do we ensure new developments will make places better?

And herein lies the problem. It is relatively easy to measure the results of Government expenditure or intervention in many areas, defence spending results in “X” amount of new tanks which provides “Y” amount of enhanced military capability, health spending results in “X” amount of new hospitals which provides “Y” amount of increased treatment capacity. These are distinct, quantifiable, measurable outcomes that lend themselves well to clear numerical analysis and comparison.

This is not the case with places. Yes, a new residential development may provide “X” amount of new homes or a new traffic layout system may provide “X” amount of additional pedestrian space. But none of this sheds any light whatsoever on what the place feels like, how people react to it, how popular it is or what kind of character or identity it maintains. In short, normal objective assessment criteria for placemaking - the principal tool deployed to deliver better places - is largely unable to determine whether places possess the most crucial ingredient in determining whether they fail or succeed: a ‘sense of place’.

A New Assessment Standard for Placemaking

This paper represents what we believe to be ground-breaking attempt to develop a universal tool capable of measuring how successful developments will be, (or are) at placemaking for the very first time. The Placemaking

Matrix will therefore bring placemaking in line with other UK statutory assessment systems like EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) ratings and OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) rankings.

The Placemaking Matrix contained within this paper sets out a series of questions whose answers can be used to calculate a score which then reflects the placemaking quality of any new development. Combining the two words of its title and conveniently appropriating the Latin word for peace, the score will be known as the PAX rating. To test the matrix, the paper has used it on three very different real-life developments in London, Cambridge and Fife in order to generate a score for each one.

The matrix questions are divided into three groups, those that relate to the Physical, Socio-Economic and Psychological elements of any new development. In this alone the rating system forms a pioneering departure from conventional placemaking practice, while it is relatively easy to define physical attributes and, to a slightly lesser extent, socio-economic ones, no previous study or standard has attempted to quantify the psychological content of places and yet these are arguably the most important when assessing their human impact. The PAX system does just this.

Embedding Placemaking into the Planning Process

The Placemaking Matrix seeks to measure and assess the quality of new places in order to provide a better understanding of the ingredients and characteristics required to make places better. In so doing it fulfils a key recommendation of the Building Better Building Beautiful final report, *Living With Beauty*, which called for the promotion of a “wider understanding of placemaking”¹. This is a valiant objective. But in order to be truly effective, the Matrix cannot simply describe good places, it must deliver them too. This is why it becomes most useful as part of the planning process.

At present the brutal reality is that placemaking during the planning process is effectively a matter of trust. Even at detailed planning application stage, beyond broad client commitments outlined in the Design and Access Statement, it is difficult to get an exact sense of placemaking quality at this relatively early stage. This is not necessarily a matter of deliberate evasion, it is simply a reflection of the fact that at this stage of the design process, the elements that tend to have a direct impact on placemaking, such as for instance materials selection or the exact number of benches and lampposts to be installed, have not yet been confirmed. Unfortunately, however, the difficulty of creating this trust can slow down the planning process and add lengthy delays and dissatisfaction for all parties in the process. This is why the *Living With Beauty* report also called for “beautiful placemaking [to] be a legally enshrined aim of the planning system.”²

By including completion of the Placemaking Matrix at detailed planning stage and by making the PAX score one of the grounds considered in the planning process, placemaking will be elevated overnight to a paramount material consideration during the planning process. This will lead to clearer

1. Building Better Building Beautiful Commission; *Living With Beauty*, January 2020; p. 112
2. Building Better Building Beautiful Commission; *Living With Beauty*, January 2020; p. 116

and less ambiguous communication between the planning authority and the developer, helping to bring issues into the open where they can be considered, discussed and resolved. It can also force the minds of both the client and the design team to give full scrutiny and consideration to placemaking issues and to make conscious placemaking decisions that will subsequently be specifically protected and secured by the terms of any subsequent planning approval.

Also, within a hypothetical planning process that is itself streamlined and truncated, (i.e. investment or enterprise zones or similar) a good PAX score could be vital to assuring all parties involved (especially the general public) that placemaking quality has not been sacrificed for planning expediency.

Design Codes

This paper acknowledges, understands and supports the current Government policy trajectory of establishing design codes as one of the key policy drivers of quality assurance in new developments. We also welcome the transformative role design codes could potentially play in providing the blanket presumption of permission necessary to unclog the planning system and provide greater certainty to its users.

Consequently the PAX system has no intention of replacing design codes but seeks to act as a supplement to them. This has been achieved by the Matrix being developed from and based upon principles established in various statutory guidance pertaining to design codes, including the *Ten Characteristics of Well Designed Places* contained in the National Design Guide³ and the National Model Design Code itself⁴.

This begs the question, why have a Placemaking Matrix if Design Codes are already in place? Does this not risk overburdening professionals and stakeholders with yet another tier of bureaucratic compliance? There are six main reasons why this will not be the case. First both the Placemaking Matrix and design codes are voluntary rather than compulsory tools. Secondly while design codes seek good design, they cannot in themselves guarantee it and many excellent projects have been designed without their deployment. Thirdly the Matrix is an assessment as well as development tool and can be used to retrospectively analyse completed schemes as well as predict the quality of proposed ones.

Fourth, while design codes, for obvious reasons, are primarily pre-occupied with physical features, the Matrix interrogates socio-economic and psychological ones like crime, employment and public commemoration. Five, in providing a clear numerical score, the Matrix provides a quick and easily digestible way of both quickly assessing and comparing projects. And finally, leading on from the last point, in designing the Matrix to be as simple and accessible as possible, it is hoped that it becomes a tool not only used by professionals but also the public in scrutinising the changes taking place within their communities and encouraging them to engage more vigorously in the planning process that will shape them.

3. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government; *National Design Guide*, January 2021

4. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government; *National Model Design Code*, June 2021

Empowering Communities

For many residents and communities, the planning process is something to be endured rather than engaged with, a belligerent bureaucratic bearpit that many of the public inexorably associate with the negativity of objection (or refusal) rather than the positivity of support. Additionally, Policy Exchange's own polling has shown that people often feel shut out of the planning process⁵, its miasma of policies, regulations and codes unwittingly serving to ostracise the very public it exists to serve.

Within placemaking terms at least, the Placemaking Matrix will partially address these concerns by providing a simple numerical score for developments and breaking down the constituent parts of the placemaking compendium into easily accessible units which can then be reviewed and if so desired scored by the public themselves. This will form a more informed and interactive basis for residents to engage with the development team and planning officers, providing a shared framework designed to facilitate a constructive conversation about placemaking quality.

Crucially it will also enable residents from even the lowest socio-economic groups to scrutinise in detail the quality of planned placemaking interventions in their communities and thereby empower them with a greater say on the type of regeneration promised and the sense of place eventually created. This will be critical to ensuring that levelling up commitments are genuinely delivered on the ground to the people it was conceived to help most.

A Localised Universal Tool

It is important to note that the Placemaking Matrix does not present itself as a definitive 'magic formula' that can conclusively determine design quality and character. While the Matrix sets out to be a universal tool, the localised nature of placemaking will inevitably require adaptation to local contexts and conditions.

Consequently It is not our intention that the current set of questions are forever fixed in stone forever. While the paper acknowledges that there are objective, observable truths that define good placemaking, it is not so ideologically rigid as to suggest that a tool such as this must attain pure, unqualified universality. We see our paper as the earliest development of the matrix and we hope and anticipate that with time, testing and hopefully trust from the industry, the questions can be modelled, adapted and evolved to strike the best possible balance between universal best practice and the localised, contextual nuance that also helps drive placemaking success.

Additionally, as with all qualitative assessment systems particularly those based on empirical evidence, it will be impossible to fully eliminate subjectivity and preference and the personal, emotive nature of placemaking outcomes makes such variation more rather than less likely to occur. Furthermore this paper emerges as the latest addition to a Policy Exchange Building Beautiful programme that has attempted to distil the very essence of beauty into an objective standard rather than a subjective

5. Ike Ijeh, Policy Exchange; *A Call for a Tall Buildings Policy*; January 2022; p. 12

instinct, a challenge that now form a central part of the political housing debate.

However, none of this denies or invalidates the core purpose of the Placemaking Matrix, to provide a methodology for promoting closer interrogation and understanding of how good and bad developments can be achieved within a shared, collaborative framework. It does not aim to be a 'tick box' exercise that confers superficial value judgements that can subsequently be easily contested and even worse, potentially ignored.

Instead, it seeks to make the placemaking assessment process more analytical, accessible and transparent. While any scoring system becomes immediately and inevitably competitive, the scores do not principally exist to praise or punish good or bad developments but to promote closer interrogation and understanding of how good and bad developments can be achieved. First and foremost, it must be remembered that the Matrix is a tool not a product, its ultimate aim is not good scores but good places.

Introduction

How do we measure place? Of course, in our digital age measuring its physical dimensions can be accomplished with great ease and from the comfort of our homes and offices but how do we complete the much more difficult challenge of measuring the quality of a place? Or even harder, defining what a “sense of place” actually is?

The venture is hazardous for five main reasons. First, human preference is always subjective, as it should be - what one person likes about a street or a city may be precisely the same commodity that another person abhors about it with no view being any less credible than the other. It is therefore immensely challenging to reflect and consolidate both potentially contradictory views within a single objective framework. Secondly place is, as it should be, a product of context. As each context is different what works well in one place might not work well in another so it is therefore immensely difficult to devise a standardised metric (especially a national one) capable of accounting for and reflecting an inordinate range of specific variations within a potentially infinite array of external local conditions.

Thirdly, places and cities grow and adapt over time meaning that the results of any qualitative assessment are likely to vary, in part, in accordance with when the assessment is taken. Cities, even when meticulously planned, are organic rather than scientific entities and the soullessness and sterility that might be associated with a new development when it completes may either recede, or sadly intensify, as it slowly becomes embedded within (or anomalous to) the social, cultural and civic ecosystems of its surroundings - a process that can take years or sometimes decades to evolve.

Fourthly, while places obviously include a number of easily quantifiable, measurable physical characteristics like building heights, road widths and material selection, they also include a whole assortment of infinitely less quantifiable and less measurable psychological characteristics that, while difficult to define, are nonetheless essential ingredients of how a place *feels* and thereby how urbanistically successful it is. How for instance does one possibly begin to measure intangible, amorphous elements like collective memory, social stigma, civic pride and personal happiness?

And the final reason measuring place is difficult is perhaps the most onerous to overcome. The process of measurement, by its very nature, relies on logic, rationality and repetition. But human preference and emotion – key determinants of placemaking success - rely on none of these things and most often defiantly revel in the very opposite. There is a reason why it is the ‘sense’ of place that we pride as the ultimate arbiter of its humanistic performance and not its statistics.

Which is why crooked, awkward, narrow lanes in the City of London or Perugia may defy the logic and rationality of spatial planning and efficient geometry but they have, over the centuries, nevertheless wormed their way into our collective consciousness as idealised exemplars of urban charm and intimacy that continue to captivate millions of people across the world to this day. Trying to rationalise the irrational might not quite be an exercise in futility but it will inevitably be one of frustration. And yet measurement without logic is useless.

Levelling Up

It is for all these reasons that people and societies have generally resisted trying to measure how well places perform in relation to their architecture and urban design. Placemaking, the modern permutation of creating good communities, towns and cities, attempts to define what qualities good places should contain but it rarely attempts to quantitatively measure the finished product.

Why is this important? What difference does the ability to measure how successful a place is make to the design and procurement of that place in the first place, particularly when the place is likely to have been developed a long time before the measuring process occurs? Has civilisation not been able to build wonderful places for millennia without the benefit of any numerical scoring system to bolster its efforts?

Within the context of Britain in 2023, the reason why such a Placemaking Matrix – if we can call it that – is so fundamentally crucial is because of its immense potential value in achieving two key and very live political aims – realising levelling up and solving the housing crisis.

The landmark February 2022 Levelling Up White Paper made incessant references to one critical word: “places”. This demonstrated that there was an acute (and welcome) political awareness of the role improving places and by extension placemaking was going to play in the broader signature programme of economic recalibration the Government seeks to achieve across the country.

What there was perhaps less evidence of in the paper were specific details about how these better places were going to be delivered and what rubric could be employed to clearly quantify and assess the values and characteristics associated with the places that were good and the places that were bad.

This is where the Placemaking Matrix comes in. By being able to deploy a tool that is able to quickly and comprehensively analyse and anticipate both the character and characteristics of new developments and give them a numerical score, it will become possible to establish a clear, accessible and (crucially) comparable means of quality assessment for places for the very first time. Not only does this make the intangible tangible but it adds certainty to the process of delivering better places and minimises the risk that they will not succeed, both outcomes being of obvious importance to the effective implementation of the levelling up agenda.

Housing Crisis

The Placemaking Matrix could also help address Britain's housing crisis, one of the most intractable socio-economic problems it faces. Despite the housing shortage, Britain's housing supply is often constrained by intense local opposition to housebuilding delaying and frustrating housing schemes and, in the most extreme instances, helping to see them abandoned entirely. NIMBYism ('Not In My Back Yard') has been a virulent force in Britain's housing politics for a long time but the fact it now coincides with a critical undersupply of new housing means it has become a highly weaponised (and frequently effective) tool of national frustration as well as local activism.

Often, although by no means entirely, objections are based on a fear that the new housing will be "ugly" or the quality of place that it will generate will be substandard with the potential to inflict harm onto the existing neighbourhood by submerging it within a soulless, dormant development. But while NIMBYism undoubtedly remains a profound logistical annoyance, in a mature liberal democracy such as our own objection must remain a democratic right. A Placemaking Matrix that provides a data and evidence-based confirmation of design quality will not in itself dissolve all opposition but it could go a long way to reassuring a potentially nervous local community that new housing need not be a threat to the character and coherence of their neighbourhood, thereby unlocking the discord and paralysis between local communities and developers that so often constrains housing supply. Equally, it may also identify those potential schemes still in need of work or improvement before they too are able to make a positive contribution to their local environment.

The Matrix may also help challenge a potentially corrosive school of thought that has emerged in recent years. The housing crisis is now so acute that in some quarters, particularly those inhabited by individuals frustrated by their inability to mount the housing ladder (i.e. renters and young people), any objection to any new housing - regardless of its quality - is increasingly met with vociferous scorn. The argument invariably promoted is that any housing is better than housing that might not necessarily meet the quality standards we might collectively aspire to.

While it is a position with which one can sympathise, especially considering the desperation of its likely adherents, it must be resisted at all costs. Limiting quality is a perverse reaction to limited supply simply because the former will simply accelerate the inevitable obsolescence that, in time, will merely intensify the latter. History tells us in the very starkest terms that renegeing on the quality of housing can have dire socio-economic consequences. Far better to increase quality *and* quantity and the Placemaking Matrix offers a reliable, evidence-based mechanism to ensure that both can be achieved.

And herein lies another critical advantage of the Placemaking Matrix. As well as measuring the quality of existing places it could also, potentially, help *deliver* high-quality new places. While there is an obvious innate comparative value in measuring the quality of existing places, the ability

to be able to speculate with an intellectually informed degree of certainty what *proposed* places would be like has the power to inject an inordinate amount of knowledge, confidence and certainty into the planning process. Even at detailed planning process so much of what a finished scheme will look and feel like remains unknown. Of course it will not be fully and definitively known until after the project has completed. But a Placemaking Score, even an initial estimate, could become of enormous value in joining the established canon of criteria which ultimately decide which schemes do or don't deserve planning permission.

There are also huge cultural and civic benefits a Placemaking Matrix could bestow, benefits that extend well beyond the political sphere. Ultimately one of the fundamental aims of any civilised society should be to improve its built environment and creating better places is essential to this core exercise of humanity. If the Placemaking Matrix can contribute to this process and help deliver tangible, concrete improvements that actively enhance the lived experience of residents in cities, towns and villages across the country, then its impact could potentially be transformative.

The BREEAM Precedent

The BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) rating system provides a hugely positive precedent of how this can be achieved. BREEAM was developed by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and is the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method and it is an assessment framework that gives a score or rating to a finished building's environmental performance. While a voluntary accreditation system, it is now mandatory for all public construction projects and they must achieve at least an 'Excellent' rating, its second highest score.

This demonstrates how effective BREEAM has been in channelling public and political concerns about environmental sustainability and packaging these into a formal compliance framework that provides an easily digestible and quickly accessible qualitative assessment of a building's environmental performance. It has revolutionised the construction industry by making sustainability a statutory as well as ethical consideration which, as a result of the status and profile instantly conferred by a high score, has led to greater awareness and implementation of higher environmental standards across the construction industry. BREEAM has resonated internationally also, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) followed shortly afterwards as the U.S. equivalent and is now arguably the foremost green building certification programme in the world. Incredibly, BREEAM achieved all this by being a voluntary rather than mandatory system, the prestige associated with a good score provides sufficient incentive to motivate participation.

These are precisely the transformative trajectories the Placemaking Matrix could potentially take. The challenges and limitations of trying to measure placemaking quality have been outlined earlier, it is far easier, as in BREEAM or LEED's case, to measure thermal heat loss through a curtain

wall system that it is to measure how intimate a courtyard feels. And the latter assessment, as well as those like it, must inevitably come with the caveat that it is informative rather than definitive.

But nevertheless, amongst all the irrationality and imprecision of human nature and its reaction to the places that surround us, there are enough definitive truths about what makes places successful to render the process of gathering them into a comprehensive assessment framework worthwhile.

Building Beautiful

This position has been a core tenet of the Policy Exchange's Building Beautiful, a pioneering policy programme that has seared issues of beauty, aesthetics and housing quality not only into public debate but into both political consciousness and ministerial vernacular. Crucially the placemaking format also liberates this programme from one of the key contentions that dogs it when evaluating architectural beauty: style. Placemaking is not a consequence of traditionalism or modernism, it is a product of how the built environment frames human response and as such transcends the aesthetic tribal loyalties that often disproportionately intrude onto the beauty debate.

So while "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" remains one of the English-speaking world's most popular aphorisms, Sir Roger Scruton, the late chair of the eponymous Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission was an inscrutable advocate of beauty being based on observable, objective truths. The Placemaking Matrix responds by providing an opportunity to fortify and reinforce both Scruton's belief and Building Beautiful's founding methodology by proving that beauty can be specifically and deliberately cultivated as a result of conscious design choices and decisions and not solely as a bespoke and unpredictable emotional reaction to random visual stimuli.

For instance, people will tend to be more prone to dwelling and gathering in places where they can sit as opposed to places where they can't. Active street frontages tend to inspire greater street vibrancy and animation than inactive frontages. Children like playing in fountains. Natural landscapes enrich urban life. And so on. These are not examples of partisan, biased speculation. They are objective, observable incontrovertible truths that form the critical building blocks in the creation of attractive, successful places in which people want to live work and visit. For the first time, the Placemaking Matrix gives these building blocks a value and in doing so confers greater value onto the sum of their parts.

Of course, creating better places offers more than just aesthetic benefits, it offers the opportunity to dramatically enhance our built environment to create improved communities, neighbourhoods, towns, villages and cities right across the country. The transformative impact this could have on all manner of socio-economic signifiers ranging from economic productivity to the health and wellbeing of society in general is immeasurable. No scientific or numerical framework, however advanced, can ever single-

handedly transform urban fabric and it is important to remember that the Placemaking Matrix is no magic formula. But by making the process of assessing placemaking quality more formulaic, the Placemaking Matrix could become an effective tool in delivering more of the charm and magic that ultimately helps bind people and places together.

1. Justifying the Matrix

1.1 The Anatomy of Placemaking

Placemaking essentially refers to the practice of creating successful, high quality public spaces that nurture and encourage the strongest possible connection between people and the physical and spatial fabric that surrounds them. It is critical in helping to construct urban character, the special genius that makes places – like people – attractive and unique and can consequently be the determining factor in whether a place succeeds or fails.

Mankind has obviously created places for millennia and until the mid-20th century this process primarily involved an architect or designer or town planner or urbanist trying to negotiate the relationship between people and the urban spaces that surrounded them. But this contract became strained in the 1960s when the explosive deployment of a new commodity became a fresh signatory to it: the motor car. The mass post-war expansion in car use aggressively recalibrated public realm priorities and configuration by tipping the balance inexorably in favour of the motor car.

Consequently the traffic engineer arguably usurped the architects and urbanists of yesteryear as the key protagonist in the design and distribution of space within our public realm. But while it seemed that the mid-20th century would see an inevitable retreat in the traditional idea of public space, it was a growing awareness of the potential onslaught the car represented that galvanised some urbanists, politicians and planners to robustly reassert the idea of public realm as a primarily people-centric entity. Herein lie the origins of placemaking, a gestation that mirrored the manner in which Modernism's relentless incursions onto built heritage ignited the birth of the conservation movement in the 1970s.

But it wasn't just the threat of the motor car that promoted the emergence of placemaking in the mid-20th century, in some areas there appeared to be a fundamental breakdown in the relationship people had traditionally held with their urban surrounding environment. This was most evident on the mass public housing schemes of the period and also in many of the commercial plazas corporate America built around its towers and office blocks, a typology that was swiftly replicated, albeit often to a less ambitious scale, in the UK and on the continent.

Many of these developments provided ample amounts of public open space but because they failed to give proper consideration to the attendant design and social conditions required to make them flourish, the spaces

often became anonymous, windswept and abandoned. London's original Paternoster Square by Lord Holford (1967) provides a classic example of this toxic trend, goading Robert Finch, the former Lord Mayor of London, into bitterly denouncing it as a "ghastly, monolithic construction without definition or character"⁶.

As a result, by the post-modern era of the 1980s there was a growing awareness that providing the physical constituents of public space was not enough, all manner of social, cultural, urban, civic, functional, climactic, environmental and behavioural conditions also needed to be forensically considered in order to create truly successful urban places and strengthen their communities. Thus the placemaking movement as we know it today was born.

Fig. 1.1 Despite being entirely pedestrianised, London's old Paternoster Square was precisely the kind of colossal public space failure that helped galvanise the placemaking movement. © City of London



1.2 How Some Places Went Wrong

Today public spaces and placemaking have now been firmly embedded into the UK's planning, architecture and developer lexicon. This is undeniably a positive step and placemaking generally enjoys a far higher profile than it did forty years ago. Key standout commercial developments like Broadgate in London (1986) and Brindleyplace in Birmingham (1995) were instructive in helping enshrine the placemaking ethos to a wider public and professional audience and the work of the Labour government's Urban Task Force in the late 1990s also helped ensure that high-quality design of places as well as buildings become a primary consideration for public and private regeneration enterprises. More recent cultural and scientific developments like sustainability and wellbeing have merely reinforced placemaking's strategic importance as they too share its primary concern with increasingly the health and resilience of society as a whole.

6. [Wonders and blunders | Architecture | The Guardian](#)

However, while placemaking is undeniably in a better place than it was in the 1970s, many of the problems it set out to fix are not only still present but have worsened. Too many housing developments are still soulless, dormitory supply donors rather than the vibrant, active places to which people would be naturally drawn to visit, work and live in. Too many public spaces still display a flagrant imbalance towards the needs of the car over the pedestrian with people crammed onto narrow pavements or hemmed behind barriers or railings. Too much of public realm is still marked by poor quality materials and indifferent design with the massive opportunities it naturally entails to unify and enhance the urban experience utterly squandered.

Too many buildings still see themselves as autonomous showcase objects rather than constituent parts of a coherent urban whole with the resultant spaces in between them - the true arteries of the city - neutered and marginalised into irrelevance. Too much architecture still revels in the bland, identikit, spreadsheet architecture that could not only be built virtually anywhere but ruthlessly replaces whatever residual urban character or sense of place its construction might have spared with the anodyne hegemony of the blank façade and revenue floorplate. Too much of our built heritage still either lies empty or is casually earmarked for demolition with all the embodied energy amassed to the build them or the rich seams of local collective memory symbolised within them or the massive potential to act as catalysts for wider civic change represented by them carelessly discarded in favour of what are all too often scandalously inferior works of architecture.

And too many skylines, streetscapes and views have been recklessly damaged and undermined by careless, incongruous, substandard additions that brutally sacrifice the innate potential these vital mediums have to project a rare collective image and idea of the city for the momentary, shallow thrill of the 'new' – blithely forgetting that change without progress is at best, inertia and at worst, injury.

Fig. 1.2 Despite improvements in placemaking quality over the past 40 years, too many contemporary developments still seek an oppressive and incongruous relationship with their surrounding local context. (Crescent Place, Southampton).



Despite the heightened awareness placemaking now enjoys, there are many reasons why these aberrations still occur. *Living With Beauty*, the landmark final report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful report, identifies one of them, a “placemaking skills gap”. It also called for the promotion of “a wider understanding of placemaking” to fill it⁷. These was a negation addressed in our previous Policy Exchange report, *A School of Place* (2022).⁸

It is also likely that while there is a general awareness that the profile and importance of placemaking has risen, much of this has been condensed into a procedural, tick-box compliance exercise rather than a fundamental understanding of and appreciation for the manifest value and benefits better placemaking can yield. Also, as so much of placemaking is based on our emotional, behavioural or psychological response to our environment, construction, which for obvious reasons prioritises the physical, is perhaps less concerned with what it might see as ephemeral, intangible outcomes it cannot entirely control than it is with the more concrete built characteristics it can.

Finally there is also a popular misconception that placemaking, like beauty, costs money. Yet in both instances nothing could be further from the truth. While expensive materials and world-famous architects will invariably come with a cost premium, these are not essential for placemaking success. What is is a constant awareness of and sensitivity to the needs and contentment of the end user and to ensure that that sensibility is thoroughly embedded into the design process and not ‘added on’, should time and inclination allow, at the end. It is not the scale of the intervention that counts, but the strength of the vision and spirit behind it. This comes at zero cost.

7. Building Better Building Beautiful Commission; *Living With Beauty*, January 2020; p. 112

8. Ike Ijeh, Policy Exchange; *A School of Place, How a New School of Architecture can Revitalise Britain's Built Environment*, December 2022

Fig. 1.3 Birmingham's Brindley Place was one of the first large-scale commercial development schemes to successfully combine retail and offices with a high quality of civic placemaking. © Brindley Place Estate.



A Placemaking Matrix that methodically and forensically extrapolates all the key ingredients of placemaking and then gives them scores a development tool in safeguarding placemaking quality by ensuring that all aspects of placemaking are given the due consideration they deserve. The Matrix will not and cannot address all the obstacles obscuring the adoption of successful placemaking identified earlier. But it could articulate and demystify the processes, protocols and practices required to achieve it.

1.3 Previous Matrix Attempts

Fig. 1.4 While the Place Diagram from the Project for Public Spaces is one of the closest contemporary attempts to developing a placemaking measuring tool, it makes no attempt to measure the “intangible” qualities it identifies as being key to placemaking success. © Project for Public Spaces



Due to the difficulties discussed earlier there have not been many previous attempts to construct a Placemaking Matrix but each one sheds light on the challenges and opportunities such a framework presents. Project for Public Spaces, the pioneering New York-based non-profit organisation that has been dedicated to improving public spaces since 1975, has probably come closest to a universal measuring tool with its iconic wheel diagram that identifies the four key ingredients of successful public places as sociability, comfort, access and use. But even this had its imitations, namely that while it would recognise and consider the role that “intangible” qualities like pride and spirituality play in creating place, it makes no attempt to measure the extent to which they actively play in forming it.⁹

Equally, while some larger housebuilders and developers may have developed and deployed internal placemaking assessment tools in the past, these tend to be moulded around corporate priorities and are not therefore necessarily eligible as a universal assessment tool. The difficulty in reconciling the physical and psychological aspects of placemaking emerges as a constant barrier to the tool’s development and the relative ease with which the former can be measured contrasts sharply with the difficulty in measuring the latter.

9. <https://www.pps.org/article/grplacefeat>

The London Public Spaces Matrix overleaf provides a case in point ([Appendix 1](#)). The Matrix analyses the physical characteristics of central London squares as they have developed over the centuries and is able to use these to produce cumulative values that give a fairly accurate impression of the overall physical composition of London's squares. For instance, this matrix indicates that three-quarters of central London's squares were developed privately and not by the state, over half of them are residential and with grassed rather than hard-paved centres and almost two-thirds of them are irregular or informal in their physical composition as opposed to the more formal European square.

All these numerical conclusions help construct a reliable physical impression of London's squares that is perfectly reflective of the broader historic, political and cultural trends that forged the capital's development. Private finance, historically summoned by the aristocracy and now by commercial interests, has indeed played a disproportionately large role in London's development as has residential development, natural landscaping and a tradition of organic irregularity and informality that is a key part of London's charm. So the matrix has been very successful in conveying and confirming the overriding physical characteristics of London's squares.

But character is about much more than the physical and the matrix is silent on the non-physical aspects that nonetheless make a huge contribution to how urban spaces perform. Accordingly, it says nothing of crime, community engagement, socio-economic conditions or civic pride. So while the matrix may give an idea of what London squares look like, it is silent on the core issue of what they feel like and what sense of place they consequently generate and maintain.

Moreover, it makes no comparative qualitative judgements on the various physical characteristics it identifies. It does not say whether a paved square is better than a grass one, whether a commercial square might be more engaging than a residential one or whether a formal layout might be preferable to an irregular composition. In short the matrix is giving a very detailed account of only part of the full picture. The Placemaking Matrix will seek to fill in the gaps.

The Placemaking Matrix also follows a long historical tradition of trying to formulaically predict architectural beauty. However most attempts have been broadly unreliable for the very reasons of subjectivity, irrationality and unpredictability that have been discussed earlier. The most famous example is the Golden Section or Ratio, a venerated mathematical theorem of Greek origin that is said to deliver proportional perfection and is the alleged allegorical basis for all manner of artistic excellence from the Parthenon to the Mona Lisa.

Furthermore, according to Leonardo da Vinci, it also forms the rational inspiration for the ultimate artistic triumph, the human body. However, while the diagrammatic shape the ratio produces can be neatly fitted onto figurative representations of these three examples in particular as well as several others, it is wildly inapplicable to thousands of the other countless buildings and works of art generally accepted as the pinnacle of human

artistic achievement.

Fig. 1.5 While the UK Government's new Housing Design Manual contains, for the first time, ten specific categories by which placemaking success can be attained, it is not its intention to numerically score or rank developments on the basis of their compliance with each one.



More recently, some academics have stated that for a street to feel comfortable, it must conform to a certain dimensional proportions that promote spatial harmony and enclosure. The most famous adherent of this principle was Baron Haussmann, famed rebuilder of 19th century Paris who decreed that boulevards in the French capital should be rebuilt on a standard ratio that established a direct proportional relationship between the height of the buildings and the width of the streets¹⁰.

But while Paris's boulevards are indeed exemplars of urban design excellence and efficiency, they are not the only streets that can lay claim to these outcomes and thoroughfares in all manner of other cities, such as Rome, Barcelona, London, Buenos Aires, Bangkok, Casablanca and New York are able to attain engaging streetscapes without deploying Hausmann's ratio.

10. Kirkland, Stephane (2014): "Napoleon III, Baron Haussmann and the Quest to Build a Modern City"; (New York: St. Martin's Press)

These examples are not cited to nullify the value of trying to devise formulaic solutions for urban or architectural design excellence, such a conclusion would have an obvious detrimental and counterintuitive impact on the central purpose of this paper. But they do convincingly illustrate the intrinsic difficulty of trying to construct a universal tool for a placemaking process that is by its nature, inherently resistant to classification, regulation and standardisation.

Of late, the government has attempted to define placemaking quality through its National Design Guide. This contains 10 Characteristics of Well-Designed Places and, while compliance is not compulsory in planning terms, it encourages architects and developers to use them as “planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places.”¹¹ The manual does not however provide a scoring system to measure levels of success and is more an informative than interrogatory tool. Nonetheless it still represents a worthy and welcome step forward in making more specific policy attempts to explicitly define exactly what placemaking quality is.

1.4 Other Statutory Ratings Systems

The Placemaking Matrix will not be the first attempt to qualitatively assesses key societal outcomes, we live in an age where either the state or the private sector has established an increasing array of scoring systems to determine the quality of all manner of functions and activities pertinent to public life. This has not yet happened with the placemaking, primarily because culturally issues of design are normally considered subjective rather than objective values. As we have seen there is some truth but there is also a huge amount of observable, definitive truth on which placemaking assessment can be based.

Therefore the Placemaking Matrix and its attendant PAX score will bring issues of urban design and regeneration into this growing orbit of qualitative interrogation and assessment. Some of the most common existing ratings systems from which the Placemaking Matrix is inspired are listed below.

BREEAM

BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) was established in 1990 by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) as the world’s first ratings system designed to assess and certify environmental sustainability of finished buildings. It has since become hugely successful (helping spawn its LEED U.S. equivalent three years after it was introduced) and has had a transformative impact on the both the professional profile sustainability enjoys within the construction industry and the energy performance of buildings. While voluntary, the Government’s 2011 Construction Strategy made it mandatory for all publicly procured projects¹². The scoring is compiled by an accredited BREEAM assessor and registration for a BREEAM assessment requires a fee.

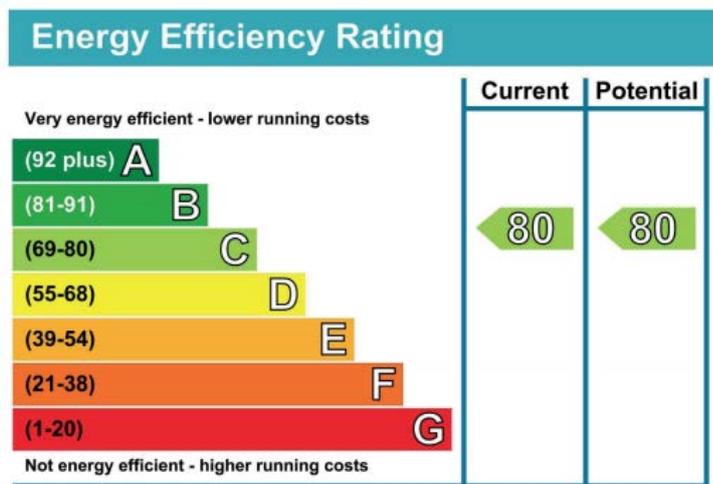
11. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government; *National Design Guide*, January 2021

12. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-construction-strategy>

ENERGY EFFICIENCY RATINGS

Energy Efficiency Ratings stickers are now a common feature on many UK consumer products, particularly large appliances and white goods. The stickers indicate how energy efficient the product in question is and offer seven performance categories ranging from “A” indicating the best performance and “G” the worst. In order to more accurately capture consumer interest, the stickers make a direct correlation between energy efficiency and running costs.

Fig. 1.5 The Energy Efficiency Rating sticker is now commonplace on larger UK electrical consumer products.



ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

Based on a similar principle to the energy efficiency rating above, Energy Performance Certificates essentially measure the energy performance of a house rather than a consumer product and similarly grade the results from A to G, indicating the highest and lowest scores respectively. EPCs are now mandatory whenever a house is either built, sold or rented and as with BREEAM the assessment is compiled by accredited assessors.

WELL STANDARD

The International Well Building Standard is a relatively new certification process that measures the quality of wellbeing a finished building attains. Wellbeing has become a more prominent feature of building construction and both it and the Well Standard seek to monitor and certify the impact the built environment has on human health and wellbeing. The Standard observes seven performance criteria which include seven “concepts”. These are Water, Nourishment, Light, Fitness, Comfort, Air and Mind. The 22 Bishopsgate skyscraper in the City of London was the first ‘shell and core’ building project in the UK to achieve the standard¹³.

13. <https://www.multiplex.global/news/22-bishopsgate-reaches-practical-completion/>

OFSTED RATINGS

OFSTED ratings are familiar to a vast number of parents in the UK meaning that they have achieved the rare cultural notoriety of being a statutory assessment system that is obsessively monitored by both state and citizens alike. The Government's Office for Standards in Education produces periodic reports and ratings that grade every state school (and selected private ones) in the UK according to the quality of education it provides. The assessment is based on an inspection and the four performance categories available are Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate.

PTAL

Public Transport Accessibility Levels measure the quality of public transport service provision at any given location within London. They are used extensively within the planning process and a low PTAL score could form part of the grounds for refusal of planning permission if the scale of development is deemed excessive in relation to the local public transport capacity or if the development does not take reasonable remedial measures. Compared to other assessment frameworks PTAL is relatively simple and results in a clear numerical score of 1 to 6 with 1 meaning poor provision and 6 the opposite. PTAL is also unusual in two other key ways. First it was specifically designed (by the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham) for London and is rarely used outside the capital or the South East. And secondly it is one of the few score ratings calculated *before* a project or development has completed, hence its ability to contribute to directly the planning process. This offers a firm precedent for the Placemaking Matrix.

2. Presenting the Matrix

The Placemaking Matrix provides a percentage score out of 100. Each percentage score falls under one of a total of four numerical bandings that range from POOR to OUTSTANDING. The performance bandings and the associated percentage values required to attain them are itemised below:

OUTSTANDING:	70% or above
GOOD:	60% to 69%
AVERAGE:	50% to 59%
POOR:	49% or below

The Placemaking Matrix comprises a number of questions split into three main categories. The categories are Physical, Socio-Economic and Psychological. Each question can earn a maximum score of 4 points and a minimum score of 0. Each main category is equally rated at 33% and **a minimum score of 60% must be attained in all three categories to achieve an Outstanding rating** to ensure that disproportionately high performance in one category does not conceal poor performance in another. Should the 60% minimum threshold not be reached in any category, then while the total final percentage score accrued in all three categories can remain intact, an Outstanding rating cannot be achieved.

Each main category is further subdivided into a number of subcategories. Unlike the main categories **these sub-categories have different weightings according to the impact of the said category and the extent of autonomous control the developer would be able to exert over it**. For instance, public transport provision does not fall directly under the developer's remit so this is only worth 3.33% of the matrix total. Equally crime is a central determinant of the quality of place yet it would be unreasonable to punish a scheme for pre-existing social conditions beyond its control so that too is worth 3.33% of the total score.

Yet the appearance of buildings however is an aspect almost entirely within the control of the design team so that accounts for 8.33% of the matrix total. Additionally, the quality of public realm also has a massive impact on a finished scheme and is almost entirely within the developer's control so this section accounts for 25% of the final matrix total score.

It is very important that the Matrix goes to great lengths to avoid value judgements. In bluntest terms, it does not exist to decide whether stone is better than glass or porticoes are preferable to canopies or cobblestones are

more desirable than paving slabs. Instead it seeks to prescribe **an objective and dispassionate means of quality assessment that focuses specifically on outcomes rather than processes or preference.**

While the Matrix seeks to be a universal assessment tool it recognises the substantial variation there can be between the scale and budgets of different projects. For instance, is it really fair to compare a vast, multi-million pound central London urban regeneration scheme like King's Cross Central to a small community housing development in a rural area? In order to more effectively attain parity, there should be capacity to tailor the Matrix to different projects by either removing selected questions by prior agreement or increasing performance thresholds for larger more expensive projects.

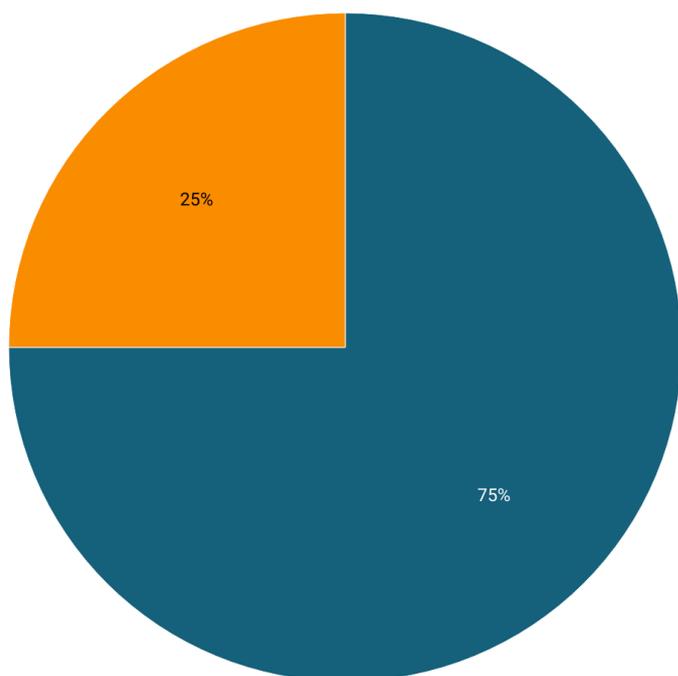
Finally the Matrix does not seek to present a definitive, exhaustive set of questions that are fixed in stone in perpetuity and can never be changed. It is anticipated that the questions, as with architecture and places themselves, will adapt and evolve over time to more accurately reflect ongoing placemaking and design theory as well as the specific scale and scope of the project at hand. But while doing so, the Matrix will always seek to embody established and objective best practice methodologies for delivering the highest standard and quality of built environment possible.

The Matrix itself is included on the following pages with further explanation and guidance of selected questions in the following section of this paper.

FIG. 2.1 PLACEMAKING MATRIX SCORE WEIGHTINGS

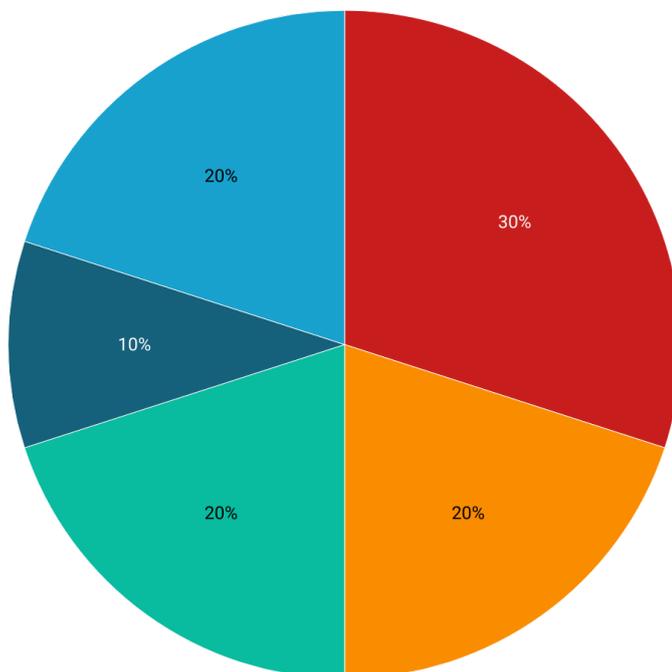
1. PHYSICAL (33.3%)

■ PUBLIC REALM (25%) ■ BUILDINGS (8.33%)



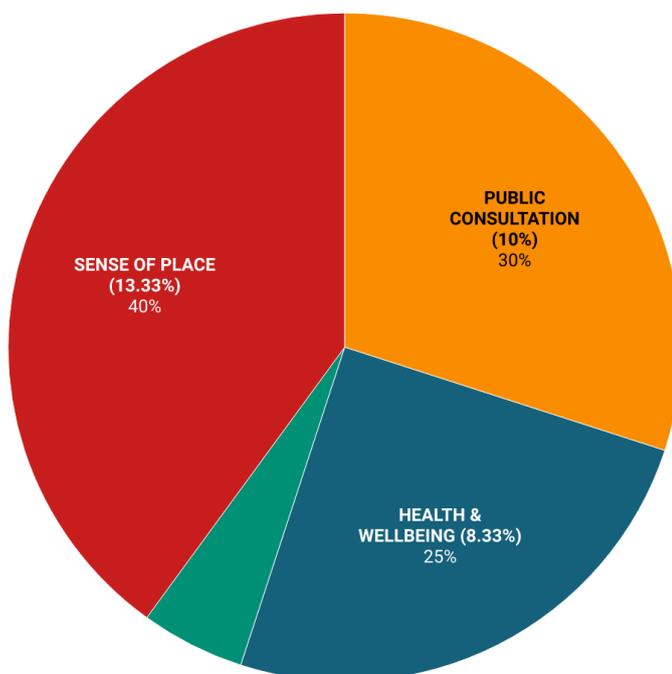
2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC (33.3%)

USES & MIX (10%) USERS & INCLUSIVITY (6.66%) MANAGEMENT (6.66%)
EMPLOYMENT (3.33%) Other



3. PSYCHOLOGICAL (33.3%)

PUBLIC CONSULTATION (10%) HEALTH & WELLBEING (8.33%)
TECHNOLOGY & INFORMATION (1.66%) SENSE OF PLACE (13.33%)



1/12 MATRIX SCORE SHEET / SECTION 1.1 - PUBLIC REALM

76 Questions 75% of Section Total, 25% of Matrix Total						
Question	Strong YES	Moderate YES	Basic Pass	Moderate NO	Strong NO	
Street Furniture	4	3	2	1	0	
1.1.01 Does street furniture apparatus conform to a coordinated and coherent design concept or a distinctive visual or thematic narrative?						
1.1.02 Is street furniture generally well integrated into public realm?						
1.1.03 Does street furniture apparatus deploy a recognisable palette of materials?						
1.1.04 Has street clutter and overspecification been actively minimised?						
1.1.05 Have benches or informal seating areas been provided in all public streets?						
1.1.06 Is a management plan in place for the efficient and effective repair and replacement of street furniture elements when required?						
1.1.07 Have supply chains been selected that maximise the likelihood of like-for-like replacement of street furniture elements like paving and bollards?						
1.1.08 Do public spaces or squares or gathering points offer communal seating?						
1.1.09 Are litter bins discreetly located?						
1.1.10 Have opportunities been taken to combine street furniture apparatus? (i.e. lamp-posts combined with litter bins)?						
1.1.11 Have opportunities been taken to make design statements from larger street furniture elements like lamp-posts?						
1.1.12 Is there a coordinated design theme for signage?						
1.1.13 In order to create more active frontages have opportunities been taken to hang signage and lamp-lighting from buildings at or just above street level?						
1.1.14 Do all bus stops have seating?						
1.1.15 Is a litter bin located at all bus-stops?						
Spatial Typology						
1.1.16 Does the development contain a street? [If No proceed to Question 1.1.19]						
1.1.17 Does the development contain a hierarchy of streets with this hierarchy expressed through specific architecture and public realm features?						
1.1.18 Do street facades generally maintain a rhythm of vertical articulation?						
1.1.19 Does the development contain a square, plaza or piazza? [If NO proceed to Question 1.1.21]						
1.1.20 Does the development contain a hierarchy of squares, plazas or piazzas with this hierarchy expressed through specific architecture and public realm features?						
1.1.21 Does the development deploy archways, gateways, screens -or covered routes to navigate the transition between adjacent public spaces?						

1.1.22	<i>Does the development contain or offer access to a public park or gardens?</i>					
1.1.23	<i>Does the development contain shared spaces or 'home zones'?</i>					
1.1.24	<i>Have any rooftops been utilised for public or communal space?</i>					
Culture & Public Art						
1.1.25	<i>Does the development contain public art?</i>					
1.1.26	<i>Can the development facilitate the temporary display of public artworks or installations?</i>					
1.1.27	<i>Does the development contain sculpture or statuary?</i>					
1.1.28	<i>Can the development host or facilitate cultural events and performances at multiple scales?</i>					
1.1.29	<i>Does the development utilise public art or sculpture in the design of public infrastructure like railway arches, electricity substations and ventilation shafts?</i>					
1.1.30	<i>Does the development have examples of civic and communal celebration and commemoration through statuary and public art?</i>					
1.1.31	<i>Has any building, street or public space been specifically with statuary or public art as a focal point?</i>					
Layout/Masterplan						
1.1.32	<i>Does the design of buildings and public spaces in the development help promote legibility (i.e. keynote buildings as landmarks)?</i>					
1.1.33	<i>Do streets have clearly defined built or natural edges?</i>					
1.1.34	<i>Has the development's urban grain been inspired by that which exists within surrounding areas or neighbouring communities?</i>					
1.1.35	<i>Does the development maintain an urban grain that relates well to human scale?</i>					
1.1.36	<i>Do public spaces have clearly defined built or natural edges?</i>					
1.1.37	<i>Is a sense of intimacy promoted within the development through the enclosure of streets and spaces with buildings or natural landscaping?</i>					
1.1.38	<i>Has a clear distinction between public and private space been maintained throughout the development?</i>					
1.1.39	<i>Are streets and public spaces generally overlooked by buildings?</i>					
1.1.40	<i>Have gaps in the line of buildings been generally avoided?</i>					
1.1.41	<i>To what extent has the street layout or public realm design been derived from desire lines?</i>					
1.1.42	<i>Do spaces have a clearly defined purpose and has leftover or surplus space been minimised?</i>					
Nature						
1.1.43	<i>Does the development contain streets lined with trees on one side?</i>					
1.1.44	<i>Does the development contain streets lined with trees on both sides?</i>					

1.1.45	<i>Is a tree strategy in place to ensure trees do not obscure statement or landmark architectural facades?</i>					
1.1.46	<i>Do trees or planting feature in public spaces?</i>					
1.1.47	<i>Has soft landscaping been integrated into the design of public spaces?</i>					
1.1.48	<i>Have public buildings been fitted with equipment enabling the hanging or fixing of plants or planters?</i>					
1.1.49	<i>Have private buildings been fitted with equipment enabling the hanging or fixing of plants or planters?</i>					
1.1.50	<i>Does the development significant grassed areas (i.e. parks or public gardens?)</i>					
1.1.51	<i>If YES to the above, have leisure or recreational amenities been concentrated in or around these areas?</i>					
1.1.52	<i>Does the development promote natural habitats in a manner that enhances and enlivens public realm?</i>					
1.1.53	<i>Do any building elevations feature integrated planting?</i>					
Water						
1.1.54	<i>Does the development contain fountains?</i>					
1.1.55	<i>Does the development contain a drinking water fountain?</i>					
1.1.56	<i>Does the development contain water features in hard landscaped areas?</i>					
1.1.57	<i>Does the development contain water features in soft landscaped areas?</i>					
1.1.58	<i>Have any rivers or large artificial water features within or adjacent to the development feature public footpaths or soft landscaping along their edge?</i>					
1.1.59	<i>Have any wildlife habitats been maintained or established around natural or artificial water features.</i>					
1.1.60	<i>If a SUDS (Sustainable Drainage System) is in place, has it been fully integrated into public realm and the landscaping plan?</i>					
1.1.61	<i>Have views towards any water features been preserved?</i>					
1.1.62	<i>Have any facades been specifically designed to engage with or serve as a backdrop to a prominent natural or artificial water feature?</i>					
Movement						
1.1.63	<i>Are cycle lanes and pedestrian pathways separated by kerbs?</i>					
1.1.64	<i>Are bus stops and stands situated in areas clearly and physically separated from cycle lanes?</i>					
1.1.65	<i>Does the development include fully pedestrianised areas?</i>					
1.1.66	<i>Does the development include fully pedestrianised areas that were previously roads?</i>					
1.1.67	<i>Does the development contain communal cycle parking?</i>					

1.1.68	<i>Does the development contain free cycle parking?</i>					
1.1.69	<i>Are cycle stands located at regular intervals throughout the development?</i>					
1.1.70	<i>Has it been ensured that railings never separate pedestrian pavements from vehicular traffic?</i>					
1.1.71	<i>Should the development contain any pedestrianised roads has the paving been unified to eliminate the demarcation between paving & former road?</i>					
1.1.72	<i>Do any shared surface spaces have physical measures in place to ensure that pedestrian priority is maintained and enhanced at all times?</i>					
1.1.73	<i>Do any shared surface spaces have tactile or audial measures in place to ensure the safety of any mobility or sensory-impaired pedestrians at all times?</i>					
1.1.74	<i>Is the development fully integrated into surrounding pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes?</i>					
1.1.75	<i>Have stone setts rather than paint been used to demarcate parking spaces?</i>					
1.1.76	<i>Has the visibility of parked cars within the public realm been minimised by measures such as planting or undercroft/underground parking?</i>					
TOTAL SECTION SCORE [y] (Out of a possible maximum of 304)						0
FINAL MATRIX SCORE (Out of a possible maximum of 25) [304 / 100] = x. y/x = a. [25 / 100] = n. a x n =						

2/12 MATRIX SCORE SHEET / SECTION 1.2 - BUILDINGS

47 Questions

25% of Section Total, 8.33% of Matrix Total

Question	Strong YES	Moderate YES	Basic Pass	Moderate NO	Strong NO
	4	3	2	1	0
1.2.01 <i>Is there an overall, publicly relatable design vision or narrative for the character and appearance of the development's buildings?</i>					
1.2.02 <i>Have building elevations been modelled with depth and articulation?</i>					
1.2.03 <i>Have bins and utility meters been concealed from entrance facades?</i>					
1.2.04 <i>Has any surface interest (i.e. modulation, perforation or decoration) been introduced onto building facades?</i>					
1.2.05 <i>Has permanent planting of any kind (from fixtures for hanging planters to green walls) been incorporated or facilitated onto facades?</i>					
1.2.06 <i>Are any feature landmarks such as domes, chimneys, gables or canopies present in order to enliven the roofscape and townscape?</i>					
1.2.07 <i>Do blocks of flats retain an appearance that is immediately distinguishable from commercial architecture?</i>					
1.2.08 <i>Do any buildings employ architectural filter devices like colonnades, cloisters or loggias to navigate the transition between different spaces and interior and exterior spaces?</i>					
1.2.09 <i>Do blocks of flats have clearly discernible and identifiable entrances?</i>					
1.2.10 <i>Are balconies and/or roof terraces present on all blocks of flats?</i>					
1.2.11 <i>Do any flats above ground floor level have dedicated, private ground floor entrances?</i>					
1.2.12 <i>Do the buildings utilise corners by modelling them as features of architectural interest?</i>					
1.2.13 <i>Has the building's impact on short, medium and long-term views been fully assessed and considered and clearly articulated in the Design & Access Statement?</i>					
1.2.14 <i>Has the building's impact on streetscape been fully assessed and considered and clearly articulated in the Design & Access Statement?</i>					
1.2.15 <i>Has the building's impact on the skyline been fully assessed and considered and clearly articulated in the Design & Access Statement?</i>					
1.2.16 <i>Has any part of the building been designed to act as a landmark or focal point that terminates vistas and views?</i>					
1.2.17 <i>Do the buildings incorporate dynamic forms and geometries to create drama and interest?</i>					
1.2.18 <i>Have buildings or building details been designed with reference to design codes or similar strategic design guidance?</i>					
1.2.19 <i>Have building details been designed with reference to pattern books or similar strategic design guidance?</i>					
1.2.20 <i>If masonry is present in the development have any textured materials been used at any point?</i>					
1.2.21 <i>Do building elevations contain unique architectural details that can be visible on medium or long-range views?</i>					

1.2.22	<i>Have blank walls been prevented from facing onto public highways?</i>					
1.2.23	<i>Has excessive elevational standardisation been avoided? (i.e. is a different façade treatment used for different adjacent environments).</i>					
1.2.24	<i>Do building footprints reflect or re-establish local urban grain?</i>					
1.2.25	<i>Have roofs been utilised for terraces or planting?</i>					
1.2.26	<i>Does the development contain a refurbished or retrofitted heritage building?</i>					
1.2.27	<i>Does the development contain a refurbished or retrofitted heritage building previously earmarked for demolition?</i>					
1.2.28	<i>To what extent do new buildings offer the flexibility that might one day enable them to be adapted to future uses that may preserve their longevity?</i>					
1.2.29	<i>To what extent are different window types deployed on different floors?</i>					
1.2.30	<i>Is there any illumination of public building facades at night?</i>					
	Context					
1.2.31	<i>Does the design of entrances/doorways reference, reinforce or reinterpret local precedents and vernaculars?</i>					
1.2.32	<i>Does the design, placing and proportion of windows reference, reinforce or reinterpret local precedents and vernaculars?</i>					
1.2.33	<i>Does the design, form and composition of the roofs reference, reinforce or reinterpret local precedents and vernaculars?</i>					
1.2.34	<i>Does the palette of wall materials reference, reinforce or reinterpret local precedents and vernaculars?</i>					
1.2.35	<i>Does the palette of roof materials reference, reflect or reinterpret local precedents and vernaculars?</i>					
1.2.36	<i>Does the palette of materials for paving and street surfaces reference, reflect or reinterpret local precedents and vernaculars?</i>					
1.2.37	<i>Do building corners reference, reinforce or reinterpret local precedents and vernaculars?</i>					
1.2.38	<i>Does building form and massing reference, reinforce or reinterpret local precedents and vernaculars?</i>					
1.2.39	<i>Do building heights reference, reinforce or reinterpret local precedents and vernaculars?</i>					
	Site Specific Questions (These can be removed & scoring recalculated if not applicable to development)					
1.2.40	<i>Do any balconies avoid an 'added-on' appearance and have they been fully integrated into the elevational composition?</i>					
1.2.41	<i>Do any tall buildings reference, reflect or reinterpret local precedents and vernaculars?</i>					
1.2.42	<i>Has the visual and strategic impact of tall buildings on long-range, medium-range and short-range views been comprehensively and graphically assessed?</i>					
1.2.43	<i>Do any tall buildings have a discernible top, middle and bottom with the latter engaging directly with the street?</i>					
1.2.44	<i>Is there variation in building heights? [ONLY APPLICABLE TO DEVELOPMENTS ABOVE A CERTAIN SIZE]</i>					
1.2.45	<i>Do non-residential buildings have clearly discernible and identifiable entrances?</i>					

1.2.46	<i>On high-density schemes, have alternative typologies to high-rise been implemented (i.e mansion blocks)?</i>					
1.2.47	<i>Do blocks of flats retain an appearance that is immediately distinguishable from commercial/office architecture?</i>					
TOTAL SECTION SCORE [y] (Out of a possible maximum of 188)		0				
FINAL MATRIX SCORE (Out of a possible maximum of 8.33) [188 / 100] = x. y/x = a. [8.33 / 100] = n. a x n =						

3/12 MATRIX SCORE SHEET / SECTION 2.1 - **TRANSPORT**

16 Questions

10% of Section Total, 3.33% of Matrix Total

Question	Strong YES	Moderate YES	Basic Pass	Moderate NO	Strong NO
	4	3	2	1	0
2.1.01 Will a bus route pass through the development?					
2.1.02 Is a bus route available within a 10-minute walking distance of the development?					
2.1.03 Is a 24hr bus route available within the development or within the immediate local area?					
2.1.04 Is a train station located within a 10-minute walking distance of the development?					
2.1.05 Is a tram or urban metro system located within a 10-minute walking distance of the development?					
2.1.06 Does the development incorporate cycle lanes?					
2.1.07 Does the development incorporate communal cycle storage?					
2.1.08 Do all residential properties within the development have access to private cycle storage?					
2.1.09 Is real time information available at bus stops?					
2.1.10 Have car parking courts been avoided throughout the development?					
2.1.11 Are any bus-stop bypasses always linked to the main pavement by raised zebra crossings?					
2.1.12 Are 'bus boarders' at bus stops avoided entirely?					
2.1.13 Does the development maintain a cycle hire scheme?					
2.1.14 Have traffic calming measures been incorporated onto the development?					
2.1.15 Are there instances where parking spaces are demarcated by changes in paving material rather than paint?					
2.1.16 To what extent has natural landscaping been used to shield/soften parking areas and spaces?					
TOTAL SECTION SCORE [y] (Out of a possible maximum of 64)			0		
FINAL MATRIX SCORE (Out of a possible maximum of 3.33) [64 / 100] = x. y/x = a. [3.33 / 100] = n. a x n =					

4/12 MATRIX SCORE SHEET / SECTION 2.2 - CRIME & SAFETY

17 Questions

10% of Section Total, 3.33% of Matrix Total

Question	Strong YES 4	Moderate YES 3	Basic Pass 2	Moderate NO 1	Strong NO 0
2.2.01 To what extent have Secured By Design principles been embedded into the design?					
2.2.02 Has the development won a Secured By Design Award?					
2.2.03 To what extent has the design been developed in consultation with any local community safety groups advocating for potentially vulnerable users?					
2.2.04 To what extent has the design been developed in consultation with the police?					
2.2.05 Have cul-de-sacs and other dead-end routes been avoided?					
2.2.06 Should cul-de-sacs be in place, to what extent do they limit onward access to secluded areas like towpath and railways lines?					
2.2.07 Have secluded corners and concealed alcoves been avoided?					
2.2.08 To what extent does the development design actively promote natural surveillance and overlooking?					
2.2.09 Are all public footpaths well and conspicuously illuminated at night?					
2.2.10 Are all residential entrances fitted with (as a minimum) motion triggered lighting at night?					
2.2.11 Has care been taken to ensure that areas that are not used after dark (i.e. children's playgrounds) are not illuminated at night?					
2.2.12 Have any barriers &/or crowd/vehicle mitigation measures (i.e. bollards/raised ramps) been designed to a high standard as part of a street furniture strategy?					
2.2.13 Will residents' safety and confidence be enhanced by the installation of advanced security measures on properties such as alarms directly connected to the police?					
2.2.14 Do public areas have communal CCTV installed?					
2.2.15 Has the gated community typology been avoided?					
2.2.16 Do colonnades, porches or similar semi-concealed features have sufficient usage, porosity, lighting and surveillance to discourage anti-social behaviour?					
2.2.17 Are fencing, walls and barriers articulated enough to avoid continuous, blank frontages against which anti-social behaviour can take place?					
TOTAL SECTION SCORE [y] (Out of a possible maximum of 68)			0		
FINAL MATRIX SCORE (Out of a possible maximum of 3.33) [68 / 100] = x. y/x = a. [3.33 / 100] = n. a x n =					

5/12 MATRIX SCORE SHEET / SECTION 2.3 - **USES & MIX**

27 Questions

30% of Section Total, 10% of Matrix Total

		Strong YES	Moderate YES	Basic Pass	Moderate NO	Strong NO
Question		4	3	2	1	0
Building Typologies						
2.3.01	To what extent has an active mix of uses been incorporated onto the development site?					
2.3.02	To what extent do building uses integrate into existing usage patterns in the area surrounding the development site?					
2.3.03	To what extent do ground floor uses alternate to reflect surrounding social and commercial conditions?					
Active Frontages						
2.3.04	To what extent have active frontages been maintained on ground floor areas?					
2.3.05	If it is not possible to maintain ground floor active frontages (i.e. residential) does the architectural design provide additional GF interest/articulation?					
2.3.06	Have opportunities been taken to concentrate active frontages on streets and squares to promote a vibrant streetscape and public realm?					
2.3.07	Do any active frontages make use of openings or awnings to directly promote interaction with the street?					
Programming & Events						
2.3.08	Has programmed space (i.e. space capable of being utilised for regular public performances, events etc) been provided? [If No go to Question 2.3.14]					
2.3.09	Is the programming part of any management plan that might exist in Section 2.5?					
2.3.10	Are measures in place to encourage/facilitate residential participation and organisation of programmed events?					
2.3.11	Does the programme design incorporate shelter for multiple weather conditions?					
2.3.12	Does the programme design incorporate opportunities for impromptu street performance?					
2.3.13	Does any programme apparatus incorporate audio-visual, tactile, sensory or play equipment?					
Amenities (Applicable for projects only above 150 units)						
2.3.14	What level of non-residential leisure or entertainment amenities have been provide on the development?					
2.3.15	What level of healthcare facilities have been provided on the development?					
2.3.16	What level of community facilities have been provided on the development?					
2.3.17	What level of commercial/employment facilities have been provided on the development?					
2.3.18	What level of recreational amenity has been provided on the development?					
2.3.19	What level of cultural amenity has been provided on the development?					
2.3.20	What level of retail facilities have been provided on the development?					
2.3.21	Has a letterbox been provided within the development?					
Housing Mix						

2.3.22	<i>Has a mix of housing tenures been provided?</i>					
2.3.23	<i>Has a mix of generational housing been provided?</i>					
2.3.24	<i>Has inter-generational housing been provided?</i>					
2.3.25	<i>Externally, do all housing tenures attain the same architectural quality?</i>					
2.3.26	<i>Do multiple housing tenures share the same entrances?</i>					
2.3.27	<i>Within blocks of flats, to what extent do ground floor properties utilise individual front doors as opposed to communal entrances?</i>					
TOTAL SECTION SCORE [y] (Out of a possible maximum of 108)		0				
FINAL MATRIX SCORE (Out of a possible maximum of 10) $[108 / 100] = x$. $y/x = a$. $[10 / 100] = n$. $a \times n =$						

6/12 MATRIX SCORE SHEET / SECTION 2.4 - **USERS & INCLUSIVITY**

13 Questions

20% of Section Total, 6.66% of Matrix Total

Question	Strong YES	Moderate YES	Basic Pass	Moderate NO	Strong NO
	4	3	2	1	0
Children & Young People					
2.4.01					
<i>Have safe and well-designed play spaces for children been provided? [If NO go to Question 2.4.04]</i>					
2.4.02					
<i>Are play spaces overlooked by housing?</i>					
2.4.03					
<i>Are play space areas lockable at night?</i>					
2.4.04					
<i>Have facilities for sports, games and recreation been provided?</i>					
Families, Older People & Accessibility					
2.4.05					
<i>Have public conveniences been provided? [If NO go to Question 2.4.08]</i>					
2.4.06					
<i>Have public conveniences been designed to a high standard that compliments other street furniture apparatus?</i>					
2.4.07					
<i>Is the management and maintenance of the public conveniences within the remit of any management plan identified in Section 2.5?</i>					
2.4.08					
<i>Has seating areas been provided in all streets and public spaces?</i>					
2.4.09					
<i>Are public baby changing facilities in place?</i>					
2.4.10					
<i>Have all residential properties with two bedrooms and above been fitted with dedicated pram storage space?</i>					
2.4.11					
<i>Are any level changes in the ground plane accompanied by ramps as well as steps?</i>					
2.4.12					
<i>Have multiple opportunities been provided for social gathering, interaction and activity?</i>					
2.4.13					
<i>To what extent has cognitive or behavioural stimuli been incorporated into the design of public spaces?</i>					
TOTAL SECTION SCORE [y] (Out of a possible maximum of 48)			0		
FINAL MATRIX SCORE (Out of a possible maximum of 6.66) [48 / 100] = x. y/x = a. [6.66 / 100] = n. a x n =					

7/12 MATRIX SCORE SHEET / SECTION 2.5 - **MANAGEMENT**

11 Questions

20% of Section Total, 6.66% of Matrix Total

	Question	Strong YES 4	Moderate YES 3	Basic Pass 2	Moderate NO 1	Strong NO 0
2.5.01	Are any new or innovative tertiary management systems (such as Business Improvement Districts) in place?					
2.5.02	Has a public realm management plan (or equivalent) been established? [If NO, go to Question 2.5.09]					
2.5.03	Will the public realm management plan seek representation from local residents &/or stakeholders?					
2.5.04	Does the public realm management plan allow for the regular or periodic scheduling of programmed events or public performance?					
2.5.05	Can the public realm management plan be reviewed and updated at regular pre-determined intervals?					
2.5.06	Have restrictive covenants, building codes or similar been used to regulate resident or stakeholder behaviour & promote responsibility post-occupancy?					
2.5.07	Does the public realm management plan have the capacity to market or promote the development in areas outside the development?					
2.5.08	Will the public realm management plan be made easily accessible to residents &/or stakeholders?					
2.5.09	Is a maintenance plan in place to assure the smooth operation of key infrastructure assets such as street lighting and litter collection?					
2.5.10	Has a Building Management System (or similar) been installed at properties within the development?					
2.5.11	Is a Litter, Cleanliness & Bin Collection strategy or plan in place?					
TOTAL SECTION SCORE [y] (Out of a possible maximum of 44)		0				
FINAL MATRIX SCORE (Out of a possible maximum of 6.66) [44 / 100] = x. y/x = a. [6.66 / 100] = n. a x n =						

8/12 MATRIX SCORE SHEET / SECTION 2.6 - **EMPLOYMENT**

7 Questions

10% of Section Total, 3.33% of Matrix Total

		Strong YES	Moderate YES	Basic Pass	Moderate NO	Strong NO
Question		4	3	2	1	0
2.6.01	Have Employment opportunities been provided within the development?					
2.6.02	Have commercial premises been provided within the development?					
2.6.03	Will the development prioritise letting of any commercial premises for residents?					
2.6.04	Will the development prioritise letting of any commercial premises for entrepreneurs?					
2.6.05	Will the development prioritise letting of any commercial premises for young people?					
2.6.06	To what extent do residential units incorporate live-work units sufficient for home working?					
2.6.07	Have short-term lettable commercial premises been provided within the development?					
TOTAL SECTION SCORE [y] (Out of a possible maximum of 28)		0				
FINAL MATRIX SCORE (Out of a possible maximum of 6.66) [28 / 100] = x. y/x = a. [3.33 / 100] = n. a x n =						

9/12 MATRIX SCORE SHEET / SECTION 3.1 - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

14 Questions

30% of Section Total, 10% of Matrix Total

30% of Section Total, 10% of Matrix Total		Strong YES	Moderate YES	Basic Pass	Moderate NO	Strong NO
Question		4	3	2	1	0
3.1.01	Generally, have the public been engaged with and embedded into the planning, design & development process?					
3.1.02	Was a single public consultation event held during the development phase?					
3.1.03	Was more than one public consultation event held during the development phase? [If No to either 3.1.02 or 3.1.03 go to Question 3.1.07]					
3.1.04	Is it possible to cite instances where the design proposals changed substantially as a result of the public consultation process?					
3.1.05	Did public consultation notification exceed the minimum statutory requirements? Were they widely advertised in local press, media and amenities?					
3.1.06	Were the public consultation events well attended?					
3.1.07	Beyond public consultation events, were other innovative strategies or campaigns devised to elicit public involvement in & awareness of the proposals?					
3.1.08	Were community workshops or charettes held to involve the public and local community during the design process?					
3.1.09	Will there be structures in place to allow residents to leave feedback on their experience living in the development?					
3.1.10	Did any community events or strategies organised as part of the consultation process take places from the very START of the design process?					
Polling						
3.1.11	Was public polling undertaken at any stage of the design, planning or development process? [If No go to Question 3.1.13]					
3.1.12	Did the results of the polling substantially alter the proposals?					
3.1.13	Are plans in place to poll public opinion of the development once it has been completed? [If no go to Section 3.2]					
3.1.14	Are plans in place to use the above poll results to inform the management of the existing development and the design of future ones?					
TOTAL SECTION SCORE [y] (Out of a possible maximum of 56)		0				
FINAL MATRIX SCORE (Out of a possible maximum of 10) [56 / 100] = x. y/x = a. [10 / 100] = n. a x n =						

10/12 MATRIX SCORE SHEET / SECTION 3.2 - **HEALTH & WELLBEING**

12 Questions

25% of Section Total, 8.33% of Matrix Total

25% of Section Total, 8.33% of Matrix Total						
Question	Strong YES	Moderate YES	Basic Pass	Moderate NO	Strong NO	
	4	3	2	1	0	
3.2.01						<i>Is any part of the development seeking WELL certification?</i>
3.2.02						<i>Has any part of the development been awarded Gold or Platinum WELL certification rating?</i>
3.2.03						<i>Does the development conspicuously encourage active walking and cycling?</i>
3.2.04						<i>Has the development been designed to encourage personal exercise?</i>
3.2.05						<i>Does the development incorporate measures to combat social isolation, especially amongst the elderly?</i>
3.2.06						<i>Has a sensory mix of public spaces been provided? (i.e. tranquil vs active areas)</i>
3.2.07						<i>Have measures been introduced to facilitate personal autonomy? (Eg. clear wayfinding, spatial legibility, conspicuous signage)</i>
3.2.08						<i>Have measures been introduced to facilitate either planned or spontaneous communal gathering? (E.g. Public space programming, group benches)</i>
3.2.09						<i>Have defibrillators and/or first aid equipment been provided in public spaces?</i>
3.2.10						<i>Has communal gym equipment been provided in public spaces?</i>
3.2.11						<i>Does natural landscaping impact all areas of the development?</i>
3.2.12						<i>Have sports and recreational facilities been provided?</i>
TOTAL SECTION SCORE [y]			0			
(Out of a possible maximum of 48)						
FINAL MATRIX SCORE (Out of a possible maximum of 8.33)						
[48 / 100] = x. y/x = a. [8.32 / 100] = n. a x n =						

11/12 MATRIX SCORE SHEET / SECTION 3.3 - TECHNOLOGY & INFORMATION

6 Questions

5% of Section Total, 1.66% of Matrix Total

	Question	Strong YES	Moderate YES	Basic Pass	Moderate NO	Strong NO
		4	3	2	1	0
3.3.01	<i>Is free public Wi-Fi provided across the development?</i>					
3.3.02	<i>Is signage clear, frequent and legible?</i>					
3.3.03	<i>Have maps been installed within the public realm?</i>					
3.3.04	<i>Have information kiosks and panels been installed within the development?</i>					
3.3.05	<i>Have signage, information panels etc. been designed and installed as part of an overall wayfinding strategy?</i>					
3.3.06	<i>Have electric vehicle charging points been provided?</i>					
TOTAL SECTION SCORE [y] (Out of a possible maximum of 24)		0				
FINAL MATRIX SCORE (Out of a possible maximum of 1.66) [24 / 100] = x. y/x = a. [8.32 / 100] = n. a x n =						

12/12 MATRIX SCORE SHEET / SECTION 3.4 - **SENSE OF PLACE**

28 Questions

40% of Section Total, 13.33% of Matrix Total

40% of Section Total, 13.33% of Matrix Total						
Question	Strong YES	Moderate YES	Basic Pass	Moderate NO	Strong NO	
Ownership & Responsibility						
3.4.01						
3.4.02						
3.4.03						
3.4.04						
3.4.05						
3.4.06						
Pride						
3.4.07						
3.4.08						
3.4.09						
3.4.10						
3.4.11						
3.4.12						
Experience						
3.4.13						
3.4.14						
3.4.15						
3.4.16						
3.4.17						
Character						
3.4.18						
3.4.19						
3.4.20						
3.4.21						

3.4.22	<i>Does the development maintain distinctive public realm landmarks?</i>					
3.4.23	<i>Does the development maintain distinctive natural landmarks?</i>					
3.4.24	<i>Does the development maintain a distinctive skyline or roofscape?</i>					
3.4.25	<i>Does the development maintain a distinctive or unconventional street pattern or layout?</i>					
3.4.26	<i>Does the development eschew the segregated feel of a housing estate that is separate to its surrounding areas?</i>					
3.4.27	<i>Are unique architectural features in place that have the potential to become local landmarks? (i.e. clocks, clocktowers, bandstands, sundials, weather vanes)</i>					
3.4.28	<i>Does the development promote a visual brand, motif or logo?</i>					
TOTAL SECTION SCORE [y] (Out of a possible maximum of 112)		0				
FINAL MATRIX SCORE (Out of a possible maximum of 11.66) [112 / 100] = x. y/x = a. [11.66 / 100] = n. a x n =						

FINAL MATRIX SCORE		
<i>All Section Totals</i>		
	<i>Section</i>	Percentage Score
PHYSICAL		
1.1	Buildings	
1.2	Public Realm	
SOCIO-ECONOMIC		
2.1	Transport	
2.2	Crime & Safety	
2.3	Uses & Mix	
2.4	Users & Inclusivity	
2.5	Management	
2.6	Employment	
PSYCHOLOGICAL		
3.1	Public Consultation	
3.2	Health & Wellbeing	
3.3	Technology & Information	
3.4	Sense of Place	
FINAL MATRIX SCORE		
FINAL MATRIX BAND (Outstanding 70%+; Good 60%-69%; Average 50%-59%; Poor 49% or below)		

3. Explaining the Matrix

Section 1: Physical

SUB-SECTION 1.1: PUBLIC REALM (25%)

Public realm is at the key agent of placemaking and, along with buildings, forms the most significant physical ingredient of public realm and therefore assumes the largest score value within the entire matrix. However, unlike buildings public realm offers less room for the assertion of aesthetic or stylistic preferences and therefore it is possible to establish a clearer and less disputed relationship between physical intervention and environmental or emotional response. Public Realm covers many areas and the questions range from street furniture, spatial typology and public art to layout, nature and movement.

Fig. 3.5 (LEFT) With its festooned dolphins, lamp-posts on London's Victoria Embankment provide a superlative example of thematically designed street furniture. [QUESTIONS 1.1.01-03] Fig. 3.6 (MIDDLE) An underground vent in London's Paternoster Square shows how infrastructure and public art can be creatively combined. [QUESTIONS 1.1.25-31] Fig. 3.7 (RIGHT) The Mirror Pool in Bradford's Centenary Square shows the energy and dynamism water can inject into public realm. [QUESTIONS 1.1.54-62]



SUB-SECTION 1.2: BUILDINGS (8.33%)

Architecture remains a uniquely contentious aspect of placemaking with some maintaining that the style of a building for instance can have a direct impact on the character of a place. While there may be evidence to prove this, there are also contradictory examples of public realm flourishing despite adjacent architecture that might be perceived as visually harmful or of low aesthetic quality. The Matrix's response therefore is to avoid making value judgements about style or aesthetics and instead explore the more intuitive impacts of physical architectural intervention. Examples of such questions are whether elevational interest is provided by facades having depth and modelling and whether elevational detailing is capable of enriching streetscape by having long as well as close range visual impact. As architecture and public realm is largely interchangeable, the weighting for

the Physical section is heavily in favour of the more objective Public Realm subsection rather than the Buildings equivalent.

Fig. 3.8 (LEFT) Colonnades such as at Glasgow's City Campus are useful architectural devices to navigate the transition between internal and external space or to subdivide public realm. [QUESTIONS 1.2.04] Fig. 3.9 (MIDDLE) Modulation, perforation and decoration, as seen here at Cartwright Gardens in London, can enliven facades. [QUESTIONS 1.2.06] Fig. 3.10 (RIGHT) The dynamic profile of social housing in south London demonstrates how roofscapes can add drama and interest to buildings, streetscapes and skylines.



Section 2: Socio-Economic

SUB-SECTION 2.1: TRANSPORT (3.33%)

Transport has a significant interface with placemaking whether it comes in private or public form. Minimising the impact vehicular traffic has on pedestrians is now seen as essential in maintaining an equitable balance between the priorities allocated to all public realm users. While good accessibility to public transport is also a key benefit, the Matrix acknowledges that these matters are not entirely within the control of the developer and weights this subsection accordingly.

Fig. 3.11 Cycle lanes have been a welcome addition to our public realm in recent years but more care has to be taken to ensure that new infrastructure does not disadvantage pedestrians or other users such as the narrow strip of paving at the bus stop above, (level with the adjacent cycle lane), allocated for passengers to board or disembark from buses. [QUESTIONS 2.1.11-2]



SUB-SECTION 2.2: CRIME & SAFETY (3.33%)

While crime has a significant impact on placemaking outcomes as with transport it is not entirely within the control of the developer. Again the Matrix weighting reflects this. However, there are conscious design decisions that can be taken to discourage anti-social behaviour and minimise the committing of criminal acts and the questions in this

subsection seek to ascertain to the extent to which these measures have been implemented.

SUB-SECTION 2.3: USES & MIX (10%)

How public spaces are used is fundamental to the character and nature they cultivate so they are an important concern of the Matrix. While there is an awareness that residential schemes may not necessarily wish to foster the more vibrant streetscapes that may be found in leisure or destination locations, there are still design measures that can be taken to ensure that even solely residential streets still foster a strong connection between user and public realm. Equally, many residential schemes, particularly in higher density urban areas, foster a mix of uses which too can be utilised to generate character and nurture an inviting sense of place.

Fig. 3.12 (LEFT) Active frontages animate pavements and streetscapes. [QUESTIONS 2.3.04-07] Fig. 3.13 (MIDDLE) A vibrant programme of events ensures that London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park has remained relevant long after the 2012 Olympic Games. [QUESTIONS 2.3.08-13] Fig. 3.14 (RIGHT) Giving upper floor flats dedicated ground floor entrances, as at the RIBA Stirling Prize winning Goldsmith Street scheme in Norwich, helps maintain street activity and strengthens the relationship between resident and public realm. [QUESTIONS 2.3.27]



SUB-SECTION 2.4: USERS & INCLUSIVITY (6.66%)

Intrinsically related to the previous subsection, ensuring that places are welcoming and inviting to as broad a range of (well-meaning) people as possible, even those that might not live there, is an essentially part of responsible placemaking. While there obvious limitations on the extent to which any develop can unilaterally forge prevailing social conditions, attending to the specific needs of various user groups, whether they be children, families or older people, can have a transformative impact on how and how well places are used.

SUB-SECTION 2.5: MANAGEMENT (6.66%)

How places are managed, maintained and run is fundamental to how well they perform. There are many management methodologies available ranging from sole local authority control to retail associations and business improvement districts. As all can have a varying degree of outcomes the Matrix's questioning does not focus on the type of management processes in place but, primarily, whether a management plan is in place and how robust and flexible that is in serving the needs of both the place and its users and residents. This is one several subsections that can only be realistically

scored after the project has been completed as concrete management plans are rarely available at planning stage.

SUB-SECTION 2.6: EMPLOYMENT (3.33%)

As with crime and transport, most developments have only limited scope to dictate employment operations or the local economic conditions that invariably determine them so this once again is reflected in this subsection's score weighting. However, the cultural changes unleashed by the pandemic are one area in which it is reasonable to expect that the exponential growth in home-working should trigger a response in both the design of houses and, to a lesser the extent, the mix of residential and workspace units developments seek to offer.

Section 3: Psychological

SUB-SECTION 3.1: PUBLIC CONSULTATION (10%)

The final Psychological section of the Matrix deals with the most intangible form of evidence, our human and emotional response to place. While this makes it the most difficult of all three sections to measure it also arguably makes it the most important. It is impossible to measure personal feelings or preferences in a numerical manner nor would it be an entirely worthwhile exercise to do in any case as responses would presumably differ wildly amongst respondents. So the Matrix's intention throughout this section has been to identify tangible and observable processes, items or events that are a *consequence, function or indication* of human emotion and use these to gauge how positively inclined that emotion may be to its surroundings.

Public consultation lends itself as a classic example. The more people tend to be involved in the process of creating their surroundings the more content and enfranchised they tend to be. And the more content and enfranchised people generally are, the more successful and sustainable the place in which they inhabit is likely to be. This is a core democratic precept that Building Beautiful also strongly advocates for. Accordingly, the Matrix also gives credit to those developments that went beyond established consultation routes and sought to solicit public responses through polling and community engagement exercises like workshops and charettes.

SUB-SECTION 3.2: HEALTH & WELLBEING (8.33%)

There is now widespread and welcome awareness of the huge links between place and healthcare and the growing wellbeing movement, represented in the WELL Building assessment system (one of PAX's precedents) illustrates the extent to which these matters are now taken seriously within design and construction. There is strong semantic argument that could justifiably claim that wellbeing and its ideological preoccupation with eliciting a positive human reaction to physical environment merely involves what might have at one point merely been labelled 'good design'.

In partial recognition of this, while this section presents its own specific questions, the wellbeing theme runs through all sections and subsections of the matrix.

SUB-SECTION 3.3: INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY (1.66%)

While questions pertaining to Information and Technology may seem like a curious inclusion in the Psychological section of the Matrix, both disciplines are central to nurturing the sense of independence and empowerment that are also key requirements of placemaking. While good places are often rightly considered to prioritise communality and social exchange, they must also promote individual agency and provide the space and conditions for personal reflection too. Listening to personal headphones in crowded public spaces and the explosion in mobile phone usage over the past 25 years show how this internalisation can take place within public settings and, in many cases, depends on it - people might not feel entirely comfortable listening to music or scrolling through their mobile in an empty street. Therefore technological measures designed to increase this sense of individual empowerment within a communal context, such as for instance free WiFi or digital information kiosks, are ever more important in our increasingly automated and digitised world.

SUB-SECTION 3.4: SENSE OF PLACE (13.33%)

Arguably the most important subsection of the entire matrix, a fact reflected in its generous weighting. And yet, as with health and wellbeing, the sense of place a location exudes is so all-encompassing that it permeates all other areas of the matrix and is particularly prevalent by proxy in the Buildings and Public Realms sections. Nonetheless this dedicated final subsection still comprises a number of specific questions designed to test how much character and uniqueness the development in question has been able to generate.

Again as is the case throughout the Psychological section the strategy is to try and measure indicators of emotion rather than the emotions themselves. It is for this reason that questions look for physical clues about civic pride (such as the presence of commemorative memorials) and seek to establish how readily residents occupy (or are invited to occupy) communal space, an empirical judgement that can be used to measure how much of a sense of ownership people feel over their surroundings, a sentiment critical to establishing the sense of belonging on which all good places depend.

Fig. 3.15 (LEFT) While it may sometimes appear unkempt, residents' willingness to occupy communal space can often be an indicator of how strong their sense of belonging to a place is. [QUESTIONS 3.4.01-06] Fig. 3.16 (MIDDLE) A simple memorial or commemorative plaque can be a focus for communal gathering and expressions of civic pride. [QUESTIONS 3.4.07-12] Fig. 3.17 (RIGHT) Street and building names can be a fiercely contested but highly effective way of expressing local pride or memorialising local figures. [QUESTION 3.4.10]



4. Testing the Matrix

This section of the paper examines three existing residential developments and uses the Placemaking Matrix to score them. This section is therefore crucial in establishing the efficacy of the matrix in real-life scenarios and ensuring its viability and credibility as a universal qualitative and authoritative assessment tool. The selected schemes have been chosen on the basis of their representative typological variety with regard to budget and location.

The first is a multi-billion pound mixed-use urban regeneration scheme in London, the second is a medium -scale design-led residential scheme in Cambridge and the third is the regeneration of a formerly depressed mining settlement in Fife. All schemes are completed developments and while it is to be acknowledged that the primary intended use of the Matrix will be for unbuilt schemes at planning stage, these case studies show how the Matrix also has considerable comparative and informative value as a retrospective assessment tool after a project has been completed.

The scoring has been compiled by the paper's author, a registered architect, on the basis of detailed site visits conducted to the three developments in question. This proves that as the paper argues, in reality the Matrix can be calculated by individuals outside the planning or design team who developed them and who are not necessarily familiar with the design process that took place. Inevitably some non-visual scoring values on the selected case studies have been assumed (such has often been the case with the Management section). But where this has occurred it has been clearly indicated in the relevant scoring section.

The scoring has been compiled in the same way it would be on a genuine Matrix, namely scores of 0-5 have been awarded for every question with the resultant section percentage scores cumulatively calculated afterwards. However, in the interests of clarity and presentation, only the overall section percentage scores rather than the individual question answers, are included on the proceeding pages.

<p>TEST CASE STUDY 1: NINE ELMS REDEVELOPMENT</p> <p>London</p> <p>2013-</p>	<p>TEST CASE STUDY 2: ACCORDIA DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Cambridge</p> <p>2003-2011</p>	<p>TEST CASE STUDY 3: LOCHGELLY REGENERATION</p> <p>Fife</p> <p>2010-</p>
		
<p>Nine Elms is a vast £9bn urban regeneration scheme comprising at least 42 separate projects and covering around 227 hectares of what is now prime riverside land on the south-western edge of central London. It is one of the largest urban regeneration projects in Europe and redevelops what was primarily either industrial or semi-derelict wasteland along the Thames. Around 20,000 new primarily high-rise homes are planned by the time the phased development completes in 2030. Key elements are already open, including the relocated U.S. Embassy and the redeveloped Battersea Power Station. The development has been designed by a multitude of different architects. The site is served by London's first new tube station in over 20 years.</p>	<p>Accordia has been one of the most influential British residential developments of the 21st century and was the first housing project to ever win the RIBA Stirling Prize in 2008. Located in south Cambridge it provided 378 new homes in a range of housing tenures on a masterplan covering almost 10 hectares. Its Arcadian mix of fulsome planting, generous amenity space, dynamic building forms, interlocking spaces and most especially its prodigious use of textured brick had an electrifying impact on British housing design and went on to inform a new generation of brick vernacular-built housing, particularly in London. Accordia was designed by a joint venture of three different architectural practices with a construction budget of approximately £38m.</p>	<p>In 2004 the Fife village of Lochgelly was crowned "the last place in Britain people want to live"¹⁴ and was declared by Halifax Bank to have the lowest house prices of any town in the UK¹⁵. It was also shortlisted for the Plook of the Plinth prize awarded to Scotland's "most dismal town". Yet today it has undergone a remarkable transformation. New housing has been built, its high street revitalised, unemployment slashed & its public realm dramatically improved, efforts that have won it a host of placemaking and regeneration awards. How the former mining settlement, (depressed since 1980s pit closures) managed this turnaround on a modest £30m phased budget serves as a valuable template for how 'left-behind' places across the UK can be rescued.</p>

14. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2004/jan/25/britishidentity.stephenkhan>

15. <https://www.examinerlive.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/brighthouse--top-house-prices-5091807>

1. PHYSICAL		
SECTION 1.1 PUBLIC REALM (25%)		
Score: 10%	Score: 22%	Score: 18%
<p>While little expense has been spared on the quality of some of the material finishes and selected areas like the riverside walkway benefit from fine views and public art, public realm throughout the development is generally of poor quality with low legibility, ill-defined edges, few active uses, a palpable lack of intimacy and near permanent oppression from a horizon of circling skyscrapers.</p>	<p>Generally of a high quality. Public spaces display extraordinary levels of intimacy and enclosure, primarily delivered through the effusive use of planting, the subtle deployment of an attractive palette of materials, an engaging network of pedestrian routes, 'home zones' a rich variety of different street typologies and the gentle deployment of human scale that is evident throughout. Two solitary sour notes are the large central green space which appears oddly featureless and un-adopted and a southern perimeter street where the pavement is raised several feet above the carriageway by a retaining wall. The landscaping throughout the scheme is excellent and the network of mews is particularly beguiling.</p>	<p>From the start of its renewal process Lochgelly took public realm very seriously and decided from the outset that improving it substantially would be one of the core ambitions of the masterplan. A measure of its commitment was the development's team's recruitment of renowned urbanist Andres Duany to lead early charrettes, a process that decided that the new housing & public realm should focus on Lochgelly's principal thoroughfare, Main Street. Accordingly the route now sports new lighting, street furniture, planting, paving and most notably a new public square featuring a public art sculpture honouring Lochgelly's mining heritage. While measures are modest they set a compelling visual narrative of urban rebirth.</p>
SECTION 1.2 BUILDINGS (8.33%)		
Score: 3%	Score: 7%	Score: 4.5%
<p>There is little about the architecture of Nine Elms that cannot be found in any other anodised, commercial developments in any number of other major world cities. It is clear many of the buildings have been designed as exercises in floorplate maximisation and then indifferently dressed with identikit facades. As well as the preponderance of high-rises that are completely at odds with site context and history and thrust unwarranted incursion onto adjacent often historic areas, buildings also gleefully display a shocking array of the architectural aberrations housing does best to avoid. These range from 'stuck on' balconies to maniacal cladding. Momentary reprieve comes in the form of the experimental Keybridge Tower whose brickwork pioneeringly seeks to marry traditional London vernacular to the high-rise format, a rare contextual concession in the development. But even the revered and restored Battersea Tower Station is now encircled by a grim girdle of faceless glass crescent blocks.</p>	<p>Accordia displays an inspiring mix of varied housing types that add an exhilarating sense of authenticity and inventiveness to the entire scheme. A range of natural materials are deployed, most commonly textured brickwork that is lovingly used to sculpt dramatic and engaging building forms. Chief amongst these are the sweep of tall, strident chimneys that line and form instant landmarks for the development and beyond. Crisp detailing is generally present throughout and facades are vigorously modelled and perforated to add depth and interest to both elevations and streetscapes. The sheer variety of architectural elevational responses is impressive with no two contextual conditions, whether it be quiet mews streets or verdant garden courtyards, ever treated the same.</p>	<p>In keeping with its industrial heritage existing architecture in Lochgelly tends to be workmanlike, utilitarian and unglamorous and new additions generally follow this lead. Main Street displays some of the most prominent new developments with a long parade of new shops and housing and a new business centre, now admittedly showing signs of wear. Lochgelly's shrunken population means it has the opposite problem to the South, there is too much housing, or at least too much of the wrong kind of housing. Accordingly, 1950s deck-access blocks of flats have been demolished and replaced with detached or terraced units, plain and practical but not especially inspiring. More convincing is Lochgelly's work in restoring formerly derelict historic fabric, a dilapidated church is now a climbing centre and the former Miners' Institute, a handsome but once crumbling neo-Georgian pile, now offers rental space to local businesses.</p>

2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC		
SECTION 2.1: TRANSPORT (3.33%)		
Score: 3.33%	Score: 2.5%	Score: 2.5%
<p>Public transport provision is exemplary. The addition of a new tube station, partially funded by site developers, is a phenomenal example of public gain from private enterprise.</p>	<p>While Accordia doesn't feature dedicated cycle lanes, its streets generally foster low traffic levels and the site is served by a local bus route providing direct access to nearby Cambridge train station as well as the historic city centre.</p>	<p>Lochgelly is well served by local public transport with a number of local bus routes running through the settlement and a local train station which provides a direct rail connection to Edinburgh across the nearby iconic Forth Bridge to the south. Crowdenbeath, which is also close by and forms one half of former UK PM Gordon Brown's Kircaldy constituency, provides a bus interchange for both local and regional services. Free e-bike hire for up to three weeks is also now available from Lochgelly's business centre.</p>
SECTION 2.2: CRIME & SAFETY (3.33%)		
Score: 2%	Score: 2%	Score: 2%
<p>All three schemes appear to adopt what is now learned best practice about minimising the impact of crime on residential developments. Cul-de-sacs and hidden alcoves have been avoided and routes and open spaces are generally overlooked by housing allowing natural surveillance to occur. Accordia also features natural planting as a subtle yet effective buffer zone between public and private space and while it does have a number of roads that are effectively dead ends, extending pedestrian routes ensure onward connectivity. Lochgelly has also removed deck-access blocks of flats that were previously a focus for anti-social behaviour and repopulated its Main Street by placing purpose-built housing above retail units, thereby providing natural surveillance to commercial areas and delivering the mixed-use, after-hours activity that potentially discourages crime.</p>		
SECTION 2.3: USES & MIX (10%)		
Score: 7.5%	Score: 6%	Score: 7%
<p>Any development on the edge of central London is likely to benefit from a wealth of amenities and Nine Elms is no different. It is a robustly mixed-use scheme, made more so by the new leisure and recreation megemporium that has now opened in Battersea Power Station. The one significant drawback is the acute lack of housing mix with luxury development conspicuously prioritised over meagre affordable housing provision and virtually no social housing. The scheme would have attained close to full marks in this section were it not for this glaring omission.</p>	<p>Accordia offers a healthy housing mix with a mixture of private and affordable homes offering a variety of tenancy models ranging from shared ownership to dedicated key worker housing, a much-coveted sector in expensive Cambridge. The scheme is almost entirely residential, partially justified by its proximity to central Cambridge. One wonders however if a few more recreational amenities might have enlivened its large and rather empty green common.</p>	<p>Lochgelly is a small settlement but offers a varied mix of activities and uses. The new masterplan contains retail, highly affordable housing (a 4-bed cottage can be purchased for around £150,000) and sports amenities, the latter of which includes a rock-climbing centre serving a popular local sport regularly played out on surrounding hills. Particularly impressive are its commercial facilities with a town centre business hub, lettable business units in its former Miners' Institute and a new business park on the village's outskirts. Lochgelly lacks recreational facilities and central green spaces but the latter is partially compensated by the surrounding countryside.</p>

SECTION 2.4: USERS & INCLUSIVITY (6.66%)		
Score: 3%	Score: 4%	Score: 3.5%
<p>The lack of affordable and social housing bleeds into the social environment the development maintains which tends to be rigorously directed to occupants of its luxury residential units. Accordingly there is little evidence of the play spaces or grassed areas that might help soften the public realm and attract a broader range of users.</p>	<p>The development exudes an aura of familial intimacy this is enhanced by the general deployment of seating and children's play apparatus that is dotted around the development and subtly integrated into its landscape and planting.</p>	<p>Copious amounts of affordable housing make Lochgelly easily economically accessible for all income groups. A preponderance of terraced and detached housing and the removal of existing 1950s flats does weigh housing mix in favour of families but new flats have been created along Main Street and affordability is not a barrier to young people in the way it can be in other higher land value areas.</p>
SECTION 2.5: MANAGEMENT (6.66%)		
Score: 3.33%	Score: 3.33%	Score: 3.33%
<p>As yet, management arrangements for both schemes are unknown so a provisional half score has been given in both instances.</p>		
SECTION 2.6: EMPLOYMENT (3.33%)		
Score: 3%	Score: 1.5%	Score: 3%
<p>Multiple employment opportunities have been created throughout the development and it also benefits from pre-existing ones in surrounding areas.</p>	<p>The site itself is 100% residential. But it does benefit from its proximity to central Cambridge and the opportunities available therein. No workshops of live-work units have been provided on the site but many housing units offer a study or dedicated work space.</p>	<p>One of Lochgelly key successes has been the economic revitalization its regeneration has delivered for the village. Prior to its regeneration plan Lochgelly was suffering depopulation leaving it with a higher proportion of economically inactive over-65s¹⁶. Today this trend has been reversed. Central to this has been the creation of multiple new employment opportunities. Lochgelly's Main Street business centre was one of the flagship schemes at the start of the project and new retail units have been created nearby. And a new business park has brought in hundreds of new jobs and recently received a £300,000 funding boost for its expansion.</p>
3. PSYCHOLOGICAL		
SECTION 3.1: PUBLIC CONSULTATION (10%)		
Score: 4.5%	Score: 5%	Score: 7%
<p>While extensive public consultation was undertaken for individual schemes, there is little evidence that it had substantial impact on the scheme or its final design. Additionally, the development and the public would have benefited from a public consultation approach that presented the entire development rather than its piecemeal constituent parts. No polling was undertaken.</p>	<p>No polling was undertaken but the normal public consultation protocols were observed. Despite the triple architect team, the scheme was always presented as a unified whole for public consultation purposes.</p>	<p>At the start of its regeneration programme the local council took the radical step of inviting renowned U.S. urban planner Andres Duany to lead a series of public charettes into the village's revival. While contentions inevitably flared, it marked a sign of the extent to which resident consultation was embedded into the redevelopment process and resulted in the formation of some of its key strategies, such as a focus on town-centre repopulation.</p>

16. <https://ecda.co.uk/projects/lochgelly-regeneration/>

SECTION 3.2: HEALTH & WELLBEING (8.33%)		
Score: 4%	Score: 6%	Score: 6%
<p>With its generous seating, exhilarating views, stimulating public art and rich landscaping, the riverside walkway appears to be the one area of the Nine Elms development that fully embraces principles relating to health and wellbeing. While the imminent opening of the 14-acre linear Nine Elms Park promises to dramatically increase the development's wellbeing quota, at present the largely anodyne nature of the public spaces in the remainder of the development suppress the current utilisation of these benefits.</p>	<p>While Accordia was designed before current trends in wellbeing and the design of healthy public spaces took hold, its conspicuous promotion of natural landscaping, communal engagement, physical activity and sensory spatial variety attest to the fact that good design intrinsically meets the vast majority of healthcare priorities.</p>	<p>Like Accordia, Lochgelly's revamp predates many of current industry approaches to issues of health and wellbeing. Nonetheless its focus on revitalised public realm has obvious benefits for walkability, sociability and public health and economic activity and civic wellbeing are clearly interlinked. Lochgelly's new climbing centre and a new care home that was one of its earliest projects also form different approaches to maintaining and encouraging public health.</p>
SECTION 3.3: TECHNOLOGY & INFORMATION (1.66%)		
Score: 0.5%	Score: 0%	Score: 0.5%
<p>Again, the riverside walkway comes to Nine Elms's rescue in the form of the Nine Elms Community noticeboard on Bourne Valley Wharf which doubles as a piece of public art. One hopes this template will eventually be dispersed across the full development site.</p>	<p>Again, as Accordia was designed before current trends in this area took hold, and because it is an exclusively residential development, beyond traditional public information boards at select open space locations there is little evidence of compliance with this section.</p>	<p>Matters of information and technology do not feature highly in Lochgelly's renewal. But its Main Street business centre does offer business units with high-speed data connections and free e-bike hire to tenants and residents alike.</p>
SECTION 3.4: SENSE OF PLACE (13.33%)		
Score: 2%	Score: 12%	Score: 9%
<p>Beyond Battersea Power Station there are very few places within Nine Elms that feel unique. Its frequently insipid high-rise architecture also means it feels detached from London too. There is also a distinct lack of visual unity, meaning that as a single entity it feels discordant and haphazardly thrown together. And because the investment model its luxury developments rely on is generally characterised by absent occupiers, any redemptive opportunity for residents to nurture a palpable sense of community is lost.</p>	<p>Accordia is an accomplished example of the power of architecture and public realm to craft a strong and distinctive sense of place. This is largely achieved in two ways. First, the prodigious use of physical landmarks and their clever utilisation as distinctive architectural motifs that become synonymous with the development (i.e. the ubiquitous textured brickwork, the soaring chimneys, the rich landscaping, the sheltered mews streets). And the clever way in which many of these motifs (i.e. the mews streets and 'home zones') contribute to the projection of the idea of a community, the fundamental ingredient for a successful place.</p>	<p>While, with the possible exception of the former Miners' Institute, Lochgelly's architecture is not necessarily remarkable or distinctive, (with the possible exception of the former Miners' Institute) it proves the truth of the aphorism that it is not the scale of the intervention that counts but the strength of the spirit behind it. Consequently, Lochgelly has used its regeneration to revitalise its most valuable commodity, not its buildings or even necessarily its spaces (although there are welcome new additions to both) but its community. The wealth of new commercial premises, the installation of housing that more accurately reflects local densities, the restoration of revered historic landmarks and even the new Main Street sculpture that celebrates the village's mining heritage all speak of a revived and reinvigorated community that has been quite literally given a new lease of life.</p>
FINAL PAX SCORE		
46.16%	71.33%	66.33%
("Poor")	("Outstanding")	("Good")

5. Applying the Matrix

5.1 When will the PAX Score Be Calculated?

The Placemaking Matrix seeks to play a full and dynamic role within the planning process therefore the intention is that planning authorities will ask for it to be calculated during the planning process and before planning submission. In this way, the PAX score can be submitted as part of the planning application and form one of several considerations when planning officers and committees determine whether planning permission should be awarded or denied. Prior to planning submission there will be a chance to complete the Matrix on at least two occasions with only the final score submitted as part of the planning application. In so doing, the initial score can identify areas in need of further work which can be improved prior to the final submission of the planning application.

Developers could also choose to use the Placemaking Matrix internally when scoping different projects, in order to ensure that placemaking is built into their plans from the outset.

This paper readily acknowledges that the best and fairest way to judge any built environment intervention is when it is complete. Equally, it further accepts that not every detail pertaining to placemaking quality might have been determined at planning stage. This ranges from prosaic considerations such as litter collection and opening hours to more substantive qualities like material selection and streetscape views. However, these potential omissions are not so onerous as to invalidate the principle of planning-stage assessment and while the details at hand may not be conclusive, sufficient information about the look and nature of a project should be available to make a qualitative assessment possible, valuable and worthwhile.

Equally, the requirement to complete the Matrix could well force placemaking design decisions to be made at an earlier planning stage that will thereby provide both clarity and certainty for all concerned. As these decisions could well end up forming the conditions on which planning permission is based, the temptation to add whatever attributes will attain a high PAX score will be conclusively outweighed by the legal responsibility to honour any conditions or commitments attached to planning approval.

Of course, as the previous chapter in this paper has demonstrated, the opportunity to complete the Placemaking Matrix after it has been built always remains. In turn, this will inevitably provide a fuller and more detailed PAX score than that attained at planning stage. Additionally, comparing scores awarded at planning stage to those awarded once the same scheme has been built could become a useful ongoing quality

assurance tool in itself as while it is hoped the range of discrepancy will be minimal, eliminating it will help fine tune the Matrix and ensure that the planning scores are as fair and accurate a reflection as possible of the scores likely to be attained after completion.

5.2 Which Schemes Will Be Required to Use the Matrix?

Planning authorities are encouraged to require developers of larger developments to use the Matrix. However, it is hoped that over time, the positivity associated with a good PAX score will see even smaller projects wish to complete the Matrix. Precedent also suggests that the Matrix need not be compulsory to be effective. Until relatively recently BREEAM was entirely voluntary but such is the high-profile sustainability enjoys and so established is the reputational notoriety now associated with a positive BREEAM result that its uptake remains strong, even with the registration and certification fee assessment incurs. Equally it is hoped that the positive PR that would be conferred by an impressive PAX score would sustain its rate of adoption even when optional.

While it is important that the Placemaking Matrix is allowed to assess placemaking quality, it has been designed to ensure that it does not unduly add to the frequently onerous list of bureaucratic compliances that the planning process already imposes on proposed residential developments, one of the most common developer complaints about the planning system. Rather, by providing a shared framework for discussion, the Matrix will lead to clearer and less ambiguous communication between the planning authority and the developer, helping to bring issues into the open where they can be considered, discussed and resolved.

The Matrix can be completed by virtually any member of the general public or design team with the time and inclination to do so, and, as it can be completed fairly quickly and for free, imposes no cost or time premium on the developer. It therefore in no way adds to the considerable logistical burden that is all too often a hallmark of larger planning applications but still offers the assurance, certainty and potential reputational endorsement that placemaking responsibilities have either been met or exceeded.

5.3 Who Will Complete the Matrix?

Most of the Placemaking Matrix's peer assessment frameworks such as PTAL scores, OFSTED rankings and Energy Performance Certificates are calculated by professional consultants, qualified assessors, civil servants or council officials. While this ensures a level of professionalism and consistency in the assessment system that helps secure trust in the framework's reliability, impartiality and competence, it does add an inevitable additional layer of time and bureaucracy to the process and sometimes, as with BREEAM, comes with a cost premium.

This latter outcomes are not ones this paper seeks. Instead it proposes a slight adaptation to the arrangements described above. and suggests that a new role of PAX Assessor is identified at the start of the project. This must be a local authority officer, urban designer or architect but crucially,

not one assigned as planning officer for the project. This will ensure the impartiality and objectivity of the scoring assessment but will also deliver the required level of professionalism to retain confidence in its results.

Two further PAX Assessors can then be appointed, this can be anyone from the project team (including a client consultant) to a local resident or member of the public. Or, if agreed by all parties and resources allow, another planning officer. Once appointed it will be the responsibility of all three PAX Assessors to compile the PAX score.

This report is aware that the Building Better Building Beautiful report *Living With Beauty* identified a “lack of placemaking skills” as one of the biggest impediments to an enhanced urban environment. This is very much a skill felt within the design industry as well as the planning sector. So while it may be ambitious to require three PAX Assessors, this will ensure the fairness and impartiality central to ensuring that the PAX Assessment system becomes a trusted resource within the industry. As placemaking skills hopefully accelerate over time, a formal qualification structure for the PAX Assessor role could also be considered.

Third party involvement from the public or design team is also important to help deliver on another of the Placemaking Matrix’s core ambitions. The Matrix’s primary function is not to offer a final, iconoclastic and irrefutable judgment on whether places are good or bad, if this were its sole aim it would be an inherently divisive one which could compel potentially injured parties to lose faith in the entire process and principle of qualitative assessment. This would not only be a disastrous outcome for all concerned but for our built environment too.

Instead the primary function of the Matrix is to establish a shared framework to facilitate a constructive conversation about placemaking quality. The tripartite PAX Assessor structure and the two-stage Matrix compilation system will be crucial to delivering this. The PAX Assessors will be expected to complete the Matrix on at least two occasions with the score of only the final assessment forming part of the planning submission. Therefore if the initial assessment identifies areas of weakness, the design team will have ample opportunity to review the proposal to enhance and improve performance deficiencies.

This will hopefully galvanise the spirit of collaboration and cooperation present on the design team, particularly if another member has compiled their own Matrix results for discussion with the PAX Assessors. This reciprocal process will also prompt active consideration of how good placemaking can be achieved and the specific nature of the interventions required to realise it. This powerfully reiterates the core ambition of the entire Matrix, not to deliver good scores but to create good places.

APPENDIX 1

	Civic	Residential	Adapted from Residential	Commercial/Retail	Privately Developed	Soft Landscape Centre
1	Arnold Circus	•				•
2	Bank Junction	•				
3	Bedford Square	•			•	•
4	Belgrave Square		•		•	•
5	Berkeley Square		•	•	•	•
6	Bloomsbury Square		•	•	•	•
7	Broadgate Circle	•		•	•	
8	Buckingham Palace Rond Point	•				
9	Cabot Square			•	•	
10	Cadogan Square		•		•	•
11	Canada Square			•	•	•
12	Cavendish Square		•	•	•	•
13	Charterhouse Square		•		•	•
14	Chester Square		•		•	•
15	Covent Garden Piazza	•	•	•	•	
16	Duke of York's Square			•	•	
17	Eaton Square		•		•	•
18	Exchange Square			•	•	
19	Finsbury Avenue Square			•	•	
20	Finsbury Circus	•	•			•
21	Finsbury Square		•	•	•	•
22	Fitzroy Square		•		•	•
23	Golden Square		•	•	•	•
24	Gordon Square		•		•	•
25	Granary Square	•			•	
26	Grosvenor Square		•		•	•
27	Guildhall Yard	•				
28	Hanover Square			•	•	•
29	Hans Place		•		•	•
30	Horse Guards Parade	•				
31	Hyde Park Corner	•				•
32	Kensington Square		•		•	•
33	King's Cross Square	•				
34	Leicester Square	•	•	•	•	•
35	Lincoln's Inn Fields		•		•	•
36	Lowndes Square		•		•	•
37	Manchester Square		•		•	•
38	Montgomery Square			•	•	
39	New Street Square			•	•	
40	Oxford Circus			•		
41	Park Crescent		•			•
42	Parliament Square	•				•
43	Paternoster Square	•		•	•	
44	Pelham Crescent		•		•	
45	Portman Square		•	•	•	•
46	Piccadilly Circus	•				
47	Royal Crescent		•		•	•
48	Russell Square		•	•	•	•
49	St. James's Square		•	•	•	•
50	Sloane Square	•		•	•	
51	Soho Square		•	•	•	•
52	Smth Square		•		•	
53	Tavistock Square		•		•	•
54	Trafalgar Square	•				
55	Trinity Church Square		•		•	•
56	Vincent Square		•		•	•
57	Waterloo Place	•				
58	Westferry Circus			•	•	•
59	Westminster Cathedral Piazza	•				
60	Wilton Crescent		•		•	•
	30%	51%	10%	40%	75%	62%

Hard Landscape Centre	Carriageway Centre	Irregular/Informal Composition	Regular/Formal Composition	Fully Pedestrianised	Part-Pedestrianised	Dominant Focal Centrepiece	Fountains
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38%	5%	62%	38%	23%	15%	25%	15%



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