

Event of the Year: Festival of Place

This year, in addition to launching itself as a new B2B media brand, *The Developer* launched its flagship conference, *Festival of Place*, a unique event featuring interactive ‘placehacks’ and four stages of talks on the biggest issues facing UK cities, from climate change to social exclusion.

Our ambition was to bring the whole placemaking community together, to be the Mipim of design and the Cannes Lions of development, and to cover the major issues no one else talks about with not-the-usual-suspects line-up of speakers – and depth. We invited mavericks, thinkers and disruptors to address the biggest challenges facing UK cities, from the high street to social exclusion, through inspiring speeches, hands-on workshops and provocative on-stage interviews.

On 9 July, we brought 450 delegates to Tobacco Dock in East London including developers and scientists, investors and planners, government, charity outreach workers and architects, to imagine our future cities and unlock how to make places that thrive. The subject matter was serious, the sessions were fun and interactive, from taking apart household items to build a city from waste to designing the perfect bench to inspire strangers to meet. It was a festival, not a conference, with a relaxed and intimate atmosphere and backed by £70,000 of sponsorship.

Speakers include Rachel Fisher, Deputy Director for Regeneration and Infrastructure, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Tim Tompkins, President of the Times Square Alliance, New York City, Sir Stuart Lipton, and Dan Labbad, the next Chief Executive of the Crown Estate. Patrice A. Derrington, Director of the Real Estate Development Programme at Columbia GSAPP, Francesca Brown, Chief Executive of Girls4Girls, Anne Power, Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics and LSE Housing and Communities and Tom Chance, Director of the National CLT Network, plus many more figures, from music industry specialists to neuroscientists.

With a ticket price of £495, the event could have been exclusive, so we opened it up to not-for-profits, students and charitable organisations, from playworkers to the vicar from across the street. The diversity of our speaker list and audience, with its near 50-50 gender parity and socio-ethnic mix, left a lasting impression on an audience used to ‘male and pale’ property events.

We finished the day with a celebration of the best in place at The Pineapples awards, a new awards programme celebrating placemaking projects that are more than 2 years old. The judging was rigorous, with all shortlisted projects

having been visited, and the shortlisted projects were presented live to the judges on stage at the festival.

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It was a four-star event, according to delegates who filled in our post-event survey, who gave us an NPS score of +20. Those surveyed described the event as “challenging and honest,” “the majority of speakers I listened to were absolutely fabulous,” “the content was very strong.” Two thirds of respondents said they were likely or very likely to attend again and just one respondent said they were unlikely to visit again.



FESTIVAL OF PLACE

9 July 2019 • Tobacco Dock

#festivalofplace



the developer

Partners:



Supporters:



City Partners:



Industry Partners:



Welcome

Collaboration is essential to the success of our future UK cities, which is why I wanted to bring together developers, investors, cities, government, planners, scientists, academics and designers to unlock how to make places that thrive.

Let this be a safe place for city shapers and makers to open their minds, share frankly, participate, inspire, celebrate and learn. Thanks to everyone who helped us launch this event, especially our partners the Design Council, Places for People and Vestre. You are at your most creative when you feel relaxed and happy, so switch off your phone, roll up your sleeves and enjoy taking part.



Christine Murray
Editor-in-chief



the developer

Programme

| Time | Festival Hall Quayside 1 | Town Hall Quayside 6 | Community Centre Quayside pub |
|-------------|--|---|--|
| 09:00 | | | |
| 09:30 | Regeneration is broken: What now? 09:15-10:15 | | |
| 10:00 | | | |
| 10:30 | The future of work/place 10:15-10:55 | Citizen voice: working with communities 10:25-11:25 | Placehack: Child's eye with Urban95 10:15-11:15 |
| 11:00 | Social impact: investing in change 10:55-12:05 | | Climate risk in investment and development 11:25-12:25 |
| 11:30 | | | |
| 12:00 | | | |
| 12:30 | The future of downtown 12:05-13:05 | What is a truly 'smart' city? 12:25-13:10 | |
| 13:00 | | | |
| 13:30 | | | |
| 14:00 | Crime and development 13:45-14:35 | Masterplanning future place 14:05-14:55 | |
| 14:30 | Designing inclusive environments 14:35-15:05 | | |
| 15:00 | | | |
| 15:30 | Child-friendly places: welcoming youth 15:05-15:45 | Placehack: Time/Shape/Space 14:55-15:55 | |
| 16:00 | | | |
| 16:30 | Curating culture 15:45-16:45 | | Placehack: Branding authenticity 15:45-16:45 |
| 17:00 | Learning from place 16:45-17:25 | | |
| 17:30-21:00 | | | The Pineapples Awards party 17:30-21:00 |

| Time | Pineapples 1 Quayside 4 | Pineapples 2 Quayside 5 | Market square |
|-------|---|---|--|
| 10:30 | | | |
| | One Tower Bridge, London 10:30-10:50 | the department store, London 10:30-10:50 | |
| 11:00 | Balham High Road 10:50-11:10 | Merchant Square footbridge, London 10:50-11:10 | |
| | The Italian Gardens, Weston-super-Mare 11:10-11:30 | Television Centre, London 11:10-11:30 | |
| 11:30 | London Wall Place, London 11:30-11:50 | Revealing the Charterhouse, London 11:30-11:50 | |
| | Culture Mile, London 11:50-12:10 | Waltham Forest, London 11:50-12:10 | |
| 12:00 | | Wembley Park, London 12:10-12:30 | |
| 12:30 | Inner North West Masterplan, Belfast 12:30-12:50 | London Dock, London 12:30-12:50 | |
| | Oakfield, Swindon 12:50-13:10 | Battersea Power Station, London 12:50-13:10 | |
| 13:00 | The Chocolate Factory for Workspace Group, London 13:10-13:30 | Blackwall Reach, London 13:10-13:30 | |
| 13:30 | | | |
| 14:00 | | | Walking tour: London Dock 13:45-14:45 |
| 14:30 | Wickside, London 14:30-14:50 | Park Hill, Sheffield 14:30-14:50 | |
| | Kirkstall Forge, Leeds 14:50-15:10 | Smith's Dock, North Shields 14:50-15:10 | Plackhack: The Circular City 14:55-16:25 |
| 15:00 | Temple, Leeds 15:10-15:30 | King's Cross, London 15:10-15:30 | |
| 15:30 | Port Loop, Birmingham 15:30-15:50 | Broadgate, London 15:30-15:50 | |
| | 8 Albert Embankment, London 15:50-16:10 | | |
| 16:00 | West End Project, London 16:10-16:30 | | |
| 16:30 | | | |

09:15-10:15

Regeneration is broken: What now?

How can we better build our cities?

Communities are protesting, governments are pressured, funders are skittish, and developers are demonised. The process by which the private sector delivers much of the urban built environment is struggling to optimize the outcomes for all concerned. In this interactive session, we seek to identify critical flaws and formulate how to better build our cities.

Dr. Patrice Derrington, *Marc Holliday Associate Professor, Director of the Real Estate Development Program, Columbia University*
Christine Murray, *Editor-in-chief, The Developer* (chair)

10:15-10:55

The future of work/place

In conversation with Sir Stuart Lipton

How we work is a moveable feast. When will planners catch up with fast-changing consumer and business appetites? We need commercial offices with decent housing for tenants nearby; clean, safe streets and well-landscaped, attractive places. As one of the first developers to seize the value of placemaking, Sir Stuart Lipton in conversation with Giles Barrie discusses the future of work and the new office building, beyond Chiswick Park and 22 Bishopsgate.

Sir Stuart Lipton, *Partner, Lipton Rogers Developments LLP*
Giles Barrie, *Senior Managing Director, FTI Consulting Global* (chair)

10:55-12:05

Social Impact: Investing in change

How can development make a difference to the lives of ordinary citizens?

What investments pay their dividends in health and wellbeing, social capital and community? How should we measure social impact, where can you find investment and what public policy is needed? What is social sustainability?

Sue Riddlestone OBE, *Chief executive and co-founder, Bioregional*
David Cowans, *Group Chief Executive, Places for People*
Ian Rigalsford, *External Affairs Manager, Ecology Building Society*
Christine Murray, *Editor-in-chief, The Developer* (chair)

12:05-13:05

The future of downtown

From high streets to Times Square, people want to gather, even if they no longer shop

The remaking of Times Square in New York City from traffic maelstrom to pedestrian paradise is a textbook example of visionary placemaking. And it's visionary thinking that's needed when it comes to London 3.0, a future for the capital and the reimagining of town centres across the UK with the help of the Future High Streets Fund. What is the future of downtown?

Tim Tompkins, *President, Times Square Alliance*
Rachel Fisher, *Deputy Director for Regeneration and Infrastructure, Cities and Local Growth Unit, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government*
Patricia Brown, *Director, Central* (chair)

13:45-14:35

Crime and development

Why is social inequality aggravated by placemaking?

Social inequality can be aggravated by placemaking and urban development. Must it always be the case? Why do current approaches to urban inequality and urban development increase division and drive austerity? How does the Grenfell fire tragedy underline the most urgent issues to tackle?

Anne Power, *Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics and Head of LSE Housing and Communities*
Christine Murray, *Editor-in-chief, The Developer* (chair)

14:35-15:05

Designing inclusive environments

Can design make a difference to inclusivity?

Sarah Weir OBE will share Design Councils rich heritage of using design as a tool for critical thinking and problem solving and demonstrate how its current work on inclusive design, places people at the heart of the design process

Sarah Weir OBE, *CEO, The Design Council*
Christine Murray, *Editor-in-chief, The Developer* (chair)

15:05-15:45

Child-friendly places: welcoming youth

Making space for and with young people

How do we make space for young people? What do they need? How can they participate in the making of our cities? Get inside knowledge on upcoming policy for play and the vanguard of youth engagement, plus A Manifesto for Change presented by a young person following the morning's Placehack: Greener, liveable, loveable

Adrian Voce, *President, European Network for Child-friendly Cities*
Dinah Bornat, *Co-Founder, ZCD Architects*
Young representative from Placehack: Greener, liveable, loveable
Patrin Watanatada, *Knowledge for Policy Director, Urban95* (chair)

15:45-16:45

Curating culture

How do we make space for culture to thrive?

How do we preserve, enhance, foster and curate culture in the city? What kind of cultural infrastructure is needed, how do we value culture and can it be created? From music to food, we explore the ways in which culture contributes to place, and how to help creative industries nest and grow.

Emma Warren, *Author, Make Some Space: Tuning into Total Refreshment Centre*
Danny Keir, *Global Head of Business Development, Sound Diplomacy*
Clarisse Tavin, *Group Manager, Major Programmes and Projects, City of London Corporation*
Akil Scafe-Smith, *Founder, Resolve Collective*
Mark Davy, *CEO and founder, Futurecity*

16:45-17:25

Learning from place

In conversation with Dan Labbad

Dan Labbad, Chief Executive Officer, Europe, Lendlease sits down in conversation with The Developer Editor-in-chief Christine Murray to reflect on his experience at the helm of major regeneration projects and his new chapter as the next chief executive of the Crown Estate.

Town Hall

Quayside 6

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vestre

10:25-11:25

Citizen voice: working with communities

Empowerment, participation, inclusivity

How can we better work with communities to design, develop and build future places? How do we empower and encourage participation? From coaching young people to learning to listen, to co-production and citizen-as-developer, we explore the citizen voice in the city in shaping future places.

Francesca Brown, Managing Director and Chief Executive, Goals4Girls

Tom Chance, Director, National CLT Network

Simon Green, Project Lead, The Circle

Andre Reid, Founder, Kiondo

Anna White, Property Journalist (chair)

11:25-12:25

Climate risk in investment and development

Where are the risks, and where are the opportunities?

Are the predictions adequate?

How do we value climate risk in investment and development?

Where are the risks, and where are the opportunities? Who has woken up, and who is still asleep? What will happen to insurance?

What of the new biodiversity regulations? A myth-busting session about land value, investment and future of development in a climate emergency.

Elizabeth Rapoport, Director, Research and advisory services, Urban Land Institute

Chris Brown, Executive chair and co-founder, Igloo

Simon Crichton, Food Farming and Trade Team Manager, Triodos Bank

Basil Demeroutis, Managing Partner, Investment Committee, FORE Partnership

FORE Partnership

Anna White, Property Journalist (chair)

12:25-13:10

What is a truly 'smart' city?

A discussion of what data can do for cities, plus some myth-busting about what it can't

Should we believe the Smart City hype? What can data teach us about making cities that thrive? Who is represented in the data, and who isn't? From privacy to technology, what are the current problems hindering the achievement of the Smart City vision, and what needs to be addressed?

Niashie Adjaye, Director of Operations, Walulel

Araceli Camargo, Neuroscientist and lab director, The Centric Lab

Chanuki Illushka Seresinhe, Researcher, Alan Turing Institute

Robin Howie, Founder, Fieldwork Facility

Rory Olcayto, Chief Executive, Open-City (chair)

14:05-14:55

Masterplanning future place

How do we envision the future?

How do we envision the future of our places? How do we design for diversity and inclusion? How does masterplanning need to change to address pressing future issues such as climate change, mass migration, housing shortages, the wealth gap, water shortages, flooding and extreme weather? And will there be cars?

Bob Allies, Partner, Allies and Morrison

James Saunders, Chief Operating Officer, Quintain

Cannon Ivers, Director, LDA Design

Bridget Snaith, Partner, Shape Landscape Architecture

Patricia Brown, Director, Central (chair)

14:55-15:55

Placehack: Time/Shape/Space

How does the shape of a public space impact behaviour?

The idea is to explore not so much place as the time-in-space, so that we can design for activity rather than use. So how do people communicate in time-space? How do we make shapes to make communication in time-space easier? Should a Square be square?

Nick Tyler, Chadwick Professor of Civil Engineering, University College London

Community Centre

Quayside pub

10:15-11:15

Placehack: Child's eye with Urban95

Reimagining cities for young families and young children

Making your place meet the needs of families with young children is one of the best investments a city or developer can make. Yet babies, toddlers and the people who care for them can be invisible to city leaders, planners and developers as a group with specific needs. That's why the Bernard van Leer Foundation's Urban95 initiative supports cities worldwide to ask and answer a bold but simple question: if you could experience a city from 95cm – the height of a 3-year-old – what would you change?

Patrin Watanatada, Knowledge for Policy Director, Bernard van Leer Foundation

Julian Vincelot, Urban95 Coordinator, Bernard van Leer Foundation

Julian Vincelot, Urban95 Coordinator, Bernard van Leer Foundation

Hannah Wright, Urban Planner and Integrator, Urban95

11:15-12:15

Placehack: Greener, liveable, loveable: a manifesto for change

Designing in green infrastructure

Younger people give voice to and shape a conversation on making their spaces future proof, greener and more equitable.

Join a cohort of young people, Design Council, Commonplace and JTP, for a participatory workshop, where we define a platform for real change.

Sue Morgan, Director of Architecture and the Built Environment, Design Council

Market Square

08:30-09:15

Registration

Coffee and refreshments

Take a seat

Enjoy a variety of street furniture provided by **Vestre** throughout the public spaces of the Festival of Place, from the picnic tables to the innovative Stoop, plus tables and benches that encourage different user behaviours. Vestre is a leading manufacturer of furniture for towns, parks and outdoor public spaces. They are a family-owned company and their head office is located in Oslo. vestre.com

08:30-05:30

The market/place

At the heart of the Festival of Place are a selection of stalls kindly sponsored by our supporters

- **Quintain** will be keeping us refreshed with their Wembley Park pilsner and Tipi IPA, pick up a take-away with one of their tote bags or enjoy one from lunchtime onwards
- **Savills Urban Design Studio** will be providing fresh fruit throughout the day
- Take home some free Monmouth Coffee courtesy of **Scott Brownrigg**, all the way from their own community in Seven Dials, Covent Garden
- **The Partnership for Biodiversity in Planning** will be showcasing some samples and material about how new developments can support biodiversity
- **Elizabeth Marsh Floral Design** will be providing fresh flowers direct from New Covent Garden Market plus she will have striking installations throughout the festival

13:45-14:45

Walking tour: London Dock

Meet near the ships for a walking tour of the surrounding development

From its 19th century heyday as the centre of world trade, to the site of the News International printworkers' strike in the 1990's; London Dock has been a place in constant transition. Today, it is one of the city's brightest emerging districts, imbued with the spirit of Wapping's dockland heritage. Join us on a walking tour that explores how Wapping's colourful past has been embedded into the design of the mixed-use development adjacent to Tobacco Dock. Each guest will also receive a copy of the book *Trading Words* by artist Gordon Young and Why Not Associates; an investigation of the dockland artefacts and memories that influenced the public realm artwork.

George Ferrari, Associate, Patel Taylor
Andy Altmann, Director, Why Not Associates

14:55-16:25

Plackhack: The Circular City

How can we use existing infrastructure and materials to create new and more purposeful cities and things?

Our cities are made up of an abundance of materials. Tap into your resourcefulness and ignite your creativity in this interactive session where you will co-design and build small scale models of 'places' in response to the challenges of the day. To build this miniature city, place groups will salvage and disassemble unused and unloved household objects and scrap materials to be used as construction material. How can we repurpose existing infrastructure and materials to create new and more purposeful cities and things?

Andre Reid, Founder, Kiondo

08:30-05:30

Live Placetest

Over the course of the day, Anthropologists Nitasha Kapoor and Dr. Nick Gadsby will be conducting a live Placetest of the Festival as it happens. They'll be looking to understand how people interact with each other and with the built environment - what's working and what's not working to create an atmosphere where people can best learn about how to make places that thrive. Nitasha and Nick will be joined by wayfinding experts from Maynard Design who will conduct an analysis of how the built environment helps or hinders movement through the site. You'll see our Placetesters making observations and having quick chats with delegates as the day goes on. We'd love for you to get involved and share your thoughts (warts and all!).

Nitasha Kapoor, Anthropologist and social researcher
Dr. Nick Gadsby, Anthropologist and commercial semiotician

10:30-4:30, Quayside 3

Urban95 VR experience with ARUP

Visit our VR room to experience the city from 95cm tall, the average height of a 3-year-old, within a fictional piece of urban realm. ARUP's virtual and visualisation, acoustics, and behavioural experts collaborated with the **Bernard van Leer Foundation** to develop an experience that allows users to 'virtually' halve in size

City Gallery

This City Gallery showcases how cities across the UK are investing in developing better places. The Festival of Place brings together professionals and key influencers committed to making cities where people want to live, work, play and learn. Our city partners actively support this industry-wide conversation while aligning their city and region with the importance of creating great places.



The Pineapples

Awards for Place

17:30-21:00

The Pineapples Awards party

The winners of The Pineapples awards for place will be presented as we celebrate at this closing party for the day.

Sponsored by

**Design
Council**

Map



17:30-21:00

The Pineapples Awards party

The winners of The Pineapples awards for place will be presented as we celebrate at this closing party for the day

Design Council

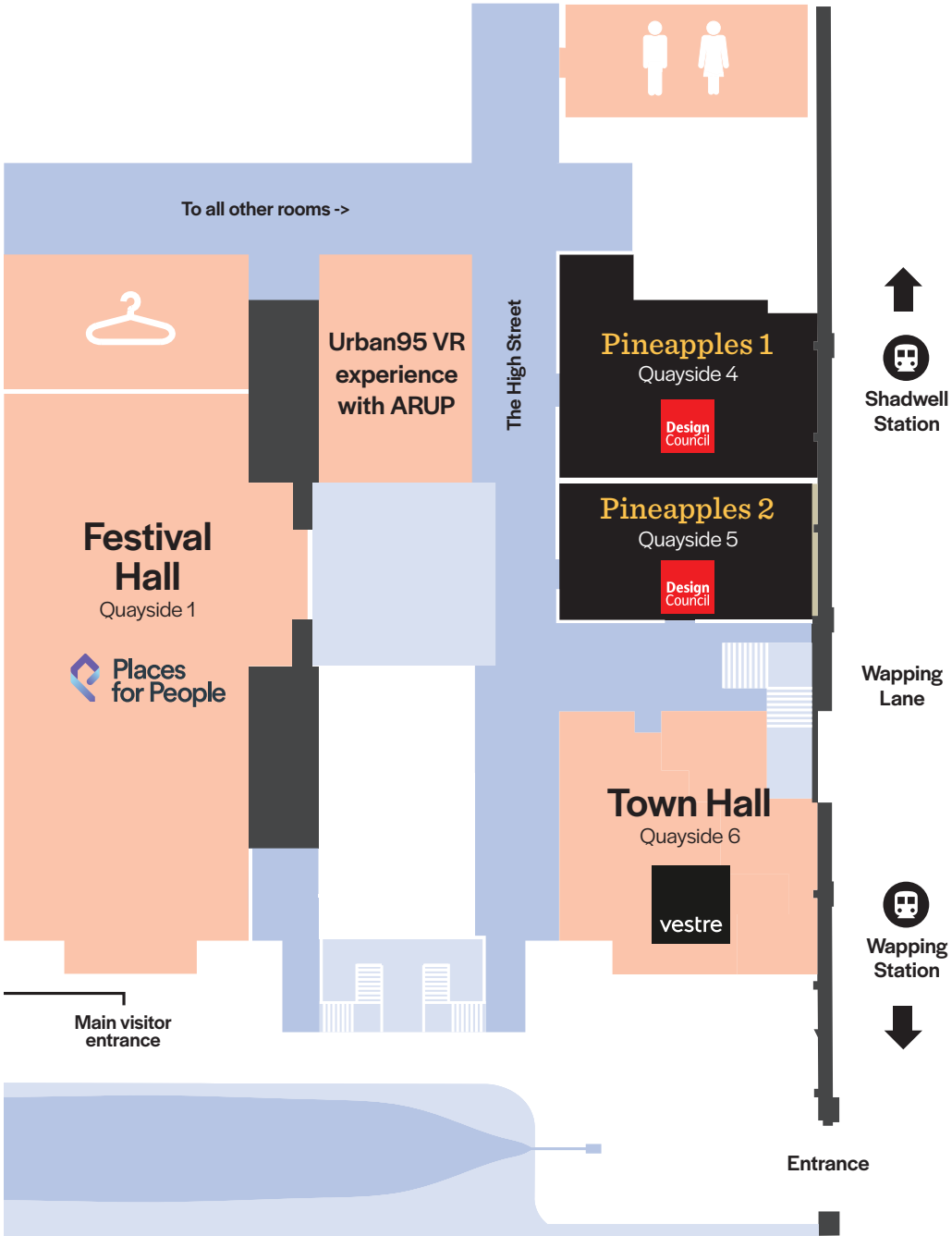
Community Centre

Quayside pub

Market Square

Explore our City Gallery, innovative street furniture and market stalls





The Pineapples

Awards for Place

The Pineapples celebrate the best places in the UK. Our judging panel will be looking for places that thrive, where people want to live, work, play, shop and learn.

Throughout the day the teams behind shortlisted projects will be presenting their entries to our panel of judges and audience of delegates.

Yolande Barnes,
Chair, Bartlett Real Estate Institute, UCL

Martin Reeves,
Chief executive, Coventry City Council

Roisin Willmott,
Director of Wales and Northern Ireland, Royal Town Planning Institute

Akeel Malik,
Fund manager, Urban Splash Residential Fund

Brian Ham,
Executive director – development, Home Group

Peter Martin,
Group director – development, Sanctuary Group

Kate Martin,
Director of city housing, City of Wolverhampton Council

Sue Morgan,
Director of architecture and the built environment, Design Council

In partnership with:



Ben Adams,
Founding director, Ben Adams Architects

Piers Taylor,
Founder, Invisible Studio Architects

Catherine Dewar,
Regional director North West, Historic England

Mike Gedye,
Executive director, CBRE

Dinah Bornat,
Co-founder, ZCD Architects

Eleanor Fawcett,
Head of design, Old Oak and Park Royal Development

Emily Gee,
Regional director, London and South East, Historic England

Pineapples Room 1

Quayside 4

Completed Place

10.30 – 10.50

One Tower Bridge, London
Berkeley Homes and London Borough of Southwark

10.50 – 11.10

Balham High Road, London
Wandsworth Borough Council

11.10 – 11.30

The Italian Gardens, Weston-super-Mare
West of England Local Enterprise Partnership

11.30 – 11.50

London Wall Place, London
Brookfield Properties and Oxford Properties

Pineapples Room 1

Quayside 4

Future Place

11.50 – 12.10

Culture Mile, London

City of London

12.30 – 12.50

Inner North West Masterplan, Belfast

Belfast City Council

12.50 – 13.10

Oakfield, Swindon

Nationwide

14.10 – 13.30

The Chocolate Factory for Workspace Group, London

Haringey Council

14.30 – 14.50

Wickside, London

McGrath

14.50 – 15.10

Kirkstall Forge, Leeds

Leeds City Council

15.10 – 15.30

Temple Leeds

Leeds City Council

15.30 – 15.50

Port Loop, Birmingham

Urban Splash and Places for People

15.50 – 16.10

8 Albert Embankment, London

U+I

16.10 – 16.30

West End Project, London

London Borough of Camden

Pineapples Room 2

Quayside 5

Contribution to Place

10.30 – 10.50

The Department Store, London

Squire & Partners

10.50 – 11.10

Merchant Square footbridge, London

European Land & Property Limited

11.10 – 11.30

Television Centre, London

Stanhope, Mitsui Fudosan, AIMCo, BBC Studioworks

11.30 – 11.50

Revealing the Charterhouse, London

The Charterhouse

11.50 – 12.10

Waltham Forest walking and cycling, London

London Borough of Waltham Forest

14.30 – 14.50

Park Hill, Sheffield

Urban Splash and Places for People

14.50 – 15.10

Smith's Dock, North Shields

Urban Splash and Places for People

15.10 – 15.30

King's Cross, London

Argent

15.30 – 15.50

Broadgate, London

British Land

Pineapples Room 2

Quayside 5

Place in Progress

12.10 – 12.30

Wembley Park, London

Quintain

12.30 – 12.50

London Dock, London

St George City

12.50 – 13.10

Battersea Power Station, London

Battersea Power Station Development Company

13.10 – 13.30

Blackwall Reach, London

Swan Housing Association, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, GLA

14.30 – 14.50

Park Hill, Sheffield

Urban Splash and Places for People

14.50 – 15.10

Smith's Dock, North Shields

Urban Splash and Places for People

15.10 – 15.30

King's Cross, London

Argent

15.30 – 15.50

Broadgate, London

British Land

Speakers



Niashie Adjaye
Director of operations
[Walulel](#)



Bob Allies
Partner
[Allies and Morrison](#)



Giles Barrie
Senior managing director
[FTI Consulting Global](#)



Dinah Bornat
Co-founder
[ZCD Architects](#)



Chris Brown
Executive chair & co-founder
[Igloo](#)



Francesca Brown
CEO
[Goals4Girls](#)



Patricia Brown
Director
[Central](#)



Araceli Camargo
Neuroscientist
[The Centric Lab](#)



Tom Chance
Director
[National CLT Network](#)



David Cowans
Group chief executive
[Places for People](#)



Simon Crichton
Food farming and trade team manager
[Troidos](#)



Mark Davy
CEO and founder
[Futurecity](#)



Basil Demeroutis
Managing partner, investment committee
[FORE Partnership](#)



Dr Patrice Derrington
Director of real estate development program
[Columbia University](#)



Rachel Fisher
Deputy director for regeneration and infrastructure
[Department for Communities and Local Government](#)



Dr Nick Gadsby
Anthropologist and commercial semiotician



Simon Green
Project lead
[The Circle](#)



Robin Howie
Founder
[Fieldwork Facility](#)



Chanuki Illushka Seresinhe
Researcher
[Alan Turing Institute](#)



Cannon Ivers
Director
[LDA Design](#)



Nitasha Kapoor
Anthropologist and social researcher



Danny Keir
Global head of business development
[Sound Diplomacy](#)



Dan Labbad
Chief executive officer Europe, Lendlease
[Lendlease Europe](#)



Sir Stuart Lipton
Partner
[Lipton Rogers Developments LLP](#)



Sue Morgan
Director of architecture and the built environment
[Design Council](#)



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Editor-in-chief
[The Developer](#)



Joy Nazzari
Founding director
[dn&co](#)



Rory Olcayto
Chief executive
[Open-City](#)



Anne Power
Head of LSE Housing and Communities
emeritus professor of social policy
[London School of Economics](#)



Elizabeth Rapoport
Director of research & advisory services
[Urban Land Institute](#)



Andre Reid
Founder
[Kiondo](#)



Ian Rigarfsford
External affairs manager
[Ecology Building Society](#)



James Saunders
Chief operating officer
[Quintain](#)



Akil Scafe-Smith
Founder
[Resolve Collective](#)



Bridget Snaith
Partner
[Shape Landscape Architecture](#)



Clarisse Tavin
Group manager, major programmes and projects
[City of London Corporation](#)



Tim Tompkins
President
[Times Square Alliance](#)



Nick Tyler
Chadwick professor of civil engineering
[University College London](#)



Julien Vincelot
Urban95 coordinator
[Bernard van Leer Foundation](#)



Adrian Voce
President
[European Network for Child Friendly Cities](#)



Emma Warren
Author
[Make Some Space: Tuning into Total Refreshment Centre](#)



Patrin Watanatada
Knowledge for policy director
[Bernard van Leer Foundation](#)



Sarah Weir OBE
CEO
[Design Council](#)



Anna White
Property journalist



Hannah Wright
Urban planner and integrator
[Urban95](#)

D

the developer

The Developer Live: Risk & Resilience takes place at
Illuminate, The Science Museum on 8 November 2019

Book now!

Placetest: Festival of Place 2019

Did the diverse groups brought together by the inaugural Festival of Place actually mingle? What potential is found in the liminality of the one-day conference? Anthropologist *Nitasha Kapoor* reports after her live placetest on the day



Days before the Festival Of Place, organiser and *The Developer* editor-in-chief Christine Murray wrote in *Dezeen* that she founded the event “in the hopes that by getting a jumble of smart people and professionals together, we can start to unpick these problems and find a way forward”.

The problems Murray refers to are complex and interconnected: a climate emergency, an epidemic of homelessness, a mental health crisis, and more.

As I arrived at the Festival of Place, charged with undertaking a live placetest of the event, that idea of “a jumble of smart people” stuck with me. Who are these people “who care about making places that thrive”, as Murray puts it? As an anthropologist and social researcher, that is what I was there to find out.

The inaugural Festival of Place brought together 450 developers, planners, investors, researchers, consultants, architects, community organisers, activists and designers – professionals across multiple disciplines linked by their interest in urban redevelopment.

Who are these people “who care about making places that thrive”, as Murray puts it?

Why have they decided it is worth their while to take a day out of work to be here? And how might this type of gathering help solve these problems?

As for the venue, it is interesting to consider the place where ‘place’ is being discussed. Tobacco Dock has always been about money, markets and the progress of capitalism. Beginning with the world trade in tobacco, it was briefly regenerated into a shopping centre in the 1990s, and now has become a venue for weddings, exhibitions and other corporate and commercial events. The interior design highlights its trade heritage, with exposed iron girders, wooden beams and bare brick walls (although I’d argue the replica pirate ships take things to a level of make-believe). Yet trade has long since given way to PowerPoint, plastic chairs and Post-it notes.



Festival of Place at Tobacco Dock in Shadwell, east London



The Market Square at the Festival of Place 2019

Placetesting does not preclude participation: I listened to presentations about regeneration, crime and the future of work, attended panels on the citizen-as-developer and curating culture, and took part in workshops to reimagine places, considering the health of future generations and the planet. I talked to people I knew and those I didn't, and asked for their thoughts on the day. I kept my eyes and ears open, and took notes.

What I found was that people came to this gathering for different reasons. They were presenting, competing, learning, sharing, socialising, networking, or simply

having a day away from their desks. The programme was more eclectic than at most architecture and development conferences, an ambition reflected in the fact that this was officially called a ‘festival’ and not a conference – although the rituals and norms associated with attending a conference are strong and, for the most part, people were behaving more in line with a business environment than a field in Glastonbury. There was a level of joy and fun in the programming that increased the chances of learning something or meeting someone new. Several people told me that they were there to witness and be a part of something from the start that was different.

Whether a conference or a festival, the liminal quality of these work-not-work environments means we’re more likely to have a new experience

Whether a conference or a festival, the liminal quality of these work-not-work environments means we are more likely to have a new experience, and that was certainly true at the Festival of Place. Liminality is a concept explored and developed by Victor Turner, a British

anthropologist who was especially interested in rituals and rites of passage. The liminal state is one where people are removed from the normal structures of society due to some sort of ‘tension’, and in so doing they become ‘betwixt or between’ – neither fully here nor there, and possibly both. An example of a classic liminal phase would be the period of time between passing exams or handing in final assignments and the graduation ceremony or first job – the student is no longer studying but has not started the next phase of life and is in a sort of no man’s land.

Liminal states are periods of time where people can try things out and be experimental, a ‘perhaps’ state of mind. Anything might, or even should, happen. Turner called the people that share liminal states the ‘communitas’. He explains how this group creates strong bonds and a camaraderie in the attempt to work through whatever tension is being experienced. People had gathered at the Festival of Place to discuss and tackle those big problems. They wanted to figure out what could possibly heal the crisis and play a part.



Festival of Place 2019 attendees reading the programme





Sir Stuart Lipton and Giles Barrie

Liminality became a theme that I continued to notice throughout the day. Anne Power, emeritus professor of social policy at LSE, spoke of the importance of half-acre infill sites, often the places that develop organically in between other places; she advocated leaving them as they are or enhancing them rather than filling them in or using them as a reason to start a development from scratch. Nick Tyler, professor of civil engineering at UCL, talked about how “places are people”, a reminder that without a deep understanding of people and culture there is little chance of creating and sustaining strong places. Prompted by these two speakers in particular, I started noticing and thinking about those who fall between people – the facilitators.

I saw ‘guides’ everywhere. They were the hosts of the day, chairing panels, leading workshops... the shapeshifters who translated presentations into possibilities for creativity

In Turner's liminal rituals, there is an understanding that people will not stay in this state for long – a conference is just for one day. Crucially, they are not alone but guided by 'ceremony masters', guides who often mediate between what happens there and what comes next.

At the Festival of Place, I saw 'guides' everywhere. They were the hosts of the day, chairing panels, leading workshops, standing in the wings, introducing and greeting, actively listening and connecting people and ideas together. They were the shapeshifters who translated presentations into possibilities for creativity.

Guides play a role that is barely noticed until it isn't done well, like when there isn't enough time left to ask questions of a panel, or when you are asked by someone who missed a talk what happened and you don't have anything interesting to say. Or when the coffee is bad. Without these small and thoughtful details, we are left with an experience that is predictable, that doesn't come to life. Without those guides and their skills, we are left with presentations of fact, without the chance to build on it.

I was struck by the ease with which these guides move in a place that is filled with people who are unfamiliar to each other. That was most clearly signposted by what attendees chose to wear: suits, business casual, summer dresses, trainers, backpacks, folded Bromptons. These choices signal the different types of work happening at the conference, but also reveal different economic and social backgrounds and, likely, different politics and perspectives on places and people.

Dr Patrice Derrington, professor and director of the real estate development programme at Columbia, gave a keynote speech where she talked about a development industry that is fragmented, and has always been that way. Global financial flows have little in common with community-organised events; people who are comfortable working in risk analysis, spreadsheets and bottom lines are generally at a distance to those working with the community, stories and human potential. Yet they are all trying to make places that thrive, connected by the guides who seem to know everyone or want to get to know everyone in the room.

I talked to a number of the guides at the conference, and recognised a pattern in their stories. They are able to speak to different types of people, and when necessary translate those ideas to others.

How do you recognise a guide? They were the kids at school that were friends with a few different cliques, moving between them, popular without being front and centre

On stage, Emma Warren, author of *Make Some Space*, a book about how to help culture thrive, advocated for the importance of ‘relationship managers’, people who understand both sides of the coin and who can mediate between different environments.

Ash Patel, community engagement officer at Quintain’s The Yellow, a community hub in Wembley Park, told me about how they might run a community workshop in the morning and demonstrate the impact of these events to middle-managers and directors in the afternoon.

Dinah Bornat, founder of ZCD Architects, translates the natural ways in which kids play into the language of masterplanning. Bornat developed innovative mapping techniques off the back of countless hours observing and talking to kids about their daily lives and local neighbourhoods for a better understanding of how

children use space and what they need.

How do you recognise a guide? When they were young, they were probably the kids at school that were friends with a few different cliques, moving between them, popular without being front and centre. They took an ‘odd path’ to get to where they are; it was not what they set out to be or do, and remains unexpected and surprising. It is obvious in the way they tell stories about their work that they love what they do.

These are people attracted to complex problems, and they like trying to solve them. They aren't afraid to acknowledge the scale of the current ones: the word 'crisis' was repeatedly used on and off stage

Patricia Brown, director at urban consultancy Central, spoke to me about the importance of hospitality – including food and drink, to the extent that she uses it as a defining feature of her manifesto, the often overlooked importance of creating the right vibe in the room to get people comfortable and setting the right conditions for

positive conversations.

Over lunch, Warren told me about how her ideal gathering would be to invite people to a place, give them delicious food and drinks and leave them be, believing that the best conversations often come from a place of generosity and simplicity.

These are people attracted to complex problems, and they like trying to solve them. They aren't afraid to acknowledge the scale of the current ones: the word 'crisis' was repeatedly used on and off stage. The numbers are striking: an estimated half of all emissions come from development and construction, in part due to the basic building blocks of concrete, glass and steel. More people in the industry are beginning to understand that they must be smarter, better and take responsibility for their role in the problem. Or else what?



Francesca Brown, chief executive at Goals 4 Girls



Dr Patrice Derrington at the Festival of Place

“It is still not too late to act,” said climate activist Greta Thunberg recently. “It will take a far-reaching vision, it will take courage, it will take fierce, fierce determination to act now, to lay the foundations where we may not know all the details about how to shape the ceiling. In other words it will take cathedral thinking.” But these guides thrive when faced with knotty problems, and they often share that kind of “cathedral thinking”: they know there is work to be done and they know there must be a way through, even if we don’t yet know every step of the way. And, of course, you can’t build a cathedral on your own.

During his workshop, Tyler asked the question at the heart of good places: “How do you get people to trust each other?” The people who can stand firmly with one foot in the land of numbers and business, and the other in the land of people and stories can help to galvanise a fragmented industry. They gain the trust of different groups by finding commonalities, rather than dwelling on differences. They are community organisers, urban consultants, business academics, the people writing reports, editing magazines, researching, campaigning. They are trusted sources of knowledge and goodwill for the industry because they have specialist knowledge and their motives are to make the industry better. They are the people you call when you have a really difficult problem, something that hasn’t been done before, that needs a different approach and a different group of people on the case.

During his workshop, Tyler asked the question at the heart of good places: “How do you get people to trust each other?”

Sometimes it takes a big gathering to see who turns up, who shines bright, and who you can call the next day to make places that thrive. The Festival of Place was ambitious, and it happened – hundreds of people were there and according to the post-event online survey, two-thirds say they are likely or extremely likely to attend again, with just one person saying they are unlikely to come back next year.

What I learned during the live placetest was that we have strong and mighty guides among the makers of place, and they play a critical role as informed hosts, gathering different types of people together, making sure everyone feels like they are getting what they need, and challenging us to do better.

All photographs by John Sturrock

*Next year's **Festival of Place** takes place on 7 July 2020 at Tobacco Dock, east London*



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