the developer

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Who's the best at placemaking?

Festival of Place: a first look at the 27 shortlisted entrants for the Pineapple Awards delivering public realm with social value

Anna White

At the very heart of every strong placemaking strategy is the upgrade of 'public realm'.

The term is frequently and loosely used by urban professionals. It could be a plaza, a playground, a towpath or the retail concourse at a train station.

But as broad and loose as the definition is, public realm lies at the heart of masterplanning. Done well, it can address loneliness, promote well-being and generate community spirit. It is also the new battleground for UK developers, architects and local authorities. Public realm will sell homes and can elevate a block of flats into a place, creating a long-lasting legacy.

Nick Whitten, director of UK research at JLL, describes it as curb appeal: "Curb appeal is ultimately where first opinions are formed. A buyer or visitor will either get a good vibe or share the excitement of what's to come. Public realm can make or break a scheme and is how a development is now judged. It's no longer about just providing a home to live in, but a place to love."

Twenty-seven of the UK's largest mixed-use projects have been shortlisted for the **Pineapple Awards** to be held at the inaugural **Festival of Place** on 9 July. The entrants are spread across four categories: Place in progress, Contribution of place, Completed place and Future place. Without exception, all the competing schemes are centred around an overhaul of public realm.

The following projects will be presented and judged in front of a live audience at the Festival of Place, with the winners announced The Pineapples drinks party at the close of the day.

Come one, come all to Quintain's new Wembley

The ambition for Park Hill is that it becomes an emblem of social change, once again

PLACE IN PROGRESS: THE CONTENDERS

London Dock, London

A total of £1.5bn has been poured into the ongoing transformation of Wapping's disused dockyards. London Dock will deliver 1,800 homes when completed, and cover more than 15 acres. Aside from historic touches such as the names of spices once carved into the walkways – a nod to goods hauled off the ships – the main feature of London Dock is its openness. The dockside flows into gardens, promenades and plazas for workers to eat lunch and families to play. Pennington Warehouse is now a creative studio and an exhibition space.

Wembley Park, London

Unless you lived locally or were off to a football match, there was no call to visit Wembley. This is changing. The 85-acre site is now home to the 70-store London Designer Outlet, the Hilton hotel, the Troubadour theatre and more than 1,750 homes. Developer Quintain has the green light for a further 115,000 sq ft of office space, a primary school, two nurseries and an NHS health centre for 25,000 patients. The concrete-encased Olympic Way is being transformed into a 400m boulevard of mature trees for walkers and cyclists. In total 7,500 homes and 42 acres of gardens and public realm will be delivered by completion.

Park Hill, Sheffield

Park Hill in Sheffield is a 1960s housing estate built as part of an effort to clear slums after the war. At the time it was deemed an emblem of social change. However, by the 1990s families had moved out, crime had moved in and the facade had deteriorated.

A £100m regeneration project is restoring the building to its Brutalist glory. Now, 700 people live and work on the estate. There is a 30,000sq ft workspace for digital and creative businesses and a rolling exhibition programme. A new musical based on the history of the housing estate, *Standing at the Sky's Edge*, is sold out at Sheffield's theatres.

Battersea Power Station, London

After decades of dereliction, one of Europe's largest brick buildings is being brought back to life. The crane-covered Battersea Power Station will house new offices (the Apple campus), 4,000 homes and a 2,000-person event space. The 42-acre public realm has a village hall (where the Battersea Power Station Community Choir rehearses), restaurants, a hairdresser's, a cinema and a florist. The busy events programme includes food festivals, roller discos and exhibitions such as London Craft Week.

Blackwall Reach, London

Robin Hood Gardens has made way for the £500m residential scheme Blackwall Reach. A total of 1,500 new homes will be built, of which half will be classified as affordable. Local people have been prioritised in this development, with existing tenants rehoused in the first phase and a replacement mosque built.

The existing school has been expanded and new landscaped gardens will have contemplation areas and public art. Martial arts classes, sewing groups and women's networks are run out of The Reach community centre.

Smith's Dock, North Shields

The 30-acre former ship repair yard Smith's Dock welcomed some of the world's largest vessels between the 1850s and its closure in the 1980s. The 800-home development (including modular townhouses and apartments) will be built around the three original dock inlets and opens up the coast-to-coast cycle route. Working with the local fishing community, a memorial has been installed for lost men at sea.

King's Cross, London

The 67-acre King's Cross regeneration site has been designed to bring together an existing local community and a new one. The new public realm at King's Cross features parks, squares and gardens, dotted with fountains and long sharing benches.

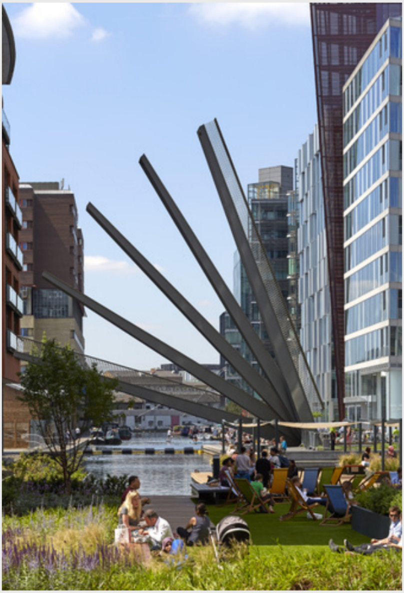
The space between the 1,900 new homes plays host to an events and enlivenment programme intended to prompt conversation and appeal to a diverse audience, from residents to visitors, and workers to academics.

Broadgate, London

Broadgate in the City was seen as a corporate concrete fortress, but a new masterplan is turning it into central London's largest pedestrianised area. It is designed to house the 30,000 workers based on the office campus and to pull in visitors and passers-by.

With more than 32 acres and four open spaces, it is fast becoming a new civic hub that appeals during the day and after office hours with foodie pop-ups, restaurants, screenings and festivals such as Archikids – a design and architecture workshop for children (5,500 participated last year).

More than 100 events take place in the area every year.



The Fan Bridge at Paddington Basin opens every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday

Charterhouse: take a tour of a 14th century former monastery-cum-modern day community hub

CONTRIBUTION TO PLACE: THE CONTENDERS

Merchant Square Footbridge, London

Every Wednesday and Friday at 12pm and every Saturday at 2pm, the new Fan Bridge at Paddington Basin reminds residents, workers and visitors of its presence. The 20m bridge over the Grand Union Canal is made from five different metal strands that lift one by one like a Japanese hand fan. The 3m wide cantilevered bridge has a hidden underground machine room and was designed to have drama in its movement. It transports workers away from the bustle of Praed Street to Merchant Square and the serenity of the canal.

Revealing the Charterhouse, London

This Grade I-listed complex of historic buildings and gardens was a 14th century monastery-turned-almshouse. In partnership with the Museum of London, Charterhouse Square has now been made open to the public for the first time, taking touring parties and running groups for older people, and providing education and learning.

The restoration comprises improvements to the gardens, a new visitors' entrance, an accessible route for tours and a museum. Considerable attention was paid to creating biodiverse ecological conditions – particularly to attracting more insect and bird species. Meadow-like areas and traditional English hedging – including hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, rowan and guelder rose – have been introduced and there are sections of native woodland shrubs including holly, crab apple and elder.

Waltham Forest, London

Waltham Forest is growing faster than any other London borough. To support this, £27m of 'Mini-Holland' funding and £800,000 (Borough Cycling Programme) from Transport for London is being invested to improve infrastructure and encourage walking and cycling.

The Enjoy Waltham Forest programme focuses on several place-based development activities to ensure freedom and healthier lifestyles for all residents.

Department Store, London

The dilapidated department store in the middle of Brixton, dating back to 1906, has been restored to house community events and services and workspace for creatives. It is home to the post office, local businesses, a coffee roastery, a record store, a deli and restaurants.

The different compartments are designed to flex from creative studio space during the day to bars at night. The Department Store is not a symbol of gentrification but of the returning of a community asset to those who love Brixton.

Television Centre, London

The BBC Television Centre at White City is shape-shifting from a closed and inaccessible site to a fully inclusive new piece of city.

Historic features, such as the original stage door, have been retained, but it has homes, offices, restaurants, a three-screen cinema and a club with a rooftop pool.

The public realm is step-free and level with landscaping and plenty of places to sit.

The site has been stitched back into the local area and led the regeneration of White City.

COMPLETED PLACE: THE CONTENDERS

Balham Town Centre, London

Balham has undergone much change as young professionals and families, priced out of Clapham, moved in to the area. But the town centre and streetscape was in need of improvement.

The scheme to overhaul the public realm included transforming Hildreth Street into a vibrant market square with a cafe strip and finding a creative solution to the 'ugly wall', a flank wall that is now covered in mock-Victorian green faience tiling as a nod to the Northern Line.

Footfall in the centre of Balham is now up 30 per cent and vacancy rates have fallen.

Italian Gardens, Weston-super-Mare

The Italian Gardens sit to the north of the high street of Weston-super-Mare, previously divorced from its surroundings and run-down.

Although well-used by the community, a £2.5m grant meant the space could be upgraded and routes opened to the town.

The new gardens are now a teaching venue with a library, cafe and restaurants. Events help to draw visitors from the seafront to the centre of Weston-super-Mare.

One Tower Bridge masterplan, London

The One Tower Bridge masterplan has linked the contemporary glass More London estate with the warehouse stock of Shad Thames.

The new district opened in the autumn 2017, with The Ivy restaurant and the Bridge Theatre on a new pedestrianised thoroughfare, Duchess Walk. Views of Tower Bridge are maximised from the new boulevard lined with shops, cafes, a spa and bike parking.

The Bridge Theatre has become the new cultural centre for the community. It's showing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* this month and *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* this winter.

London Wall Place, London

London Wall Place is made up of two new corporate buildings with nine roof terraces. The buildings are located on an important historic site within the City of London, next to St Alphage Church's medieval ruins and London Wall. The brief was to unlock these historic structures, replace those structures of no heritage value and create a commercial campus for 5,000 people.

The architects designed the campus so that it sits in a public park made up of landscaped gardens, which welcome 1,000 visitors per day. London Wall Place has the largest public gardens created in the City of London since the Barbican Estate.

Green faience tiling is the new signature of design for Balham town centre

One Tower Bridge masterplan links the Shad Thames warehouse stock and contemporary More London Place

FUTURE PLACE: THE CONTENDERS

Culture Mile, London

The City of London Corporation, together with the Barbican, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London Symphony Orchestra and the Museum of London, is transforming the north-west corner of the Square Mile into the Culture Mile.

A new linear public space will stretch from Farringdon to Moorgate, lined with pop-ups of art installations, exhibitions and performances. More gardens are also being created.

These cultural events will be inclusive and free ,and will animate the streets of the Square Mile.

Inner North West (INW) masterplan, Belfast

As a result of the Northern Ireland conflict, Belfast's city centre communities are segregated from each other by 'peace walls'. These communities have separate social activities, and sporting and educational facilities – they even produce different newspapers.

Plans for the underdeveloped and underinvested INW could tear down these barriers.

The aim is to create Belfast's first mixed city centre neighbourhood that will connect to the wider city, create open spaces, retain and integrate heritage assets, provide a mix of uses, create density, and foster a sense of community by creating an inclusive place for everyone.

Oakfield, Swindon

The 239-home scheme Oakfield was built for people not cars. A redundant former university campus, the site lies at the intersection of three distinct neighbourhoods. Hoarded off, unused and unloved for years, it's effectively a partition between communities.

Oakfield will offer affordable rent, shared ownership, rent to buy and market sale properties. The one- to four-bedroom homes are suitable for local people at every stage of life.

To encourage interaction, the front doors are arranged in pairs, and there are communal courtyard gardens and pocket parks. It's a not-for-profit development.

The Chocolate Factory, Wood Green, London

The Chocolate Factory, once home of the Jelly Baby, closed down in 1975.

The cluster of 19th and 20th century manufacturing buildings have steadily been claimed as studios for local artists, music makers, multimedia studios, photographic studios and performing arts organisations.

The new masterplan has sought to maintain the individual nature of the different structures while creating cohesion. It takes the creative core and wraps it around exhibition space with routes taking visitors intuitively to the Chocolate Square centre.

There is now an independent cinema, cafes and restaurants with residential above.

Wickside, Hackney, London

Wickside is a polluted, canal-side industrial no-man's land in Hackney – a waste-transfer site with no homes and just 21 jobs.

The masterplan received planning approval in May 2018 to turn the area into a thriving, buzzing district with 500 homes, a craft brewery, a casting foundry, studio space for creative businesses and local artists, and a food market.

A mix of housing, commercial and community space linked by a park, it will be seen as the gateway to the regeneration of Hackney's Fish Island.

Kirkstall Forge, Leeds

The 57-acre Kirkstall Forge development is the oldest continually industrialised site in the UK.
It cost £40m to clear and decontaminate the brownfield site, and build flood defences, a major river bridge and an on-site railway station.

The new rural neighbourhood will be nestled in 150 acres of woodland valley, but is just a six-minute train journey into Leeds.

When completed, it will deliver 1,050 homes and 300,000sq ft of high quality offices, leisure, shops and restaurants.

An apprenticeship campus is already up and running, training ex-youth offenders and local community groups.

Port Loop, Birmingham

Port Loop was a redundant urban island, strangled by canals, just outside Birmingham the city centre.

It is one of the UK's most significant brownfield regeneration schemes, and is being transformed into a new, family-focused waterside neighbourhood.

The 43-acre site will bring 1,150 new homes to the city, along with workspaces, parks, community facilities, a swimming pool, cycleways, 1.5km of towpaths and a water bus stop.

The waterways are being replanted to encourage biodiversity, and restaurants, bars and cafes are also in the plans.

8 Albert Embankment, London

The Grade II-listed Lambeth Fire Station and former London Fire Brigade headquarters, which overlooks the Thames and the Houses of Parliament, is being converted into 400 homes, a new fire station and a Fire Brigade Museum.

The £450m project also includes the creation of public space in front of the building, opening up the high street where a new hotel, offices and shops will be delivered.

This central square reinvents the original purpose of the high street as an active community centre, which has been missing for the past 100 years.

Temple, Leeds

Demolition work is underway on a £350m project adjacent to Leeds train station and the proposed HS2 route. A nine-acre brownfield site is being transformed into an office, retail and leisure space with 750 new homes.

The scheme is seen as the gateway development for the regeneration of disadvantaged inner city district Holbeck, bringing new homes and jobs.

It forms part of Leeds City Council's plan to double the size of the existing city centre through regeneration schemes, opening up the city to areas that are currently cut off by roads and industrial estates.

West End Project, London

The West End Project is a radical overhaul of traffic and public realm in central London.

It removes the one-way systems and general traffic on Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street, closes streets to create parks and new squares, widens pavements and improves road safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

The aim is to shape the public realm to tackle air quality, loneliness and climate change.

The project will transform seven key spaces. At Princes Circus, a section of Shaftesbury Avenue will make way for a public square. Alfred Place will close a busy trafficked street to become the first new public park in this area in 100 years that will be a space for play and relaxation.

Whitfield Gardens will be transformed for the local community and four well-lit new pocket parks will be created along Tottenham Court Road.

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