

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The RTPI Planning Awards exist to celebrate the contribution that planners and planning make to society

through enhancements of the physical environment that create recognisable social and economic benefit.

As we continue to operate in a changing environment, it is essential to highlight the scale and diversity of what we have achieved. The projects here range from involving dispersed communities in planning the future of their area to creating major national infrastructure – just a few of the ways in which planning delivers for our communities and nations.

Past awards have celebrated the contribution of planning to economic performance. The introduction this

year of a Planning for Business award allows us to clearly underline this vital dimension of our work.

As well as celebrating what our award winners have achieved, we hope to inspire others to the same high standards in their own work.

I would like to thank all those who entered these awards for showing what planning can do and to our team of judges for their time, effort and expertise. Planners continue to deal with change but it is important to reflect on the achievements of 2011 and how we can build on these.

The RTPI Planning Awards have been highlighting the very best of planning for more than three decades. We look forward to celebrating the profession's achievements for many years to come.

Colin Haylock, President, RTPI

MESSAGE FROM THE JUDGES

This year saw a record number of entries with 139 submissions covering a wide range of topics including the Olympics, strategic planning, practical tools for community engagement, enforcement, regeneration, and a variety of large and small development schemes.

All entries were of exceptional quality, making the shortlisting task challenging but enjoyable. Ultimately, we settled on 34 finalists covering all ten categories and including submissions from right across the UK.

We had a hectic but stimulating three-month period of presentations and site visits, including a mill in Norfolk, a walk around Soho and a flying visit to Belfast. We heard from a range of participants representing both planning and other disciplines, as well as local residents involved in some schemes. All showed great enthusiasm for their roles in making a difference to the planning of the places in which we all live and work.

Key themes that impressed the judges were: the imaginative use of scarce resources; the value of partnership working and community involvement; how responding to climate change

and delivering sustainability leads to innovation; the importance of long-term strategic planning and the need for visionary leaders.

At a time when the planning system in England is under extreme challenge, being described as "broken" by our current government, it is encouraging to find so many exceptional examples of what it has achieved throughout the UK.

Ranging from the global to the local scale, planning continues to make a real difference to the places we live in and to meeting the challenges of delivering sustainable development for present and future generations. As judges, we are proud to be able to celebrate this achievement.

Leonora Rozee OBE MRTPI (chair), formerly deputy chief executive and director of policy, quality and development plans, Planning Inspectorate

Professor Chris Couch MRTPI, formerly head of school of planning, Liverpool John Moores University
Don Alder MRTPI, consultant and formerly head of environmental services, Taunton Deane Borough Council



CONTENTS

- 04 **Award for Spatial Strategies and Silver Jubilee Cup**
TAYplan Proposed Strategic Development Plan
- 07 **Award for Sustainable Communities**
Low Carbon Bath
- 08 **Award for Local Regeneration and Renewal**
Saint Anne's Square
- 09 **Award for Planning for Business**
Shaftesbury Villages
- 10 **Award for Planning Process**
Brighton & Hove Site Waste Management Plan Implementation
- 11 **Award for Heritage, Arts, Culture and Sport**
High House Production Park
- 12 **Award for Public Realm**
The Better Southend Project
- 13 **Award for Rural Areas and the Natural Environment**
Argyll and Bute Woodland and Forestry Strategy
- 14 **Judges' Special Award**
Olympic Park
- 15 **Young Planner of the Year**
Nikola Miller
- 16 **Consultancy Awards**
Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners; Cass Associates; Optimis Consulting
- 18 **Education Awards**
Dr Jon Anderson; Julian Lowther; Savills RTPI Summer Placement Scheme

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SHAFTESBURY VILLAGES

The Shaftesbury Villages are five areas in central London – Carnaby Street, Chinatown, Berwick Street, Seven Dials/Covent Garden and the Royal Opera House area – where Shaftesbury Plc has extensive property holdings.

Since 1991, consultants Rolfe Judd Planning have had responsibility for sustaining these vibrant commercial and residential areas on the owner's behalf. Keeping property vacancies to a minimum is central to the company's approach.

The policy basis for the villages is the concept of "urban farming". This reflects a way of treating people, spaces and social interaction in the same manner that a farmer looks after his land – by knowing each field and visiting his stock daily. The judges recognised that in this way, "Shaftesbury treats its property holdings as individual entities that need nurturing and managing on an individual basis".

The company does this within a highly flexible overall planning framework, devised with Westminster City Council and the London Borough of Camden. The entry met the judges' originality criterion by using innovative methods in adapting buildings for a variety of uses.

In terms of fit with the statutory planning context, another judging criterion, the area falls in the central activities zone designated in the London Plan. The company has promoted the development of supplementary planning guidance and the adoption of a Chinatown conservation area, providing further evidence of its close relationship with the local authorities.

Shaftesbury and Rolfe Judd emphasise the special mixed-use character of certain areas in the West End, creating focal points for unusual combinations of uses. This approach leads to as many as four different uses in a single Georgian or



Urban mix: an abhorrence for vacant space has led to multiple uses in buildings

KEY PARTICIPANTS

Client

Shaftesbury Plc Jonathan Lane, chief executive; Thomas Welton, director; Simon Quayle, director

Planning consultants

Rolfe Judd Planning Daryl Mylroie MRTPI, director; Sean Tickle MRTPI, director; Jan Donovan MRTPI, senior associate; Claire Evans MRTPI, senior planner; Danielle Zaire MRTPI, senior planner; Lucy Entecott, licentiate planner; Alex Gandy, licentiate planner

Victorian terrace building, especially in Chinatown.

Chair of the judging panel Leonora Rozee sums up why the entry meets the environmental enhancement judging criterion: "It is an exciting programme of property investment and management which is about creating and sustaining places where people live, work and have fun by adopting bespoke solutions, while achieving economic benefit and improving the environment."

Considering the sustainability criterion, the judges were impressed

by the focus on public transport and car-free development characteristic of all the villages and by Shaftesbury's preference to reuse rather than redevelop its buildings. Hundreds of flexible planning permissions allow for fast reletting of accommodation for a range of previously permitted uses, reducing the potential for vacancies and consequent deterioration of the older buildings.

The framework has led to a well-managed street environment, with limited loading times and shared surfaces ensuring that pedestrians have ownership of the streets. The company says support for a thriving business community has paid dividends in terms of its own financial performance as well as enhancing the viability of central London's heartlands.

The judges identified Shaftesbury's long-term commitment to giving its holdings a sustainable future as being especially praiseworthy. Careful design and management reflects the company's interest in building on the history and character of the highly individual areas forming its unique villages, they concluded.

COMMENDATION

Edinburgh Planning Concordat

The Edinburgh Planning Concordat is a statement of commitment between the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and City of Edinburgh Council's planning service. The concordat aims to improve working relationships between the development sector and the planning authority to facilitate economic development. It sets out a process for managing major development proposals by clarifying expectations and responsibilities for the applicant, the planning authority and the community. The judges concluded that its cooperative, informed, managed and transparent approach makes a significant contribution to culture change in Scotland's modernised planning system.

Finalists

Greening Victoria – LUC;
Plymouth's Market Recovery Action Plan – Plymouth City Council; **Trident Park** – SLR Consulting and Viridor