A new approach to healthy urban design & planning

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What does a healthy building or neighbourhood look like in 2019?
As a designer, planner, engineer... how do I know if my project will promote health?
There are many existing standards and guidance documents...
Covering a range of topics…

- Transport
- Inclusion & Equity
- Physical activity
- Gender
- Streets
- Ageing Population
- Food
- Air Quality
Yet we still often have a siloed design and planning response
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Continued need for integrated design

- Break out of siloed approaches
- Define what is good against a broad range of criteria
- Show that we can make healthy places…it is our job!
Continued need for integrated design

Break out of siloed approaches
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Buildings cannot cure people.
Mirko Zardini*

There is no moral duty on architects to incorporate cures into their work.
Peter Murray*

*Quoted from Horton (2012) who paraphrased the original speakers
A new Framework for Healthy Urban Design & Planning
Developing and testing the Framework

- Interviews (Design & Planning Professionals)
- 2-Part Literature Review (Health Impacts & Frameworks)
- Reflection on experience
- Preliminary Framework
- Accompanying evidence-based design strategies & monitoring indicators
- Test via Participatory Workshops & Implementation in Live Project
- Final Framework
Preliminary interview findings

19 participants in China, UK and USA

- Architecture
- Urban design
- Engineering
- Planning
- Sustainability

Health isn’t a new objective for us

The technologies and standards have shifted rapidly

Client & occupant expectations are shifting rapidly

Health & Sustainability are inextricably linked

They develop bespoke design approaches

Potential limitation: Speaking to ‘the converted’?
## Preliminary literature review findings

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Healthy design &amp; planning frameworks</th>
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<td>Importance of Planetary &amp; Ecosystem Health</td>
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<td>Importance of Equity &amp; Inclusion</td>
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<td>Co-benefits &amp; Unintended consequences</td>
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<td>Focus from individual factors moving out</td>
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<td>Siloed nature of current guidance</td>
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<td>Uncertainty of evidence base but need to act</td>
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A new PRELIMINARY Healthy Urban Design and Planning Framework
Three Core Principles

**Sustainability:** Triple bottom line with environment typically deprioritised

**Equity:** Recognises unfair differences in health caused by unfair distribution of health-promoting resources.

**Inclusivity:** Individuals’ characteristics (e.g. age, gender, race) may require different design considerations.
Three Scales of Health Impact

Relates to spatial scales of policy and development.

Recognises that decisions taken in a city can impact health at a global level.
Planetary Health

‘the health of human civilisation and the state of the natural systems on which it depends.’
(Whitmee et al., 2015)

Goals: Zero Carbon, Biodiverse, Resource Efficient

Core Principle Links (e.g. equity): Poor people emit least carbon, but most vulnerable to climate change impacts.

Good looks like: The Bullitt Center, Seattle, WA, USA
Ecosystem Health

Ecosystems are ‘webs of connections between living and non-living system components’ and they are foundational to human health. (Buse et al., 2018)

**Goals:** Water, Waste, Sanitation & Green Infrastructure, Air Quality

**Core Principle Links (e.g. inclusive):** Children, older people and those with existing conditions are disproportionately harmed by air pollution.

**Good looks like:** East Village, London, UK
Human Health

Two spatial scales: neighbourhood and building

**Neighbourhood Goals**: Physical Activity, Social Connection, Nutrition, Services, (Perceived) Safety

**Building Goals**: Noise, Thermal Comfort, Lighting, Building Safety, Tenure Security, Space

**Interconnections across 3 Scales**: e.g. Physical Activity

**Good looks like**: Grow Community, Bainbridge, WA, USA
Preliminary Framework – Currently being tested

Currently funded by Guy’s and St Thomas’ Charity to implement and test the Framework at Royal Street.

Royal Street

Vision: ‘An exemplar site for how to improve urban health through commercial property development’

Aims to draw on global best practice, alongside the charity’s own work on urban health, to maximise the health and wellbeing benefits of the development.

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References


Thank you

Please send feedback and good practice examples!

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