JOHN THOMPSON & PARTNERS

John Thompson & Partners (JTP) is a placemaking practice with extensive experience of delivering successful projects for the public and private sectors throughout the UK and internationally. We have pioneered community planning processes over two decades to build collaborative Visions for our projects with the very people who will go on to live in and use them.

From our offices in London, Edinburgh and Shanghai we undertake placemaking projects at every scale from cities and towns, to neighbourhoods, streets and the design of individual buildings.

“Planning and architecture are too important to be left to the professionals!”

HRH The Prince of Wales

JTP TIMELINE

JTP’s approach is informed by a timeline of leading edge activities and projects over the last 30 years from the Community Architecture movement in the 1980s through the pioneering of Community Planning Weekends for the public and private sector to create Visions for a wide range of placemaking projects to working with whole town communities to deliver Urban Renaissance to playing a leading role in the creation and establishment of the Academy of Urbanism; developing collaborative Charrette methodologies to deliver placemaking strategies and masterplans on high profile international projects, including for Battersea Power Station and the federal government district as part of the Moscow Expansion.

BUILDING FOR LIFE AWARDS

Our unique approach has received high praise: JTP is the only architecture practice to have won eight Building for Life Awards, the UK national standard for excellence in neighbourhood design and the building of community.
In 1988, John Thompson was invited to the Regional Urban Design Action Team (R/UDAT) in Pittsburgh, with other UK practitioners including Nick Wates. It was in Pittsburgh that John saw for the first time this Charrette based process, which engaged professionals with the local community to develop scenarios for the regeneration of the Monongahela Valley following the collapse of the steel industry. John brought the Charrette concept back to the UK and developed the Community Planning Weekend process. The first Community Planning Weekend was “A Vision for Bishopsgate Goods Yard” in 1989.

Also in 1989, the Poundbury Community Planning Weekend invited members of the Dorchester community to participate in developing the underlying principles of the mixed-use urban village.

The Community Architecture movement arose in the 1970s and 80s and is based on the principle that the built environment works best when the local community are actively engaged with its creation and daily administration. Community Planning methodologies emerged as a way of enabling communities to participate effectively in this process.
URBAN VILLAGES & URBAN EXTENSIONS

The Urban Villages movement grew up in the 1990s and the concept is characterized by mixed use, walkable neighbourhoods with an emphasis on high quality placemaking. JTP have latterly applied these principles as far as possible to the design of sustainable urban extensions, which are being planned to meet the current demand for new homes.

THE VILLAGE AT CATERHAM, SURREY

Caterham Barracks was the first time a Community Planning process was run with a private sector client, Linden Homes. Over a five day Community Planning Weekend around 1,000 local people participated in creating a shared vision, keeping the best of the existing buildings and landscape and creating a new, mixed-use village. A key feature was the establishment of a Community Development Trust, which owns and manages community buildings and maintains the public realm. The Village at Caterham is now a fully built and established community.

“The Community Planning Weekend has been used before but rarely in our opinion in a way that has enabled that process to be continued during the whole development.” TPI

HUNGATE, YORK

The Hungate site was the last remaining brownfield site within York’s walled city and, as such, a very sensitive project. JTP was appointed by Hungate (York) Regeneration Ltd as architects in 2003 and the first step was to invite the local community to participate in the vision for Hungate Community Planning Weekend. A key theme was how to design a contextual new city quarter that met modern day standards but that still had “Yorkness”. Planning was granted in 2004 and the first phase is now complete.

CHILMINGTON GREEN, ASHFORD, KENT

Chilmington Green will be an urban extension to Ashford providing up to 5,750 new homes and comprising a park, a high street and a market square; three villages with a hamlet at its heart. The masterplan was developed through a series of stakeholder workshops and a Community Planning Weekend developed the vision, design principles and masterplan for the site. A community development trust will take responsibility for safeguarding assets and managing facilities.

In January 2014 the project took the strategic planning award in Planning Magazine’s Placemaking Awards.
SCARBOROUGH

From the 1970s Scarborough’s buoyant tourism and fishing industries went into decline, with a devastating effect on the local economy. In 2001 JTP was asked to work with the local community to build a new future for the town. JTP ran an intensive community animation programme which encouraged over 1000 people to attend the Vision for Scarborough Community Planning Weekend. The Scarborough Renaissance Town Team was established and helped to oversee the delivery of a wide range of projects including harbour and neighbourhood regeneration, a Creative Industries Centre and art and culture festivals, all of which have helped to diversify and develop Scarborough’s economy.

“Scarborough was on the brink of terminal decline in 2001. We needed patience, vision and stimulus which the JTP team provided in abundance.” Nick Taylor, Scarborough Renaissance

UPPER CALDER VALLEY, YORKSHIRE

Upper Calder Valley Renaissance, comprising mill towns Walsden, Todmorden, Hebden Bridge, Mytholmroyd and Sowerby Bridge, presented the complex challenge of generating a strategy for the transformation of an entire valley. JTP engaged over 2,000 people, organisations and businesses through a collaborative placemaking process to create a Valley Charter that redefined the roles of the market towns and a valley masterplan that presented a long-term Vision to ensure future investment was strategy-led rather than driven by short-term funding.

BARNSLEY DEARNE GARDEN VILLAGES

JTP was appointed to work with the Dearne Valley Town Team and wider community in the Dearne Valley, a rural coal mining area comprising Thurcroft, Goldthorpe and Highgate and Bolton upon Dearne. Through a series of meetings culminating in a Community Planning Weekend, a new Vision was created for the Dearne Garden Villages “the best of town and country”. This was set out in a Sustainable Development Framework and Valley Charters building on the triple bottom line of Equity, Environment and Economy.

URBAN & RURAL RENAISSANCE

In the early 2000s Yorkshire Forward, the then Regional Development Agency, launched its Urban and Rural Renaissance programmes to support the social and economic regeneration of towns and cities in the region. As Urban and Rural Renaissance panellists, JTP undertook ground-breaking work with whole town communities delivering Visions, masterplans, charters and establishing Town Teams.
The word “Charrette” is gaining currency as a catch-all to describe interactive and intensive multi-disciplinary events, like Community Planning Weekends, that engage local people with experts to develop visions and plans for their community. JTP have worked internationally on a range of Charrette processes over many years.

In 2011 JTP was selected by the Scottish Government to facilitate multi-day Charrette processes in Scotland. In early 2013 JTP ran two Charrette processes simultaneously in Wick and Thurso to develop visions for the town aimed at enhancing their roles as economic, cultural, and service towns for the wider Caithness & North Sutherland area. The outcomes from both Charette have informed the Main Issues Report for the emerging Caithness & Sutherland Local Development Plan.

 Afterwards, the local John O’Groats Journal supported the Charettes as “a thoroughly democratic process”, and the resultant visions as, “cracking ideas . . . which would undoubtedly make our towns more appealing places for both residents and visitors.”

Upplands Väsby is enjoying high levels of economic investment and to accommodate the need for housing, the municipality is planning Sweden’s most sustainable neighbourhood, including 3500 new homes, located by a beautiful lakeside. Following local objections to the concept, JTP was asked to facilitate a seven day Charrette to work with the local community to develop a consensus Vision for the new neighbourhood. The local community engaged with the process and a Vision was created which respected the environment whilst providing for the development needed.

Changzhi Island is located south of Zhoushan, close to the regional centres of Ningbo, Hangzhou and Shanghai. The brief was for a new settlement to accommodate 50,000 people, designed on sustainable principles to create a low energy, ecological town. JTP won the project by developing the proposals through an intensive nine day Charrette process with the client and design team. In March 2014 JTP facilitated The Vision for Changzhi Town Centre Community Charrette to give the local community the chance to voice their dreams and gather their ideas towards the design of the town centre.

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PLACEMAKING STRATEGIES

JTP employ the years of collaborative planning experience to facilitate processes with clients, experts, stakeholders develop successful placemaking strategies on a wide range of projects.

BATTERSEA POWER STATION, LONDON

Located on the south bank of the River Thames, this Grade II* listed building is one of the best known landmarks in London. JTP Cities was commissioned to assist in developing a long-term Placemaking Vision for the redevelopment to inform the detailed design. The Placemaking Vision was created through a programme of events which included eight expert sessions, organised and facilitated by JTP Cities, around the themes of Evolving, Playing, Shopping, Working, Living, Learning, Connecting and Branding.

JTP has also been involved in the development of the Battersea Power Station Community Charter launched in April 2014.

LÜBECK, GERMANY

The old quarter of Lübeck (UNESCO World Heritage Site) is an island enclosed by the Trave River and Elbe-Lübeck Canal. The medieval centre suffered damage during WW2, which resulted in a lack of spatial coherence and poor quality public realm. The city authority sought sensitive proposals for public realm improvements and an extension to the pedestrian zone. JTP facilitated a Community Planning Weekend that provided a neutral platform for debate that stimulated over 400 local people to contribute to placemaking and vehicular circulation solutions. The resulting consensus vision formed an integral component of the brief for an international competition to redesign the public realm, which is now in place.

ST CLEMENTS, LONDON

St Clement’s Hospital is a curtilage listed site and a former workhouse infirmary in Bow, East London, which has been empty since 2003. In 2012 the Mayor of London decided to establish London’s first Community Land Trust (CLT) on the site. Galliford Try Linden Homes, with JTP as architects and master-planners, were selected as the GLA’s development partner. The St Clements Hospital Community Planning Workshop was held over two days and over 350 local people joined in to help develop placemaking solutions for the delivery of 250 new homes. The scheme received unanimous approval from Tower Hamlets in late 2013 for detailed planning, listed building consent and conservation area consent.

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