

GUERILLA  
TACTICS

# UNDERSTANDING THE DEVELOPER MINDSET

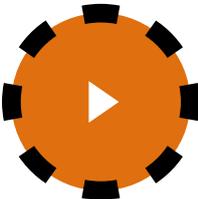
Winning New Business and  
Creating Your Own Opportunities



# How to use

Welcome to your interactive Delegate Resource Pack. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for attending the RIBA Guerrilla Tactics Conference 2019. This document offers a summary of the insights shared throughout the conference day and provides links to recordings of all presentations should you wish to watch them again.

Clicking on this icon will take you to the video recording.



Welcome	1
Introduction: Why we are here	2
Keynote: Being an architect-developer	3
How to network like a pro	4
Crafting the message	6
Understanding the opportunity you've got	8
Preparing Properly	9
What the developer wants to hear	11
What we learned about development	15
From architect to developer	16
The right purchase in the right place at the right time	17
Legal traps and how to avoid them	19
How to finance your build project	21
How to plug the gap	23
Creating a group-led self-build	25
Baugruppen in the UK	26
Inspiration from abroad	27
Summing up the day	28

# WELCOME

Alan Jones, RIBA President



## **Challenges and opportunities for architects**

- Amidst pressure on fee levels and rising operational costs, architects need to be smarter about overheads and their business in general.
- Effectively monetising their expertise and specialist knowledge is essential in creating a long-term sustainable career as an architect
- Architects have a talent for spotting and creating opportunities beyond the profession. There are sites ignored by the average developer, which can greatly benefit from an architect's joy in enhancing communities.

## **Learning the language of development**

- Those taking the plunge into development need to understand the hard facts and manage the financial risks that accompany them. The numbers need to add up.
- Understanding development is not only of interest to aspiring developers. Being able to communicate in the same language means that architects can offer a better service and ultimately win more business.

## INTRODUCTION: WHY WE ARE HERE

Amanda Baillieu and Gus Zogolovitch,  
Guerrilla Tactics Creative Directors



### **Understanding developers as clients**

- It is important to appreciate the developer's priorities. Think of a developer client as a customer: someone you are selling your services to. The better you understand their business, the better you can solve their problems.
- In order to approach a potential developer client and secure a meeting, identify and sell a solution to their problem, rather than merely trying to convey what is special about you and your work.

### **Architects' potential as developers**

- Architects already possess almost all the skills a developer needs, but have a few significant knowledge gaps.
- Every town and city has hundreds of unconventional sites that remain untapped by mainstream developers. They require an architect's ingenuity to unlock them.

# KEYNOTE: BEING AN ARCHITECT-DEVELOPER

George Ferguson CBE, RIBA Past President

## Defying the conventions of development

- Throw away the rule-book. While developers need to understand regulations, they should also be prepared to challenge received wisdom about town planning and urban design. Learn from history and from successful communities abroad.
- Invest during recessions: step on the accelerator when others are putting on the brakes.
- Distrust the mantra 'keep it simple'. The average developer wishes to keep things simple, but many complex factors contribute to what makes a neighbourhood successful. Placemaking is as much about communal space, play and food as about architecture.
- Take on a project because you love the building. Its quirks and problematic features can themselves suggest usages and imaginative solutions can prompt equally imaginative ones nearby.

## Think local

- Architects shape the lives of people and cities. They do not just design beautiful buildings for magazines. They are placemakers who steer communities.
- Do not be afraid to integrate campaigning with development. Helping a community regain control of its city can be a spur to development, for example. This can be kick-started by simple interventions such as striking use of paint on buildings or a reclaiming of underappreciated local landmarks.
- Architecture is not just about building but the activities that happen around them. Allowing local communities to participate in the regeneration of areas, via pop-up businesses and meanwhile spaces, can lead to extremely successful developments.

[George Ferguson CBE, RIBA Past President](#)



# HOW TO NETWORK LIKE A PRO

Leanne Tritton, ING



## Networking fundamentals

- Networking is the cheapest, most cost-effective way to build up a business from scratch with no money. In assessing what marketing budget you have, if any, first look at what you yourself can do.
- Networking is nothing to be scared of: it is simply the creation of connections between people. While you do not need to become best friends with everyone you network with, it can lead to durable friendships.
- Large-scale industry events such as MIPIM may seem intimidating, but they are ultimately a platform for connecting with relevant contacts in large numbers.

## Spotting opportunities and making connections

- Only 6% of new homes are currently designed by an architect. Rather than a disheartening statistic, this can be seen as an opportunity.
- Identify what makes you relevant and special. Find a reason why others would be interested in talking to you.

## Communicating the value of an architect

- There are potential clients that do not know how to find an architect or how much their services will cost. They are unaware of the value architects deliver and do not know what the process of architecture involves.

- Be as 'user-friendly' as possible. Just as many architects are scared of networking, many clients are scared of talking to architects.

#### **Finding others who will recommend you**

- The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a metric used in consumer marketing: a measure revealing the willingness of a customer or contact to recommend a company's services to others. Practices should identify who in their local area might fulfil that function.
- These might be: local design champions and those who are vocal about architecture in your area; local cognoscenti or parish councils; contractors, tradespeople and materials suppliers; local business networking groups such as Rotary Clubs; and the development teams of local authorities.

#### **Create your own opportunities**

- Architects can learn much from developers and housebuilders about the value of showing off their work to the public. Tactics include:

- Team up with other local architects and launch your own Open House weekend. These are an excellent opportunity to present work to local potential clients.
- Present workshops and talks at your practice or at well-known local venues to establish yourself as local thought-leaders. Sectors such as the financial services routinely provide workshops on topics such as 'how to make money from buying a house' or 'wealth planning'.
- Take your practice to the high street to increase visibility. Many UK high streets have affordable retail space which practices may be able to use as their office or for exhibitions.
- Embrace the fundamental digital tools of LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram. These are where individual clients find businesses, services and inspiration.



## CRAFTING THE MESSAGE

Lou Dawson, Smith Dawson; Roger Black, Black & Colleagues



### Strategies in pitching to a developer

- Address 'what success looks like'. Research the company or individual you are pitching to and judge what their definition of a successful outcome would be.
- Success might, depending on their sector, be the maximising of profit, a social outcome or the overcoming of an early funding hurdle.
- 
- Craft a narrative of the journey towards that successful outcome. This need not necessarily use your own portfolio. It could reference the work of a different practice.
- Place yourself in the developer's position and pitch yourself as the solution to their problem.

### **The architect as thought-leader**

- Do not assume that a developer knows everything. One tactic in pitching is to present an analysis of what works in the relevant sector.
- Beautiful architecture alone will not win a pitch. Think beyond building design about the overall experience and meaning of a project: what will bring joy, delight or social success beyond the buildings themselves?

### **Maintaining relationships**

- Be at the front of the queue. Developers may be working on several projects with long horizons. It is therefore important to maintain regular contact so that your practice is on a developer's radar when a project is ready to go.
- Do not be scared to ask for work from within your established network. Ask those who you know well to be advocates on your behalf and let them know if you are struggling to find work.



# UNDERSTANDING THE OPPORTUNITY YOU'VE GOT

Oliver Salway, SoftRoom



## Working out the value of a development opportunity

- Value in development broadly splits into the 'economic' and 'artistic' categories.
- Key economic questions include 'will it make money?' and 'if not, can I afford to do it?' Key artistic considerations include whether a project enhances a portfolio and will lead to career progression.
- Social, ethical and environmental values may also be considerations in the context of a practice's long-term interests and ambitions.

## Question the project's suitability

- Ask how much of a natural fit a project really is for your practice. How and why the client chose your practice gives a good suggestion of their expectations.
- If you are one of many being invited to pitch, make a realistic assessment of the likely odds of success relative to the hours and resources required to do so.
- Ensure you know who the ultimate decision-maker is on the client side. Are there clear channels of

communication? Assess any risks of changes in the client's management team: think about the business cycle of the particular sector.

- Diagnose any symptoms of 'sick project syndrome'. These might be: a challenging budget based on inaccurate assumptions; over-optimism concerning the site's capacity; or an unrealistic schedule.

## What are your 'red lines'?

- Every project contains risk and requires compromise. Nevertheless it is important to establish certain red lines which none of your team should be prepared to cross in terms of time and profitability.
- Stepping up into a much larger project may seem like a golden opportunity. However, the need to bring in contract staff should be assessed and how that would affect the profit margin.
- Reach a decision over the project's profit margin and the extent to which a successful project outcome might be worth a degree of loss in the long-term trajectory of your practice.

Oliver Salway, SoftRoom

# PREPARING PROPERLY

David Tigg, Tigg + Coll Architects



## Finding a developer client

- A speculative, 'cold' email can achieve positive results, but it must be targeted at the correct person and have a compelling point to it. It must provide an idea or an insight and demonstrate that you have researched the company.
- MIPIM remains an excellent platform for meeting large numbers of potential clients in one place. Ensure that any interested clients will encounter an impressive website when they later search for you online.

## Preparing for a pitch

- Carry out thorough background research on the company and its individuals. Identify its aims as

an organisation: what do they appear to want to do and how do they seem to be going about it?

- Find synergies and commonalities with your own work and ambitions. Do you work with any of the same people, or have any parallel business objectives?
- Ask yourself why this project needs to be carried out. Identify the need that is underlining it, as specifically as possible.

## Practice, practice and practice again

- Work out what you are trying to say and practice conveying that message until it is clear and succinct. Try to find a simple idea to sketch out,



such as a relevant problem you have observed from your background research and a potential solution to it.

- Timing is crucial. A well-thought-out pitch can be delivered successfully and powerfully in three minutes.

#### **Presenting your portfolio**

- Convey the scale of your work and your practice's ability to deliver, such as an impressive track record in getting planning permission for challenging projects.
- Balance information on project delivery with detail on the overall experience of an exemplary project: the 'feel' of it. This is particularly useful when pitching for work on an existing space, such as a fit-out.
- Use your portfolio sparingly and wisely. Keep it specific to the pitch rather than a 'greatest hits' catalogue.

#### **Different approaches to project images**

- When presenting to a large-scale developer, showcase images and descriptions that focus on open spaces, with plenty of daylight.
- When pitching for a college or hotel, however, honing images down to details, illustrating points about materials and fittings, may be more appropriate.

Evening shots with lighting often conveys more of an intimate sense of being in a space.

#### **Pitching your practice**

- Maintain a strong sense of your practice's values but hone those values down with a particular client in mind. Identify your USP.
- It should be possible to convey these values economically in 4 keywords. They should reflect a practice's skillsets but also demonstrate an understanding of a particular client's business model and their specific problems.
- A positive image that presents the practice in a playful light, demonstrating that the team enjoy a healthy life/work balance, is a powerful conclusion to a pitch.

#### **The end is not the end**

- When pitching to a client at their premises, make the most of your time with the client before and after the pitch.
- Even if you do not win a pitch, you should still aim to 'plant a seed'. Demonstrating energy and enthusiasm may lead to future opportunities.

**David Tigg, Tigg + Coll Architects**

# WHAT THE DEVELOPER WANTS TO HEAR

Steve Sanham, Real Estate Entrepreneur



## **Understand your potential client**

- All developers are ultimately emotional creatures. Many of their projects will take place over several years, so they need a relationship with a party that can be sustained across a long period of time.
- To establish a connection, find out as much as possible about work they have previously carried out and the market they work in. Read up on what they have talked about in the trade press, for example.
- Analyse their drivers: the 'what', 'why', 'who' and 'how' of their business. The 'why' is particularly important as it is not always purely financial.

- If you have any shared contacts, it cannot hurt to namedrop.
- Demonstrate familiarity with the construction methods in the client's sector and portfolio.

## **Demonstrating your value**

- Key to a successful pitch is being able to convince a developer that you can realise more profit and deliver more value than anticipated.
- Architects can add significant value by optimising the spatial use of a site. Being able to reduce overall project costs adds yet more value.



- Use relevant examples to illustrate the value you can add. Try to feature projects in which the practice proved innovative in some way.
- There are many truisms and myths about premiums attached to certain design features. Do not make promises or quote statistics you cannot back up.

#### **Respond to your audience**

- Show off your creativity as an architect in the room. Rather than just presenting your portfolio, sketch out illustrative examples on paper. Invite contributions from the developer.
- Get to the point. An hour of analysis before showing your intentions for the site is completely unengaging.

# THE POWER OF NARRATIVE

Jennifer Rosen, Full Tilt



## **Narrative and personality**

- Business meetings should not be devoid of personality or narrative. These are fundamental aspects of being human and the person we are pitching to will respond to them.
- Never underestimate the value of a compelling narrative. We tell stories about ourselves constantly: it is how we make sense of world. An engaging story is an immense asset to leverage.
- Make your narrative easily digestible. Architecture is a visual medium, so use relevant illustrative cues in leading a potential client through your narrative.

## **The hero's journey**

- Joseph Campbell, an expert on the narrative structure of myths, noted the preponderance of the 'hero's journey' as a common theme in mythology. The hero answers the call to an adventure, encounters obstacles along the way, succeeds in a quest and returns to tell the story.
- This is a near-universal human narrative and a very seductive one. Its structure can be mapped onto the story of any project.
- In a pitch, implying that the client is the potential hero of a call to adventure that you are instigating is a highly persuasive tactic. It suggests that you could accompany each other on a journey that will be beneficially transformative for everyone.

### Finding your story

- Compelling narratives can be constructed even when the subject matter we have to work from is less than inspiring. A kernel of narrative can be found even in the reporting of year-end results
- Asking yourself certain fundamental questions can tease out what will make your story compelling and re-engage you with what you are passionate about. These questions might include: 'why are you doing what you are doing?'; 'why do you believe in it?'; 'think of something you were scared to do but did it anyway?'; and 'who do I think I am?'

### Telling your story effectively

- Before you present your pitch, mentally reconnect with what makes you most passionate about what you do. Sustain that connection no matter what happens.
- While memorable narrative content is essential, how you speak is almost as important. Practice speaking in an engaging manner and ensure you do not slip into a monotone.
- Be aware of your audience and their attention span, but never steer away from your overall intention: stick to your plan. If you do not believe in your narrative, nobody else will.

- Think of a pitch as an opportunity to learn from someone. Even if a presentation does not win a particular pitch, it is a success if it is memorable. If you make an impact you may well be considered for something else in the future.

### Be aware of your non-verbal communication

- Maximise the impact of an in-person presentation by being aware of your body language; practice controlling it in preparation.
- Maintaining eye contact is an effective way of engaging with individuals. It can also provide an anchor if you feel disconnected or flustered.
- Research shows that human beings instinctively dislike seeing people with their hands placed behind our back.
- Before any meeting, especially before competing for work, carry out a short mindfulness exercise to help you relax. We should aim to be alert but at ease.
- Do not bring tension into a pitch, especially in your face. 'Breathe into' tension. In moments of uncertainty or stress, remember that breath is your anchor.

[Jennifer Rosen, Full Tilt](#)



# WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT DEVELOPMENT

Will Mawson, MawsonKerr Architects



## **Moving into development with no budget**

- MawsonKerr have always regarded development projects as a fundamental part of a self-sustaining practice. When first moving into development the practice had zero own capital to invest.
- The practice's office was its first development. The building was listed and council-owned. The practice was given three years rent-free by the council and received a sizeable EU business grant.
- Architects may not have money but they might have time. This is a form of capital in itself, might allow them to enter development partnerships with others who have money to invest.

## **Bring in the expertise you lack**

- A contact from a previous architectural project led to a long-term working relationship with a sympathetic builder who shared MawsonKerr's PassivHaus interests. This was a catalyst for joint development projects and ultimately a

new joint development business.

- Fear of failure had previously held back the practice's development plans but construction expertise provided the enthusiasm and drive to push the business forwards.

## **Make sure you do the maths**

- Thinking like a contractor requires a different kind of budgetary maths. With sustainable buildings in particular, time needs to be spent deciding which consultants, engineers, and groundworks consultants to employ and when.
- Develop nerves of steel. It is challenging to keep a clear head when making calculations that could break the bank.

## **Key takeaways**

- Great opportunities present themselves unexpectedly
- Understand all the risks
- Plan your 'out' as a priority: be certain you can sell a building at the end.

[Will Mawson, MawsonKerr Architects](#)

# FROM ARCHITECT TO DEVELOPER

Jake Edgley, Edgley Design

## Finding Opportunities

- The main challenge of development is finding opportunities. If any site is easy to find, it probably has no potential.
- Opportunities tend to arise more from maintaining connections with fellow professionals than via auction websites.
- Even if you have been outbid for a site, keep in touch with the vendor as sales frequently fall through.

## Development requires vision and persistence

- An architect with imagination may be able to spot value in a site perceived as having none.
- A willingness to take on problematic sites, such as plots with contaminated soil or those with a history of failed planning applications can be a way into development.
- In a dense city, any plot is liable to be a challenge and require ingenuity over issues such as rights of access and technical issues with neighbours.

## Construction

- Call in favours. Architects have plenty of contacts and may be able to contract out construction work to friends and family.
- Sites often reveal unexpected potential during the process of design, post-purchase. Constraints can turn into opportunities, so be prepared to revise plans to realise them.

## Balancing risk and reward.

- Anything that is worth doing is risky. However, risk can be minimised by taking on development projects that fulfil a personal need: a home or an office.
- The satisfaction of a successful build can be a reward in itself. As an architect-developer, you are able to make decisions that your clients probably would not make.

[Jake Edgley, Edgley Design](#)



# THE RIGHT PURCHASE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

Sophie Goldhill, Liddicoat & Goldhill



## **The right purchase in the right place at the right time**

- Research the market and try to anticipate what the area will be like in five years' time. An as-yet undeveloped area with plans in place for local redevelopment has plenty of potential.
- The first project for most architect-developers will probably be a small and unloved site. Architects are well-placed to realise the potential of garage and infill sites.

## **Do it yourself**

- Any work that you are able to carry out yourself, such as basic plumbing or the laying of joists will keep down project costs and retain control over the project's direction and detailing.

## **Focus on build-quality**

- A well-designed and sympathetically constructed house can command a higher premium than the market rate for the area



### **The trajectory of an architect-developer**

- The price of cheaper sites will often reflect a higher risk in terms of planning consent. Larger projects will require greater financial outlay but less planning risk.
- In approaching larger developments it is even more important to understand the local market, and it is worth consulting with appropriate estate agents. You are designing and building for a way of living particular to a very different market.

- Understanding development finance is an imperative for acquiring the funding for a larger site. Interest repayments are higher than a normal mortgage.
- In a larger development, less work can be carried out on a DIY basis. Construction budgets should reflect this and a reliable contractor becomes more important.

**Sophie Goldhill, Liddicoat & Goldhil**

# LEGAL TRAPS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

Matthew Tebbot, Wedlake Bell



## Buyer beware

- Buying a plot of land for development should be undertaken with the same level of preparation as buying a house to live in.
- Developers are frequently guilty of not looking before they leap. When they believe they have found a bargain plot they rush to purchase it following a viewing and a quick development appraisal.
- Land auctions are a particularly fraught occasion for uninformed purchases, often because buyers are worried about losing their 10% deposit.

## Information about the plot

- While a vendor cannot be fraudulent, they are not obliged to tell a purchaser everything that is wrong with a property. A seller must carry out searches and do their research.
- If an information pack at an auction provides very little information, there is probably a good reason. A genuinely attractive site will generally be accompanied by a wealth of information. A deal that seems to be too good to be true probably is.

### Essential services that a law firm can provide

- A legal advisor will highlight any potential issues regarding the type of land being purchased. Stamp duty land tax (SDLT) is one potentially problematic issue. The amount can vary vastly depending on whether the plot has planning permission designated as residential or commercial.
- Law firms will carry out searches, as with domestic house purchases, as to any implications regarding: chancel repair; maintenance of private infrastructure; soil contamination; Crossrail or HS2 developments; and local flooding.

- Once a site has been purchased, large interest rates become a major concern for a developer while a problem, such as the restitution of a private road to local authority standards, is addressed.
- Local searches, title issues, survey and inspection problems and enquiries into any local disputes or nearby developments are all routine tasks for property law firms. It is not worth skimping on having them carried out.

Matthew Tebbot, Wedlake Bell



# HOW TO FINANCE YOUR BUILD PROJECT

Mary Riley, Mary Riley Solutions



## Calculating the capital required

- Appropriate financing of a development depends on what the developer wishes to achieve. The financial considerations behind a 'forever home' are very different compared to those of a lucrative business venture.
- Conduct feasibility studies and carry out research into land and property values by speaking to local estate agents and planners. This will determine the ceiling of a project's Gross Development Value (the projected value of a property development once it is completed).
- Thoroughly understand the current market conditions. Educate yourself in the demographics of the region's affordability and age groups.

- Look at the costs from the top down, never from the bottom up. Scrutinise the GDV and ensure you have considered the total project costs (everything associated with the site). Only then can you be certain that there will be profit.
- Have a very clear dialogue with your contractors and that it is your budget that is the focus, not a budget that contractors suggest you should be working to. If you cannot make the site work within your budget, that site is simply not viable.
- Developer profit should ideally be no less than 20%.

## Accurate costing

- You cannot be confident in the usefulness of your projected costs until you have obtained:

- o Full planning permission
- o Final designs
- o Building regulation approval
- o Scaled drawings with accurate dimensions
- o Detailed scope and specification document
- o Detailed tender document

#### **Ways to finance the build**

- The most common finance for a build is a loan that accounts for around 60–65% of the value of the land. There are many investors who are prepared to lend: do not be discouraged and look elsewhere if the best-known banks and building societies turn down your first approaches.
- There is always an ‘if’ and a ‘what’ to consider regarding the loan. If you do not finish your build in time, how will the lender react. The ‘what’ refers to the cost of borrowing: arrangement fees and monitoring surveyors need to be factored in.

- Topping up the loan will usually be via a joint venture or a form of mezzanine finance. This may be easier to find if the project has a social value element.
- Ensure you have a contingency fund of between 15% and 20%. Inflation, materials costs and labour costs fluctuate.

#### **Managing the development**

- The lender will seek reassurance that you, as an inexperienced developer, are working with experienced team members who can provide guidance. This might be a project manager or a main contractor: both are costs that should be factored in.
- Communicate frequently with your delivery team. If there is a concern at any point, raise it immediately
- Maintain a change register and update it with any changes that happen during the construction process, whether positive or negative.

[Mary Riley, Mary Riley Solutions](#)



# HOW TO PLUG THE GAP

John Smart, Craftworks



## **Architects have vision and agility**

- Architects possess a nimbleness that mainstream developers lack. They can view a site and, if the funding is there, bid on the same morning. Large developers might take six weeks to come to a decision.
- Start small with an opportunity that others might miss: a one-bedroom flat that could be converted into a two-bedroom flat, for example.

## **Equity, profit and rates of return**

- In a company, equity is simply the difference between what the business is worth, less the value of its debts and liabilities. In a project it is the total project cost less the amount of loan taken to finance it.
- Do not confuse profit with the rate of return on your investment. Projects that make a good proportional return on your investment are more desirable than projects that make more money but less profit.

- Good tax planning is essential in development. Ensure you know how long you are likely to be holding onto any built assets and when you intend to sell them.

#### **Financing development**

- A loan coupled with mezzanine financing might account for 80% of the project cost. However, mezzanine financing will incur a much higher interest rate, which is burdensome if or when a project goes wrong.

- Patron-led investors will not only invest in the project but your company itself. They wish their involvement to be minimal but consequently need cast-iron assurance in your capabilities.
- Venture capitalists will generally invest a minimum stake of around £1 million with the expectation of doubling their money. Their expectations and input will vary but it is possible to negotiate an 80/20 ratio in terms of finance injection but a 50/50 split in projects.

[John Smart, Craftworks](#)



# CREATING A GROUP-LED SELF-BUILD

Jackson Moulding, Ecomotive



## **The community is the client**

- There are currently many different models and approaches for community-led housing. They may involve self-build, co-housing with shared amenities, the formation of a Community Land Trust or a combination of all three. All have a common focus on the wants and needs of the local community.

## **Typical motives behind a community development**

- Concerns over what a large developer might produce on a prominent local site that is for sale.
- The opportunity for individuals to design and build their own homes: 18,000 people have signed up to local authority self-build registers.
- Plot costs may be lower for those interested in self-build.

- Local authorities are becoming increasingly interested in facilitating community-led developments for local interest groups. They are obliged to maintain a register of those expressing interest in self-build.

## **Quality of life**

- Evaluation based on feedback from residents found a better sense of wellbeing widespread in community-led developments. The most positive metric was residents' sense of control over and input into their environment
- A mix of self-build plots and self-finish homes can provide this sense of engagement to a wide range of skill levels among residents. Self-finish options can be made available to renters, not only owners.

[Jackson Moulding, Ecomotive](#)

# BAUGRUPPEN IN THE UK

John Kinsley, John Kinsley Architects

## The benefits of a Baugruppen

- Baugruppen translates as 'building group'. It consists of residents coming together to procure group housing and live in it afterwards. It currently accounts for about 10% of housing in Berlin.
- The end-users are directly involved in the design and the construction process. They can insist on quality procurement, leading to builds with better space and light than a mass housebuilder many deem necessary.
- Members of a Baugruppen have control over their appetite for involvement. They can choose the amount of sweat equity they contribute, based on their own skill levels.
- Residents are essentially buying properties at more or less cost price. They are the developers, so they are not paying the developer's premium: a saving of around 20%.

## Opportunities for architects in a Baugruppen

- Baugruppen places architects at the centre of the process, rather just simply implementing a developer's bidding.

- A practice can set its own fee allowing it to be accurately and fairly paid for its time. It is both a stakeholder and a hired consultant.
- As an entry point into development it is relatively low-risk as compared to conventional development: financial contributions are spread across the Baugruppen's members.
- Architects can take on the role of an enabler in addition to a design role. Rather than contributing finance they might: identify land; source participants; set up the team's formal constitution; and seek finance.
- A successful Baugruppen project is a 'neighbourhood success story' that local councillors and politicians are very happy with. This is an excellent way of raising a practice's profile and reputation regionally.

[John Kinsley, John Kinsley Architects](#)



# INSPIRATION FROM ABROAD

Alexandra Georgescu and Tomas Kozelsky, KOGAA Studio, Czech Republic



## **The development potential of industrial sites**

- Brno, where KOGAA Studio is based in the Czech Republic, is a city with a legacy of former industrial textile production. It has many abandoned brownfield areas which have untapped development potential.
- Brownfield industrial sites are in many ways a developer's nightmare. Problems include unconnected spaces, lack of amenities and sometimes heritage protection. This makes them a possible entry point for architects. Developers have a very strict way of calculating return, while architects can be more creative.

## **Slow development**

- Thinking in terms of the 'minimum viable product' is useful in industrial sites. Start with just one room, clean it up and work out what it could be. Spaces ultimately suggest their own use: as, for example, a cinema, gallery or office.

- Structural and decorative parts of rooms can be recycled for use in others, saving money and minimising waste.
- Invite the most interesting local creatives to view the site. Leasing rooms as pop-up workspaces is a form of slow development in action: creatives are used to customising spaces imaginatively.

## **Planting seeds**

- Slow development of this kind bonds tenants with the project. Their creativity and productivity becomes part of working within that building.
- Developments centred upon an area's artistic community may not be initially profitable, but they create a reputation. They catch the eye of developers and local authorities who will commission you for similar work.

[Alexandra Georgescu and Tomas Kozelsky, KOGAA Studio](#)

# SUMMING UP THE DAY

Roger Zogolovich, Solidspace

## Asserting the architect's value

- The concept of the architect-developer is more relevant than ever, given the profession's erosion and struggle to demonstrate its own worth. Architects should never be scared to assert that they need to make a profit, like any other professional.
- The relationship between architects and clients should be collaborative. If a project exhibits the symptoms of 'sick project syndrome', do not get involved.
- Architects are dealing with risks and pricing fees and time sensibly is as essential for an architect-led development as it is for a pure design project.

## Conveying your passion

- Most architects entered the profession to make the world a better place. Do not be afraid to share your passion and communicate in concrete, non-abstract terms.
- Architects have unique skills. Demonstrating your ideas in person, via sketches that a client is invited to contribute to, is very seductive.
- Success in winning pitches and addressing the public in general lies in getting across your experience, knowledge and enthusiasm. Exploit the power of narrative and take the person you are addressing on a journey.



## CPD Day Presentations

[Towards sustainable practice; Mina Hasman](#)

[Towards sustainable practice; Alasdair Dixon](#)

[Towards sustainable practice; Tate Harmer](#)

[Towards sustainable practice; Architype](#)

[Applying behavioural insights to spatial design; Edward Gardiner](#)

[Building your practice's brand recognition; David Tanguy](#)

[Creating a process for community-led design; Myra Stuart and Grace Cannis](#)

[Driving leads through digital marketing; Daniel Nelson](#)

[Getting to grips with cash flow management; Neil Boyde](#)

[The new RIBA Professional Services Contracts; Sarah Lupton](#)

[Adding value in the early project stages; Ruth Butler](#)

[Research & Development tax credits; Barbara Kaucky](#)

[The Code of Professional Conduct, Code of Practice and disciplinary procedures; Rachel Gwilliam](#)

[Calculating and negotiating fees; Stephen Brookhouse](#)

[Applying the RIBA sustainability strategy and Plan for Use; Craig Robertson](#)

[Low-toxicity design in domestic buildings; Jake Edgley](#)

[Navigating the planning application process; Gerry Cassidy](#)