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**Historic Towns Forum Annual Conference**  
**New Towns, Garden Cities and Utopian Masterplanning –**  
**Cities of the Past, Cities of the Future**  
 Milton Keynes November 2013

**Good design – historic centres and the new town**

Tony Wyatt: HTF Vice Chair and Director @ +Plus Urban Design Ltd.






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**Scene Setting**

- *Firstly few of us are paid to be popular ... secondly become comfortable with ambiguity...*
- Cherishing our local historic places
- Recognising our cities, towns and villages currently are facing change to accommodate new growth
- Acknowledging that the historic and the new elements need each other for continuity, mutual legitimacy and a shared future
- Current national climate of local people fearful of change and developers fearful of local expectations ...



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**What is the challenge?**

- *"Basildon will become a City which people from all over the world will want to visit. It will be a place where all classes of community can meet freely together on equal terms and enjoy common cultural recreational facilities."*  
 Lewis Silkin Minister of Town & Country Planning 1948
- Maintaining existing quality and adding complementary new places
- Ongoing strategic process that meets future housing provision across all ages
- Our historic cities, towns and villages have been successful in growing sustainably - so how do we continue to maintain that?

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**And what is important?**

- Historic town core, heritage asset or fragment
- Physical assets or traces of local significance
- Sense of place – already working well – capable of incremental growth
- Existing well defined settlement which needs to be maintained whilst a new neighbouring and larger community is created
- Should the historic core be retained as a separate smaller entity?
- Or absorbed as part of the expanded 'new town'





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**Placemaking and the Offer**

- It is what makes our existing historic centres work well and remain popular with our local communities and future residents
- Local distinctiveness is our brand and market USP
- Our historic places are proven competitors – with an enduring and renewable offer
- Structure – easy to understand – have a richness that facilitates flexibility and mutual use
- Public spaces designed to foster exchanges – 'market' place – and everyday engagement ...
- Range of opportunities and routes – high street, main street, neighbourhood centre, village green






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**How do we go about it?**

- Understand our place – character analysis and strategic local **spatial** framework
- Identify what it is about our existing historic place that is important – share this - stick to it when bringing forward the 'new' town or the urban extension
- Be honest about the present deficiencies as these can be addressed in the 'new town'
- Investors want something to have a stake in and there's plenty of competition for their £ - why your authentic local place?
- Who are your partners – critical friends – local supporters - and leaders?

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**Value of Good Urban Design**

**Context  
Structure  
Movement  
Mixed Uses  
Public Realm  
Servicing  
Vision  
'Road Map'**



*Delivering the new local identity - just like MK did so successfully*

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