

Delivering More Homes and Better Places in Scotland

Case Study 1: Anderston Regeneration Project

Introduction

Anderston is one of five case studies featured in the report [Delivering More Homes and Better Places: lessons from policy and practice](#), which is jointly published by the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE) and the Scottish Land Commission. Anderston demonstrates the importance of an active land policy, masterplanning, intensive community engagement, and public sector funding for site assembly and delivery. The main report is part a series of reports that make up the Commission’s Review on Land for Housing & Development, which will report later this year.

Project description and background

The Anderston regeneration project is a large-scale, inner-city housing renewal programme that was undertaken by Sanctuary (Scotland) Housing Association in partnership with Glasgow City Centre and the Scottish Government. This five-phase development project of 542 new dwellings, mostly for social rent, comprises of tenemental apartment blocks ranging from four to seven storeys in height, with some two-storey townhouses. The project was built out over a 10-year period, beginning in 2008 and ending in 2018 (see Figure 1).

The site is located on the north bank of the River Clyde on the western fringe of Glasgow city centre. It is an area of Glasgow that has seen housing-led regeneration in the past with the demolition of the Victorian tenements in the 1960s and their replacement with system-built concrete blocks of municipal flats. However, the 1960s redevelopment, like many other area-based regeneration initiatives of its time, failed to balance material improvements with social and economic renewal. The continuation both of poor housing conditions and associated underlying problems necessitated further regeneration in the 2000s.



Figure 1: Five Phases of Regeneration, Anderston



Figure 2: Aerial View of Anderston Regeneration Project, 2018 (Photo by Andrew Lee; courtesy of Collective Architecture)

Project promoter

Sanctuary (Scotland) Housing Association took possession of the site, which comprised of 402 homes, following a Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer (LSVT) from Communities Scotland in June 2005.¹ Over the course of the development, Sanctuary worked with the Council and the local community to transform the area. They employed three design teams – MAST Architects, Cooper Cromar and Collective Architecture – to design different phases of the development, and contracted CCG (Scotland) Ltd. to build the project.

LSVT funding of £39.7m was made available by the Scottish Government and administered on their behalf by the Council following the Transfer of Management of Development Funding (TMDF) in 2003. An additional grant of

£7.7m was provided by the Council through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme to provide 119 homes for mid-market rent.

Land assembly

The role of the Council using its statutory powers to facilitate land assembly is vitally important in this case. The Council facilitated a land swap between Sanctuary and Margaret Blackwood Housing Association – which owned two sites and a care home facility within the proposed masterplan area – as well as contributing land that was owned by the Council. The land swap enabled Sanctuary to rephase the project to accommodate Phase 3A and allowed an acceleration of new build because no demolition was required.

¹ Communities Scotland was an executive agency of the Scottish Executive/Government from 2001 to 2008. It was responsible for housing,

homelessness, communities and regeneration throughout Scotland.

Land assembly, in this case, also entailed convincing 93 owner occupiers to participate in the regeneration plans. To this end, Sanctuary combined monthly public meetings and individual consultations with residents to persuade them to be part of the project without having to resort to the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs). This intensive approach to community engagement meant only three CPOs were actioned.

Planning and design

In July 2005, Sanctuary submitted an application to the Council for outline planning permission. Despite the recommendation of the Director of Development and Regeneration Services to grant an outline permission subject to conditions, the Council refused planning permission on the grounds that 'The proposed demolition has not been adequately justified and would be detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding, established, residential area'.² However, planning permission subject to conditions was granted in January 2017 following a Public Inquiry.

The Anderston project, while large-scale within an urban city location, is essentially the development of two urban blocks rather than a place in isolation. The masterplan was designed to completely replace existing housing stock in a phased programme of demolition and construction. In addition to replacing all housing stock, the project aimed to retain the existing community which meant meeting the rehousing requirements both of existing social housing tenants and those owner occupiers who wished to remain in the area.

A key feature of the masterplan was also to re-establish the historical Victorian street line of

Argyll Street, which was compromised during the 1960s regeneration.

In terms of the mode of delivery and product design, CCG (Scotland) Ltd. employed offsite manufacturing and modern methods of constructions (MMC) to construct buildings using their IQ timber frame system complemented by traditional blockwork. The materials used in construction also complement adjacent Victorian buildings.

Development commentary

There are clearly significant positive regenerational and place-making elements to this large-scale project. Good regeneration projects seek wider beneficial impact by demonstrating how well they connect and fit with other parts of the wider neighbourhood beyond the redline boundary of the project. The Anderston masterplan not only complied with the Council's Finnieston, Anderston and Springfield Local Development Strategy, it also re-established the historical street line of Argyle Street, enhancing connectivity and permeability. It is now easier and more pleasant to walk from Finnieston through Anderston and into the city centre.

The project also demonstrates significant improvements in design and build quality compared to the 1960s regeneration. The combined use of offsite manufacturing and MMC has resulted in the production of new homes that are built to a much higher environmental standard than before. The thermal efficiency of the timber frame system, combined with other energy-saving applications and solar panels, should also help to contribute to long-term energy savings for residents, which helps to offset issues of fuel poverty and enhances sustainability.³

² <https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/search-judgments/judgment?id=368b8aa6-8980-69d2-b500-ff0000d74aa7>

³ It would be remiss of us, however, not to mention the loss of embodied carbon in the demolished housing. Whole life carbon costs of

buildings is the great challenge for the regeneration industry and carbon costs are only likely to increase in profile. In France, high rise social housing of the type that once peppered Glasgow is being improved rather than replaced with low rise.

The project has also delivered an additional 140 homes on top of replacing existing stock, including 119 for mid-market rent. The latter provide an opportunity for people on modest incomes to access affordable housing close to a number of key employment hubs in the city centre. However, overall, the project is heavily focussed on housing for social and affordable rent, and could have benefitted from a wider range of housing tenures that could have created a greater level of social balance within the neighbourhood.⁴ Planning policy requires an element of affordable housing to be accommodated within a project and, by the same token, to achieve a good socially balanced place, an element of housing for sale

should be accommodated in affordable housing projects.

While residents have access to communal areas along Houldsworth Street, to the rear of the site, and three play parks located across the development, the overall landscape approach is a subordinate and fragmented element. Good place-making practice should see landscaping as a fundamental principle that is accommodated as part of the master planning framework. However, subordination of landscape to a later stage is fairly prevalent in planning practice rendering landscape as a filler of gaps rather than being a controlling element of the development framework.



Figure 3: Phase 4 housing designed by Collective Architecture, location Elderslie Street/St Vincent Street (Photo by Andrew Lee; courtesy of Collective Architecture)

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⁴ Although, we recognise that this assertion is highly contested among researchers, see e.g. Bridge, et al. (2011) and Cheshire (2006).