

# The Building Futures Game

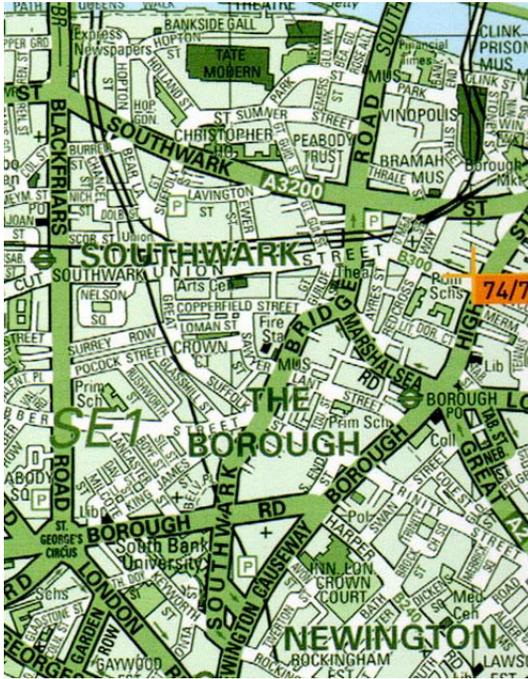
## RIBA London Training 2008

*Bankside- London 01 April 2008*



## Location- BANKSIDE, LONDON

Bankside is one of London's most diverse districts. Historically it was an area with a somewhat insalubrious air about it. It sat across the river beyond the jurisdiction of the City and was littered with bear baiting rings, brothels and London's first theatres- most notable among them Shakespeare's Globe, but also market gardens and staging Inns serving routes to the south. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century this mix was added to by a web of railway arches taking lines into the City and the West End, warehouses serving the docks and industrial units.



Map and satellite views of Bankside- Tate Modern can be seen at the top centre of both.

It was only recently regarded as part of central London, despite its proximity, and as a result of this the area has mixed use and varied population. The building mix is characterised by many small scale industrial units, 19<sup>th</sup> century warehousing, social housing, and local shops and pubs. Since 2000 and the opening of Tate Modern, these have been joined by a growing number of luxury apartment blocks, prestige office developments, restaurants and facilities serving cultural industries.

## THE FACTS

The area is subject to numerous high-profile schemes for development, most of these have been centred along the riverside or at cultural and transport clusters and consist of landmark towers promising mixed use. Another pattern of development has been small scale apartment block building. The riverside has many clear and distinct draws and a massive and well publicised redevelopment scheme is underway for the Elephant and Castle area to its south, but what of the areas in between these districts? Bankside tries to serve two roles that can be in conflict. One is as expansion area for central London and the other serving local residential needs for basic services, environmental quality and housing. One of the challenges for the area is managing this mix and producing a vision of place that responds to both user needs and functions.

In 2000, Cross River Partnerships (an initiative with the LDA, local businesses and Southwark and Lambeth Councils) began the process of trying to link up the district and its connectivity to the city north of the river. One of its most ambitious recommendations was for a tram linking north and south and passing straight through the area. This and others are ongoing.

**The People:** Those playing the game were a mix of architects and planners who have bought or expressed interest in obtaining copies of the Building Futures Game via RIBA London and those invited from the local area to provide some expertise to the subject.

The five teams included representation from: *de Rijke Marsh Morgan Ltd Architects, Colin Buchanan, CSK Strategies Ltd, Academy for Sustainable Communities, Cardiff Business School, Common Purpose, Business of Culture Ltd, Atlas Team Advisory, Planning Aid South East, English Partnerships, Planning Aid South East, Accord Housing Association, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, DIVINE IDEAS (UK) LIMITED, North Northants Development Company, London South Bank University, Notting Hill Housing and the Kent Architecture Centre*

**The aim of the game:** To create an action plan from five distinct team scenarios that brings together core objectives for addressing the Bankside area over the next ten years. The area for discussion is defined by London Bridge and Waterloo stations (East to West) and Tate Modern and Elephant and Castle (North to South). This speculative exercise aims to give players greater awareness of the toolkit and its workings, introduce them to the Bankside area and make solid and informed suggestions for its future strategic growth.

## THE GAME

### 1. BASELINE STAGE – drawing out concerns and aspirations for the future

The opening stage of the game playing involved the four groups considering the ‘Statement Cards.’ On these are written a variety of economic, social and physical observations grouped under headings looking at Retail, Community, Culture, Transport and Utilities among others. For example one choice under Transport is ‘There will be more cars in the street,’ while for Utilities a choice includes, ‘We will produce less waste and recycle more.’



Groups working on Baseline choices with RIBA President, Sunand Prasad as observer

The groups had to choose 8 of these statements that reflected ‘Likely Futures’- those things most likely to happen to the area over the next ten years. These were then marked onto the Baseline Sheet in Blue.

Once ‘Likely Futures’ had been mapped out, the groups had to once more pick out 8 more cards from the same set of statements, but this time with an open mind. They could choose whatever they wanted to see happen- their ‘Dream Futures.’ These were then marked on the baseline sheet in red.

**OUTCOMES- identifying common choices and trends.**

All five groups highlighted a diverse range of issues on concerns and aspirations, but there was clear agreement on four key areas. In each of these cases four groups were in agreement and one option received the support of the entire training group. The conversation began with this choice.



**Baseline Sheet with areas of agreement shown as marked clusters.**

**‘Likely Futures.’**

**CULTURE ‘Tourists will go out of their way to come to the area.’**

This option was identified across the five groups. All felt that the area will maintain its level of tourists and visitors with a number of key institutions based in the area including the Tate Modern, the National Theatre, the Royal Festival Hall and the Globe Theatre as well as the river and its views. It had a well established place on the visitor map and this would only improve and grow given developments around and behind river based attractions and facilities. This was also highlighted as a concern, as all groups wanted to see more going on away from the river and the two major transport hubs (Waterloo and London Bridge). Compared to these areas of exciting activity, the centre of the district was seen as underutilised and lacking attention.

**TRANSPORT ‘Transport connections between here and other places will be faster and/or busier.’**

Four out of the five groups chose this option. As the area grew there would be more pressure on the existing transport network, which in the short term was unlikely to improve substantially. The area is well served by two mainline stations and is crossed by the underground and rail services into the city and the west end. The group agreed that this would get busier as the provision of office space, diverse users and resident populations grew. It was also identified that as well as residents, the network served a national population and was used frequently by visitors as well. This choice surfaced a general view that major infrastructural projects were unlikely to happen in response.

**‘Dream Futures.’**

**BUSINESS There will be more businesses owned and run by local people.’**

This statement was identified by four groups. Generally, they believed that smaller community initiatives could work here and would be desirable. The population is primarily those living in smaller housing association flats, but almost all have to leave the area to work, while thousands from elsewhere come into it. In Bankside, two movements of people occur daily it seems. Discussion was had about the provision for the community, which they felt needed catering for in a district that was increasingly geared towards accommodating ever growing numbers of visitors and businesses.

**BUSINESS ‘There will be a job of some kind for everyone in the area.’**

This choice reflected directly the comments above and sought to support community and local residential provision. This aspiration was also geared towards maintaining and improving upon the diversity of the area, without saying ‘no’ to new users and incoming business enterprise.

**COMMUNITY ‘More people will be taking part in learning/training activities’ and ‘Community members will organize a wider range of community activities.’**

Favoured by three groups, there was enthusiasm to develop and encourage enterprise and in residents taking responsibility. Training and learning facilities would help maintain a mix in the population groups coming into and moving around the area- families were seen as especially desirable. It could also build upon the existing South bank University site and complement resources at Guys and St Thomas’s Hospital.

There was a strong desire to encourage interaction in the area as the current focus either looked straight to the river or to sites further afield in South London, such as the E&C or Camberwell/Peckham. With an incoming population it was seen important that new residents don’t treat the area as a barracks for getting to and from work or facilities north of the river. New comers must embrace the life of the district and activities and jobs available should encourage that and support diverse users.

**UTILITIES ‘We will produce less waste and recycle more.’**

Three out of the five groups saw that any future development in the area should be committed to taking on green issues. It was noted during discussion that such initiatives could be employed as part of community efforts to bring cleaner and ‘greener’ spaces to the district. While others noted that new residential developments should employ and encouraged to utilize green technologies as part of their planning agreement.

**2. CONSIDERING THE FUTURE – aspirational scenarios for the next ten years.**

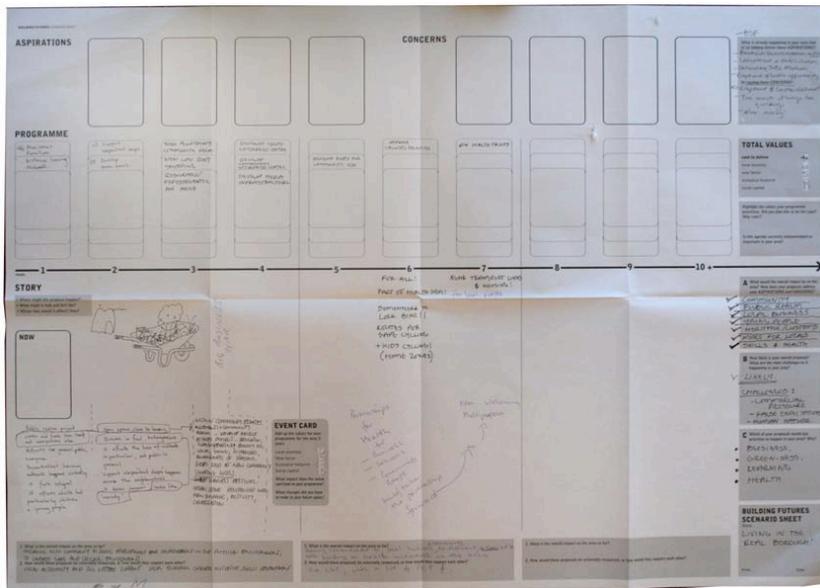
The next stage of the game involved the groups working out their own scenario plan for the next 10 years of Bankside by setting out ‘Proposal’ cards on the ‘Scenario Sheet’ and fleshing them out by annotating on the sheet how each choice would impact on the area and the reason for its inclusion.

The teams had 56 'Proposal' cards from which to choose. The cards cover a range of projects ranging from 'New Bus or Tram' to 'New Iconic Structure/landmark' or 'New Premises for Major Chains.' Each of these proposals are given a mark out of 10 for distinct 'Values.' These cover its impact on 'Local Economy' 'Wow factor' 'Ecological Footprint' and 'Social Capital.' The groups then set-out their choices over a 10 year period based on the estimated time scale noted on each card. The groups could choose as many or as little of these as they wanted, but the total could not add up to more than 40 points. This process encouraged players to backup their choices with consideration and place them in order of value and delivery practicalities- like real life.

**OUTCOMES- Future Stories**

**Group 1 – 'Living in the Real Borough' Logo- Fertile Wheelbarrow.**

The first group to present gave 'community' and health a real focus and looked away from major or 'global city' schemes. They were quite playful in their approach suggesting home-zones, smaller shopping kiosks, allotments on unused land and youth enterprise as ways to fill in the area and address issues of engagement and interaction. A new library or Health facility would be the figurehead scheme in a manner not unlike Finsbury in the years immediately following the Second World War. Bankside would become the model of a 'healthy' inner city district. The group put forward the suggestion that such a scheme would be readily supported via central government and lottery funding. They noted that the possible problems to such a scenario would be a reluctance from the commercial sector to take it on and challenges from behavioural norms or 'Human Nature.'



**Group 1 Scenario Sheet**

**Proposals selected in 10 year story:**

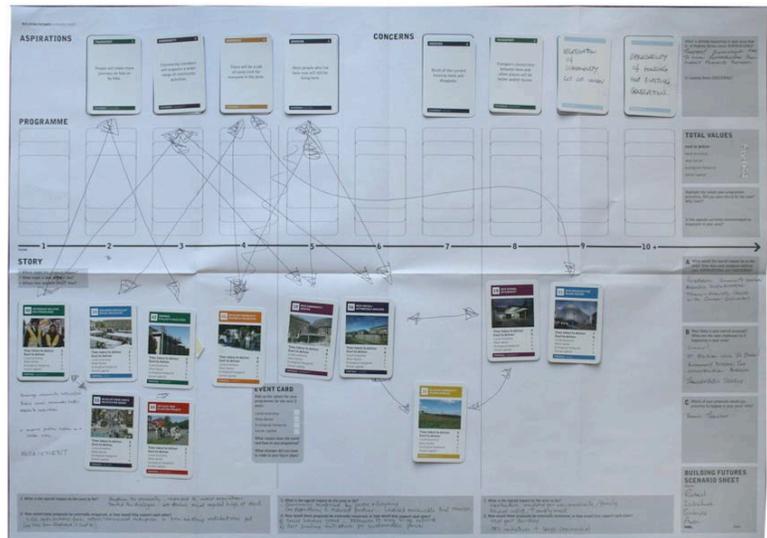
- 1-4:** New Street Furniture, Support Independent Shops, Develop Home Zones, New Allotments/Community Farm, New Low rent Shopping, Resurface/Pedestrianise areas, Develop Youth Enterprise Centre, Develop Community Enterprise Centre, Develop Media Infrastructure.
- 5-7:** Develop Roofs for Community Use, Improve Cyclist's, New Health Facility.
- 8-10:** (no options)

**Total Values:**

Cost to Deliver-	<b>40</b>
Local Economy-	<b>66</b>
Wow Factor-	<b>42</b>
Ecological Footprint-	<b>65</b>
Social Capital-	<b>87</b>

**Group 2 – ‘Radical Initiative for the Bankside Area (RIBA)’**

RIBA began their scenario with smaller developments (quick wins) that would be cost effective and score highly in terms of social capital. Further improvements that further this include homezones and cycle facilities, around which they provided affordable housing and environmental enhancement. At the closing stages of their scheme there would be new provision to encourage greater job diversity with the construction of retail premises that would support specialist retail initiatives. At the centre and crucial to their ‘radical’ scheme would be a new school and affordable housing project powered by and linked up with a community power source. Such a link up would persuade people out of their cars and increase journeys by foot around the district. The emphasis was on supporting and improving community infrastructure and developing an affordable and sufficient urban unit.



**Group 2 Scenario Sheet**

**Proposals selected in 10 year story:**

**1-4:** *Introduce Walking Bus Programme, Organise Specialist Retail Initiative, Develop Home Zones on existing roads, Improve Cyclist’s Facilities, Initiate Tree Planting Project and Develop Community Business Incubator.*

**5-7:** *New Community centre, New Social/Affordable Housing and Develop Community Power Sources.*

**8-10:** *New School or Nursery and New Premises for Major Chains.*

**Total Values:**

Cost to Deliver-	<b>42</b>
Local Economy-	<b>48</b>
Wow Factor-	<b>44</b>
Ecological Footprint-	<b>68</b>
Social Capital-	<b>84</b>

**Group 3 – ‘New Wave’**

New Wave presented the most radical, exciting scheme. They decided that the Thames could be utilised as a gigantic tidal power generation facility, generating local power for the community with tower blocks complementing this with roof top or ‘built- in’ wind turbines. They even suggested that the Tate Modern was old news, and that the former power station could be usefully converted back to it’s original form- presumably burning a cleaner source of fuel.



**Group 3 Scenario Sheet**

Proposals further to this focussed once more on community facilities and in particular youth orientated projects. It moved strongly away from furthering any development in Bankside as a cultural tourist destination- if it was it would be via its radical proposals.

**Proposals selected in 10 year story:**

**1-4:** Provide New Youth Facilities, Develop Home Zones on Existing Roads, Organise Specialist Retail Initiative, Develop Roofs for Community Use, Introduce Open Space Rangers, Develop Community Business Incubator and Renew existing Social Housing.

**5-7:** (New Card) Convert Redundant Space to Business use, New Sports Facility and New Social/Affordable Housing

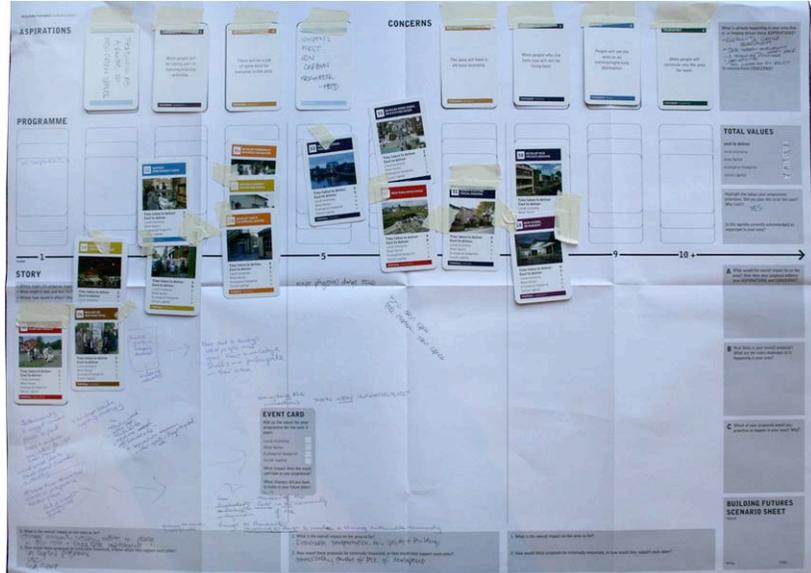
**8-10:** (New Card) Renewables Project- Tidal Wave scheme (Thames) Windmills (high rise towers).

**Total Values:**

Cost to Deliver-	<b>44</b>
Local Economy-	<b>67</b>
Wow Factor-	<b>47</b>
Ecological Footprint-	<b>74</b>
Social Capital-	<b>89</b>

**Group 4 – ‘From Borough to Bankside: Harnessing Our Power to Create a Thriving Sustainable Community’**

The group had sustainability as their watchword. They were concerned at the impact of the 24 hour economy on the families living in the area. They sought to mediate the demands on Bankside from the wider city and its visitors with the areas residential population. They looked at soft or existing resources such as a heritage trail to draw people through away the river ‘off bankside’ into the quieter, but historically interesting, quarters towards the heart of the district. In this new area, small business enterprise would provide a host of diverse facilities for all age groups and users.



**Group 4 Scenario Sheet**

Unique among the five groups they sought to develop private housing and partnered this up with new facilities catering for new families. They also addressed older groups by providing new sheltered accommodation.

**Proposals selected in 10 year story:**

**1-4:** *Initiate Tree Planting Project, New Art of Heritage Trail, Support Independent Shops, Develop Community Media Infrastructure, Develop Community Business Incubator, Retrofit Energy Saving Measures and Develop Youth Enterprise centre*

**5-7:** *New Sheltered Housing, develop Home Zones on existing Roads, New Park or Open Space and Renew Existing Social Housing.*

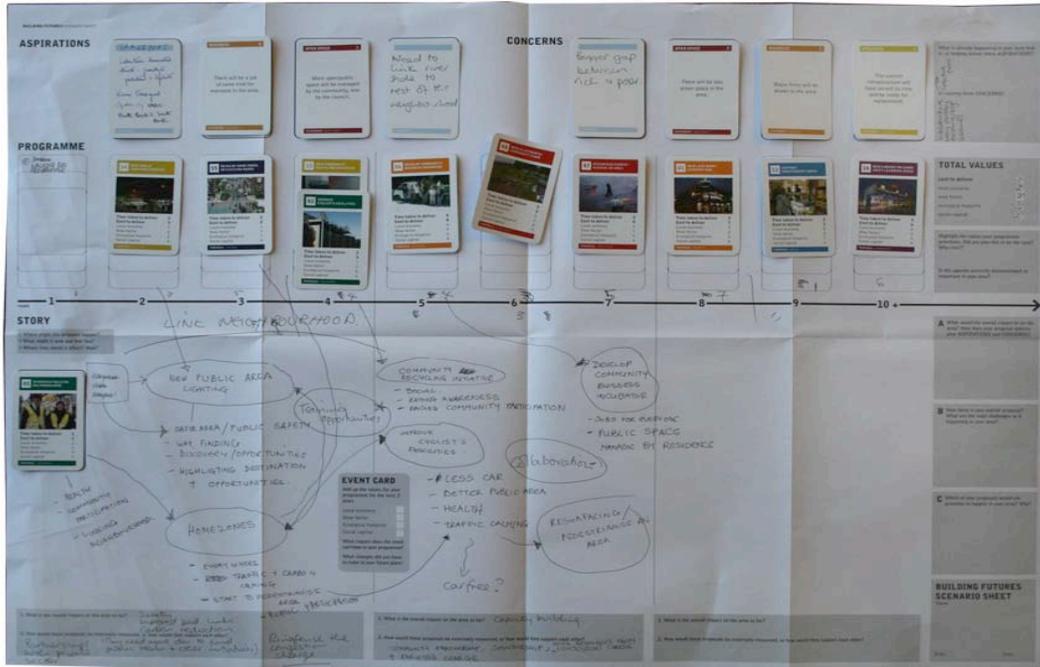
**8-10:** *Develop New Private Housing and New School or Nursery.*

**Total Values:**

Cost to Deliver-	<b>46</b>
Local Economy-	<b>75</b>
Wow Factor-	<b>60</b>
Ecological Footprint-	<b>76</b>
Social Capital-	<b>94</b>

**Group 5- (no Title)**

The final group brought together a range of initiatives aimed once more at encouraging healthier community participation. They did this in the first wave through ‘Ring fencing the Congestion Charge.’ Walking programmes and better lighting would encourage people to take to their feet in what is a geographically small area. Walking or cycling, the group stated, would provide ‘opportunities for discovery’ and way-finding. If groups were to take to the area they had to see what was on offer and this couldn’t be done via road or bus as these both skirt the edges. Measures introduced as part of this aimed at slowing down the movement of traffic and provide new public areas for community use and recreation.



**Group 5 Scenario Sheet**

The group wished to encourage a private-public partnership in the funding of these improvements and wanted to establish a new 24 hour economy hub, this would be away from that currently at the riverside or London Bridge and be located at the district’s ‘interior.’

**Proposals selected in 10 year story:**

**1-4:** Introduce Walking Bus Programme, New Public Lighting Strategy, Develop Homes Zones on existing Roads, New Community Recycling initiative, Improve Cyclist’s Facilities.

**5-7:** Develop Community Business Incubator, New Allotments/ Community Farm and Resurface/Pedestrianise an Area.

**8-10:** New Late Night Economy Hub, Support Independent Shops and New Library or Community Learning Space.

**Total Values:**

Cost to Deliver-	<b>39</b>
Local Economy-	<b>47</b>
Wow Factor-	<b>48</b>
Ecological Footprint-	<b>65</b>
Social Capital-	<b>75</b>

### 3. COMMON GROUND AND CONCLUSIONS

The Bankside event was a speculative exercise designed to train people in how they might run their own events. There was universal agreement that it was something each of the players wished to take up again within their own organisations. The game event worked as an excellent way to structure people's thinking on a district many knew little about. Despite this the framework of the toolkit meant the proposals were (nearly) all realistic, but imaginative and locally-tailored.



#### Groups present their scenarios

#### COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT

All groups produced highly socially minded scenarios with an emphasis on community and the environment. There was great common ground built around the area's location between the three points of Waterloo, London Bridge and Elephant and Castle. This was seen as the site of the most pressing issue. All groups were in agreement that local residents and their needs have been left behind by the new commercial and leisure developments aimed at expanding the central area of London. Bankside, in their collective vision, would be a distinctive area not because of 'global city' landmarks like those strung along the riverside, but because of innovation green measures and a thriving, distinctive local economic base.

The response across the five groups was to concentrate efforts in the centre of the district with a range of community facilities such as allotments, making the area more pleasant with HomeZones, and better public realm initiatives such as lighting. These quick wins were often bolstered with a bigger facility like a library and affordable/social housing, giving a deserved community focus and seeking to establish and maintain a diverse local population.

#### NOTES

**Building Futures** is the RIBA's think tank on issues affecting the future of our towns and cities. It was established to create space for discussion about the needs of society from our built environment and, consequently, the built environment professions in 20 years and beyond. The group aims to highlight and promote those working with new technologies and developing new ideas, which will contribute to the future of our towns and cities and address society's changing demands over the coming years. How and where will we be living in 50 or 100 years' time? What technologies will architects be using to design new buildings and what

materials will be specified? How will the inevitable new technologies affect the buildings and places we use every day

[www.buildingfutures.org.uk](http://www.buildingfutures.org.uk)

***Co-developers of the Building Futures Game.***

**CABE**, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, is the government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space. CABE works on behalf of the public and is committed to inspire people to demand more from buildings and spaces.

[www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)

**AOC** is an architecture practice committed to exploring the broader relationship between people and the complex, messy world around them. Working with people, rather than for them, their aim is to make things happen through a variety of responses and proposals, some of which may include buildings.

[www.theaoc.co.uk](http://www.theaoc.co.uk)

The Building Futures Game is a Building Futures RIBA initiative:

For more information on this or any other Building Futures project contact: [buildingfutures@inst.riba.org](mailto:buildingfutures@inst.riba.org) or on 0207 307 3620