

PiL celebrates 60 issues

A recent editorial advisory board decided it was time your editors 'came out' and showed their faces. Faye Menzies noted them chatting about the mag.



Your editors show their faces.
L to R: Lee Mallett, Paul Finch, Brian Waters

Brian: When, in 1990, I took on chairmanship of the London Planning & Development Forum I soon realised the value of Forum discussions and that they weren't going anywhere much beyond the meeting room. I tried to persuade Forum members to publish some kind of account of the goings on. They supported the idea but failed to come up with any funding. The DoE said they would contribute if we got it going; the others claimed poverty!

Lee: It was then that Brian took the idea to Paul and me at a time when we were working at Morgan Grampian, editing *BD* and *Estates Times*, hoping the company might be interested in backing it. The idea was too small for MG, but we liked it so the three of us put up a bit of cash and set up a publishing company to produce the journal in association with the Forum. We ended up

joining Brian in the venture.

Brian: When asked to pitch in, the DoE backed off saying they couldn't contribute to a commercial venture!

Lee: Perhaps we should have told them we were never going to make a profit?

Paul: We felt that there was a gap between planners, the property industry and the government and a publication was needed to ventilate the field. We also felt that the London focus filled a niche that national magazines would not cover well and that there would be a lot of interesting material.

Lee: Even now, nearly 14 years on, there is still a gap in understanding between planning in the public sector and the development industry in the private sector, and the magazine still fits into that area, bridging the rift between the two.

Brian: This of course remains the mission of the Forum: the journal has helped develop its profile and its membership continues to grow, the newest joiners being the Landscape Architects and the Planning Officers' Society.

Paul: *Planning in London* was launched at a joint RIBA/RTPI London planning conference at the Mermaid theatre which I chaired. Based on one small leaflet we received a shower of cheques from members for a magazine that as yet did not exist.

Lee: Perhaps we should have stopped then! Previously the public sector did not recognise

International Building Press awards 2006
Magazine of the Year (non weekly)
PiL was a finalist with *Architectural Review*
(ed. P. Finch) and the winner *Icon*.
The judges made special mention of
Planning in London which they described as
"an essential read for property professionals
but also an extremely informative one for
laymen."

the need to understand the private sector and vice versa. While this problem has reduced, with power so centralised it is increasingly difficult to resolve matters on a local basis.

Paul: The big challenge of the future is to bridge the gap between central planning power and local planning achievement.

Lee: London is a good example with the re-establishment of testing out the use of local power, demonstrating the success of the notion of an elective mayor. The logical extension would be to pass more authority back at least to city authorities, if not to local authorities. When power resides locally people can determine their own futures.

Brian: Giving local businesses a vote and allowing some business rate to be retained by local authorities would also help the balance and strength of local democracy. London would benefit at least as much as everywhere else.

Planning in London used to be put together on Saturday afternoons in Brian's office, his secretary volunteering for copy typing articles often delivered in long-hand. In the early days a 24 page issue was something of an achievement! To print off a proof page we had to disconnect the little Mac SEs from the network since we had only one copy of Quark Xpress. Today the magic of email and broadband means the editors only get to meet over lunch – or, as in the photo for our first photo-opportunity in 60 issues.

The original layout was done for £250 by the MG designer. Peter Murray at Wordsearch offered to give us a makeover last year and their fresh new look has been very well received.

Despite never having employed any staff (but we could use a skilled sub editor – any volunteers?) – *Planning in London* has been finalist in four International Building Press

'Magazine of the Year' awards, including a Commendation and this year's special mention: "an essential read for property professionals but also an extremely informative one for laymen."

The Yearbook is published for *Planning in London* under contract and helps to finance the journal. The lively website and ePiL, which is sent out by London RIBA and RTPI to their members and linked to the RICS website, support the Forum as well as the journal. This year's launch of www.PiLjobs.com – the UK portal for jobs in town planning – should strengthen it further.

The loyalty and support of our subscribers is appreciated and contributions for publication are always welcome.

Day jobs

Brian Waters is an architect and planning consultant, principal of The Boisot Waters Cohen Partnership and chairman of the London Planning & Development Forum. He has worked for the City of London Corporation, the GLC and Shankland/Cox and has been a vice-president of the RIBA, Master of the Architects' livery company and is a vice-president of the Association of Consultant Architects. He writes a monthly planning column in the *Architects' Journal* and is joint publishing editor of *Planning in London*. See: www.bwcp.co.uk

Paul Finch is editor of the *Architectural Review* and deputy chairman of CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment). He is a former editor of *Building Design* and the *Architects' Journal*, and is a joint editor of *Planning in London*. He is currently chairing a joint CABE/GLA Architecture and Urbanism Unit design review panel for the 2012 Olympics, and chairs CABE's design review programme. He is a former trustee of the Architecture Foundation, and a former councillor of the Architectural Association. He is a visiting professor at the Bartlett School of Architecture.

Lee Mallett is an urban regeneration and communications consultant. He is currently editing the Urban Regeneration Toolbox, a collection of 80 essays from practitioners, to be published in February 2007. He is conference editor for CMPI publishers of *Building*, *Building Design* and *Property Week*. His company Regeneration & Communication Limited provides consultancy services to councils, architects, developers and stakeholders. He is former editor of *Building Design* and *Estates Times*, and joint publishing editor of *Planning in London*. He is a former director of architecture and property marketing company Wordsearch.