

iPILLO!

Claim the credit

The planning minister **Nick Boles** said a long-standing idea of his was to have a brass plate at head height on every new development in the country, stating the name and address of the architect and builder.

Addressing a room full of house builders he added: "I suspect most people in the industry know what they're proud of and what developments you'd rather forget."



This model blue plaque may be less informative than the Minister has in mind. The first reader to name the street where it was placed wins a prize. Just email planninginlondon@mac.com

Worried planners

Twice as many London planners believe a key government reform has failed to improve the planning process as those who think it has helped, according to a new survey.

The survey of 20 London boroughs carried out by **Sitematch London**, shows that more than half (53 per cent) of planners said the National Planning Policy Framework has had no beneficial effects in their borough. This compared to 26 per cent who thought it had helped, and 21 per cent who were unsure.

The NPPF was introduced with the aim of simplifying a raft of planning guidance, ministerial statements and circulars into one document. But **Heather Cheesbrough**, assistant director of strategic planning, regeneration and economic development at **London Borough of Hounslow** said that the NPPF has introduced vagueness into the system. She said: "The NPPF has brought simplification through a condensing of the quantum of

planning guidance, although the document can be interpreted in different ways by different people in different places. This doesn't necessarily make the process of planning simpler."

She added that effect of the introduction of the NPPF "pales into insignificance" against the introduction of permitted development rights on certain types of development, such as extensions "which completely undermine the ability of a planning authority to positively plan and regenerate places".

Steve Barton, planning policy manager at the **London Borough of Ealing** said: "As a planning practitioner it is difficult to reconcile the many varied, competing and contradictory messages that emit from government, which clearly wants to blame us for not delivering growth and development. But, in fact, it is the constant tinkering with the planning system that creates confusion and uncertainty and makes it more difficult for investment to come forward."

The survey also discovered that almost three quarters (71 per cent) of planners believe the government's neighbourhood planning policies are not helpful to the planning process. Only 12 per cent of those surveyed said that they thought it would provide a positive contribution. Many respondents said that they thought that the system allowing communities to prepare neighbourhood plans would favour councils with wealthier communities.

A number of planning officers from disadvantaged boroughs commented that the better off tend to have more time to invest in neighbourhood planning, compared to people living more deprived areas.



The wisdom of Bucky

Architect **Buckminster Fuller** said: "We must do away with the absolutely specious notion that everyone has to earn a living..."

The true business of people should be to go back to school and think about whatever they were thinking about before someone told them they had to earn a living."



HELLO! London Dock



'Fortress Wapping', News International's former printworks, is to be transformed into 1800 new homes in a mixed development by St George, part of the **Berkeley Homes Group**.

Crucial work

Christine Murray, editor of the *AJ* enjoyed visiting Madrid for the **British Council of Offices** annual conference. Even more she enjoyed a conversation with an unnamed developer who explained how essential architects were in unlocking the value of difficult sites.

"He talked about how cynically he pays the estate agent and the solicitor's bills, and how remarkably little the architect is paid for considerably more crucial work," she wrote.



From 'The 7 Sins of Architects' by Robert Adam