

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON  
FACULTY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
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## **BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE COMMUNITY?**

Process, practice and wider outcomes  
in the Building Schools for the Future programme.

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Being a report submitted to the faculty of the Built Environment as part of the requirements for the award of MSc Urban Regeneration at University College London:

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## **Glossary of Terms**

BSF	Building Schools for the Future
CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
DFEE	Department for Education and Employment
DFES	Department for Education and Skills <sup>1</sup>
LEA	Local Education Authority
HCC	Hampshire County Council
PUK	Partnerships UK
PfS	Partnerships for Schools
SECE	South East Centre of Excellence

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<sup>1</sup> The central government department responsible for education has changed from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) in 1995 to the Department for Education (DfES) in 2001 and from July 2007 will be known as the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF). I have referred to the correct department for publications; however throughout the report I refer to the DfES as the current department.

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## **Abstract and research question**

In 2004 the government announced a massive school building programme which will result in the refurbishment or rebuilding of every secondary school in England within the next 15 years at a total budget of £45bn. Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is the government's most ambitious school building programme since the post war period.

Within its remit it aims to achieve more than schools that are fit for purpose and seeks to accomplish wider regeneration objectives in the local area. It matters that schools begin to tackle these issues as the links between low educational achievement, unemployment and social exclusion are well documented.

This report goes beyond the limited available literature regarding schools and regeneration to examine broader policy objectives, practice and evaluation of BSF so far. It uses a review of the previous post war school building programme through an analysis of the processes used and the outcomes achieved, to allow comparisons to be drawn with the albeit different but nevertheless system lead approach of BSF today.

It concludes by making recommendations that could be applied to BSF that aim to resolve some of the complexities and difficulties associated with designing new school buildings for our local communities.

(199 words)

## **Introduction**

Chapter 1 is a literature review of current available information regarding regeneration and schools in terms of broader government policy, BSF and evaluation of recent capital investment in school buildings.

Chapter 2 explains the methodology used for the research in the report, carried out in the following three chapters.

Chapter 3 sets the context for the BSF programme in terms of urban regeneration, procurement and education policy and practice.

Chapter 4 looks at the BSF process in more detail in terms of its structure and requirements and through a number of interviews with individuals involved in school projects.

Chapter 5 examines the post war school building programme of the 1950s and 1960s through a similar look at the procurement, policy and process used in this period.

Chapter 6 summarises the key findings of BSF so far and compares it with that of the post war programme.



## Chapter 1: Context and literature review

This chapter is a literature review of schools and regeneration. It begins with a definition of urban regeneration and how this fits in with government policy. There is an absence of literature available on schools and regeneration specifically, so I move on to discuss BSF policy and describe changing ideas and structures of procurement, design and quality that are relevant to the programme. I then look at evaluation of recent school buildings carried out by the government to begin to understand the links between process and outcomes.

### 1.1 Urban Regeneration and government policy

Roberts (2000 p17) defines urban regeneration as: 'a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change.'

This is a useful definition and reflects policy widely used by the present government that was introduced particularly through documents such as the *Urban White Paper: Our towns and cities: the future* in 2000 and *Sustainable Communities* in 2003. In these documents there is a clear objective of applying an integrated approach to urban problems by tackling education, health and transport and most importantly the promotion of community engagement in such change.

In order to meet this challenge the *Urban White Paper* went on to point to a skills shortage in the sector amongst those people best placed to carry out the vision; 'Achieving good planning and design depends critically on the ability and skills of the professionals involved. There are many in both the public and private sectors with good skills in individual disciplines, but we have a shortage of people with high quality cross-disciplinary urban design skills.' (DETR 2000 p59).

*The Egan Review* (ODPM 2004) talked further about skills across three main groups – those associated with delivering sustainable communities who spend most of their time doing so; the 'associated occupations' in which he includes educators; and those who have a 'legitimate interest in sustainable communities'. The first group included built environment professionals; local, regional and national government and voluntary sector workers. It is this core group, Egan argued, that needed to improve their cross disciplinary generic skills to be able to work efficiently across all sectors.

This lack of skills is important to consider in the context of this report; as I will look at the role and practice of professionals in the BSF programme towards achieving the goals of regeneration policy objectives.

## Chapter 1: Context and literature review

### 1.2 Schools and regeneration policy

The concept of the school and its community is not new; however there is currently little literature available specifically on the subject of schools and the role they can play in regeneration. Indeed, until recently there was little policy on the subject; backed up by a Policy Press review *Schools and area regeneration* which describes a situation of little 'coherent and supportive policy' in an atmosphere promoting primarily at pupil attainment (Crowther et al 2003 p1). This specific policy void is one from which the BSF programme has emerged.

### 1.3 BSF policy

If we examine BSF in the context of the above objectives of 'an integrated vision', then we should expect to now see policies across departments at local and national level that seek to achieve more than a rebuilding programme. I examined five main policy and guidance documents from and associated with BSF available to local authorities, schools and the private sector to discover whether that is the case, discussed here in turn:

#### *DfES Strategy for Change*

This document is intended for local authority use and lays out the planning and procurement processes necessary for each BSF project. The words 'regenerate' or 'regeneration' do not appear within the document, however it does refer to extended schools services and community use. It describes a lengthy procedure which precedes the design stage and requires the local authority to consider wider objectives in the school building project. Both stage 1 and stage 2 must be assessed by central government departments before approval is given to proceed with the project.

#### *DfES BB98 Briefing Framework for Secondary School Projects*

This key document provides non statutory guidelines for the design of schools. Local authorities use this document to calculate funding requirements by establishing the accommodation requirements for each school. It is then intended for use by design professionals to develop the brief and design of the school building. It outlines an in depth briefing and design process as befits a project of the size and nature.

The words 'regenerate' or 'regeneration' do not appear in the document although it does refer to the opportunity for extended school provision and community facilities. It stipulates that regeneration issues are expected to be considered before the design teams are appointed. In addition its rigid accommodation schedule does not seem to allow for any deviation from a 'one size fits all' solution that may be expected to develop and change through consultation with teachers, parents and pupils.

## **Chapter 1: Context and literature review**

### **CABE** *The Client Design Advisor*

An introductory document that sets out the role for the design professional who is expected to provide the local authority and school with 'access to high-level knowledge and experience of the design and construction process' (CABE 2005) and will work with the school and the consortia to advise on the development of the design. The words 'regenerate' or 'regeneration' do not appear in the document. However it does refer to the importance of the role the school can play in the wider community. This document also refers to the 'Design Quality Indicator' or DQI process that each school project is expected to evaluate and progress the design proposals. I will discuss this in more detail later.

The final two documents, published in 2006 and 2007 introduce the concept of the 'Extended School'. The definition of extended school services is that a school will provide:

- High-quality 8am-6pm year-round childcare.
- A range of study support activities.
- Parenting support, including family learning.
- Swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialist support services.
- Wider community access to learning and recreational facilities for adults. (DFES 2006a p1)

### **DfES** *Designing Schools for Extended Services*

This is a policy document aimed at all schools and sets out the government's objectives for school use by the wider community. 12 instances of 'regenerate' or 'regeneration' were found in this document, reinforcing the connection between this policy area and the wider objectives of regeneration. For example the first instance it is found boldly claims; 'BSF will in turn contribute to the wider regeneration efforts of local authorities.' (DFES 2006a p16)

### **DCSF** *Extended Schools: Building on Experience*

This document goes into more detail about the extended schools service, linking in with other local services as well as giving case study examples. It is targeted at schools and local authorities. It makes far less mention of regeneration, with just one instance of the word 'regenerate' itself. However there are over 30 mentions of the word community, in the context of the role the school can have on the wider community particularly in the development of children (DCSF 2007).

The government aim is that by 2010 all schools will provide these services. This strategy straddles schools policy and the government's Every Child Matters vision which it increasingly continues to use as a cornerstone of its public policy. It is an example of cross-departmental strategies that will provide services for the wider community.

## **Chapter 1: Context and literature review**

### **1.4 Procurement, design and quality**

Achieving high quality in the design and construction of the new school buildings is an issue more widely discussed by policy makers and a number of academics.

DQI was developed by the Construction Industry Council as 'an assessment tool for evaluating the design quality of buildings' (Whyte and Gann 2003 p1). It is expected to be used on every schools project, although through development is now described more as an opportunity to understand and discuss design rather than as a measurement tool, the latter proving problematic (Markus 2003).

Other writers have looked at the idea of measuring design; for example Mulgan et al discuss quantifying design as 'physical capital' (Mulgan et al 2005). This idea gives strength and justification to the importance of design in an era concerned with 'value for money'. The argument acknowledges that some aspects are 'less tangible' (ibid) and very complex.

Matarasso argues 'Even if we allow for complex, overlapping and conflicting uses, there remains a point - that might be expressed simply as fitness for purpose - beyond which differences of quality in physical capital are exactly that: qualitative.' (Matarasso 2005 p37) He suggests that people's attitude to the built environment is 'necessarily subjective' (ibid).

Both Mulgan and Matarasso go on to propose solutions that involve 'value mapping' and assessing our physical capital and that this will need to take place over a long period of time. This may well be something worth carrying out, but it is something a fast moving programme like BSF will not have time to benefit from.

So we see a link between the qualitative aspects of a building being difficult to measure and being to do with certain aspects of design and with wider outcomes, such as regeneration. What is the importance of this overlap? Mulgan et al (2006) bring these two issues together; they too look to 'value mapping' and believe that in order to raise awareness of the less tangible aspects of value within the built environment the public must be involved in the design process, and that they rarely are at an early stage.

## Chapter 1: Context and literature review

### 1.5 Evaluation

So far the programme is in its early days and has little to show. However the government is strong on evaluation and has commissioned a number of reports to test policy objectives and to measure outcomes in recent schools' capital investment.

The first two reports were released before the start of the programme and examined the impact new school buildings have on pupils, learning and teachers.

- DfEE and PWC *Building Performance: capital investment and pupil performance* (2000)
- DfES and PWC *Building better performance* (2003)

In the 2000 report it is clear that a quantitative analysis into capital investment reveals very little benefit in pupil performance: 'It is important to note that the absolute size of the effect of capital spend on pupil performance is relatively weak, i.e. capital-related changes in performance are small relative to changes which can be related to other factors such as the socio-economic composition of the school.' (DfES 2000 p37). Fig 1 shows how changes in Key Stage 3 performance (ages 11 to 14) are minor.

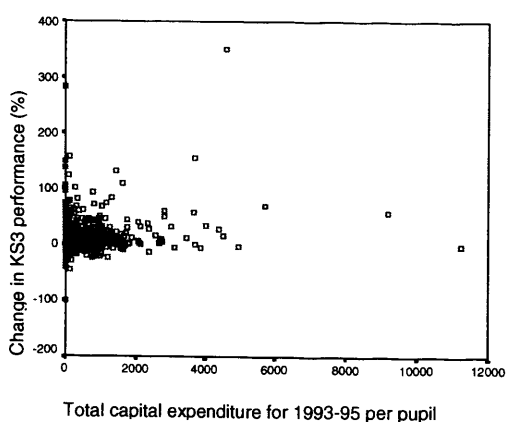


Fig 1 (source DFES 2000)

## Chapter 1: Context and literature review

The 2003 report goes into more depth and carries out a qualitative analysis into wider outcomes following school improvements. It identifies four main broader benefits; learning, economic, environmental/ health and social/ community and then applies cost-benefit analysis to evaluate the success of a number of schools in achieving these outcomes.

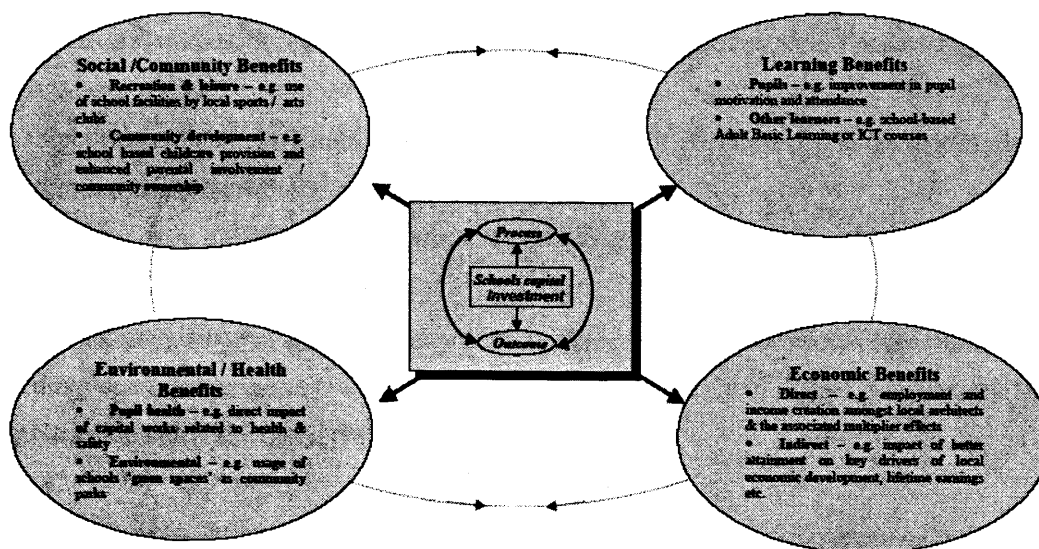


Fig 2 (source: DFES 2003)

Whilst it states that schools in more economically deprived areas are more likely to be well accessed and used by the local community for a number of reasons, it goes on to say later; 'In economically deprived areas, there are so many other contextual factors which are militating against improvements in pupil performance, that even very significant enhancements in the quality of school buildings, are likely to do little on their own to improve performance.' (DfES 2003 p45)

*The Academies programme* report produced by the National Audit office is important to consider here as these schools are now being incorporated into the BSF programme. All academies are built in areas suffering from high deprivation and on the sites of previously failing schools. They have more funding than a school in the BSF programme. The report uses pupil performance at GCSE as a measure of the success of the school and shows a 'continuing increase in performance over 5 years' across the academies (NAO 2007).

One aspect of its focus was to look at Academies contributions to tackling social deprivation'; the report concludes that it was doing that by 'raising the attainment of their pupils with deprived backgrounds' as is expressed in the improved performance at GCSE level. The report also says; 'We found that compared with other new schools, most academies are of good quality, having

## Chapter 1: Context and literature review

benefited from a process that has given architects and users sufficient time to consider the design fully.' (NAO 2007 p6)

*Lessons learnt* from PfS interviewed a number of local authorities and private sector consortia who have been involved in BSF projects. Significantly, other than improving their own internal resources and output the local authorities cited two key changes they would make to the process next time:

- Not underestimate the length of time and the amount of effort needed in developing the project and engaging with the private sector
- Have far more involvement from the schools (PfS 2007 p1)

Private sector companies appeared more cautious with repeating their experiences explaining that bidding for schools projects is expensive and resource intensive, and suggesting that some local authorities should be avoided (PfS 2007).

CABE's *Assessing Secondary School design quality* review of school buildings completed between 2000 and 2005 concluded that over half were of 'poor or mediocre' quality (CABE 2006 p23). PFI schools scored even less well. Results of the assessment were achieved by using the DQI method carried out by 'design experts' and did not include user's opinions.

The report looked at Wave 1 BSF schemes, at that point mostly at the design stage, and noted that their own enablers were expressing concerns with the design quality of 'a significant number of the schemes' (CABE 2006) The report concludes with a number of recommendations for government and local authorities which include:

- Greater pre-project planning and feasibility studies; submitted to DfES 'schools review panel' for approval
- Better use of the CABE role of Client Design Advisor
- Design weighting within the PfS assessment criteria (CABE 2006 p67)

It is at the preparation stage that the report highlights the extended schools issue: 'Preparation work for BSF projects will need to be even more extensive as schools and local authorities must consider how learning will be transformed, including the massive impact of ICT, and the influence that the extended schools agenda may have on the school buildings and grounds.' (CABE 2006 p6)

## **Chapter 1: Context and literature review**

### **1.6 Summary**

This section has raised a number of issues. Firstly the importances of skills of, amongst others, design professionals in achieving regeneration. Secondly it reveals an increasing emphasis on regeneration issues in BSF policy and associated guidance. Evaluation of recently built schools reveals the complexity of these issues however: Quantitative analysis into capital investment shows little benefit to pupil performance. Academies report suggests that pupil attainment is being raised in deprived areas and that therefore this is working towards tackling social deprivation. This is in contrast to CABE's report into the wave 1 BSF schemes, half of which were seen to be below a good standard. Public and private sector is concerned with length of time spent on developing the project, which in some cases is proving prohibitively expensive for the private sector.

Problems are being highlighted both in the process and the outcomes; that is to say in the procurement and design process and in the success of the school buildings both practically and in terms of complex and more difficult to measure aspects which would include wider regeneration aims.

What this suggests is that both processes and outcomes need to be considered in more detail to determine the interrelationships between the two. This is the task of chapter 4; in which I will look at the structure of the BSF process and how it is being carried out by a number of individuals involved. But first I outline my methodology and then review the background of regeneration and schools policy.



## Chapter 2: Methodology

Research for the report begins with the context within which the BSF programme is situated. For this I looked further at books, articles and policy on regeneration, procurement and schools.

Chapter 4 looks in detail at the prescribed process from the *Strategy for Change* (DFES 2006b) document. The research then focuses on primary data gathered by conducting interviews with a number of people involved in school design.

I held interviews with a range of architects working on schools projects, and two individuals working in more broad strategic roles in BSF. Sadiq Mir was interviewed for his alternative academic view of schools and the effects on the community. Interviews were held at their places of work, the structure of the interviews and questions are listed in Appendix B.

Laura Marr	Project Architect Edward Cullinan Architects	01.02.07
Helen Roberts	Associate Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects	15.02.07
Lee Bennett	Design Director Sheppard Robson Architects	27.03.07
Richard Gooden	Assistant Head of Architecture Hampshire County Council	01.05.07
Elanor Warwick	Joint Head of Research CABE	26.02.07
Sharon Wright	'Creative Wit' (ex Schoolworks)	19.04.07
Sadiq Mir	Researcher Kings College London	02.03.07

Research into the post-war school building programme was carried out with reference to three books which exist on the subject and a collection of papers from the RIBA Journal in 1968. The latter are particularly useful as they offer both a critical view of what was achieved and address the issue of schools and community.

## **Chapter 3: Urban Regeneration, Construction and Schools**

This chapter provides the context for the BSF programme in terms of broader urban regeneration policy, schools policy and changing procurement methods.

### **3.1 The development of urban regeneration policy.**

In Roberts (2000) we see a description of the evolution of urban policy since the Second World War. Essentially there has been a shift from what is known as urban renewal, concerned mainly with rebuilding programmes, towards a more holistic approach. From an organisational perspective Roberts describe the change in administration in the postwar period of national and local government control, to a more partnership focused approach with regeneration.

As we have seen, these ideas run through current government policy, such as *The Urban White Paper* 'Previous governments failed to stem urban decline because they only addressed part of the problem, and ignored the underlying causes. Often, they forgot that urban policies are not just about bricks and mortar, but about improving the prosperity and quality of life for the people who live there.' (DETR 2000 p5).

This shift away from rebuilding as the focus for improvements in area to a more broad approach that embraces social, cultural, economic, environmental and educational aspects has occurred alongside changing practices in procurement.

### **3.2 Changing roles and methods in design and construction procurement.**

From the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century construction industry building processes were dominated by the 'professional system' (Winch 2000), whereby a client, whether state or private, employed a contractor to carry out the construction of a building, road, square or so on. The client was advised by a number of professionals, which in the case of buildings was lead by an architect. These professionals would be appointed with the task of designing the building and with guiding the client through the construction process

During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the state took increasing control for investment in infrastructure, housing, education and health. The professional system continued to be used and evolved so that by the post Second World War period professionals saw their role as 'to regulate the free market in the interests of the wider community' (Winch 2000 p142)

However, the professional system began to be seen as not protecting client interests and need; there was little incentive to reduce costs, both from the design professionals and the contractors. It was seen as inflexible with a lack of incentive for innovation.

### Chapter 3: Urban Regeneration, Construction and Schools

The post-war building boom came to an end after the 1973 economic crisis and the government 'cut back dramatically on public sector investment in built facilities' (Winch 2000 p145). What followed was private sector dominance of construction and little or no investment in public buildings and the public realm from the state, alongside a massive change from manufacturing to a service industry dominated society. By the early 1990s the government was looking for new methods of procuring infrastructure and building and it looked to the private sector where some small changes had started.

The so called Latham and Egan reports commissioned by the Conservative and Labour Governments respectively looked for different models of procurement with the first calling upon the industry to cut construction costs by 30 percent by 2000 (Latham 1994). Both Latham and Egan looked for innovation and cost reduction and a move away from competitive tendering, however their model for partnering in the industry still operated through a traditional method.

Economists in the 1990s were pointing to the need for 'an efficient and effective infrastructure for economic activity' (Winch 2000 p146) in what had become deteriorating stock. In reaction to the crisis the state sold off much of its industry, retaining only the parts it thought necessary to provide such as education. In looking for a new solution it saw the answer in 'concession contracting' (Winch 2000 p146). The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) was a form of such procurement and was first introduced in the UK to build the Channel Tunnel in 1992. Control of the project remained in the hands of the government but the risk was shared with the private sector.

The incoming Labour Government in 1997 continued with this policy for greater cost certainty and control and increasingly pushed the use of Public Private Partnerships, of which PFI is one model, throughout its capital investment programme. Gordon Brown at the Treasury expanded the PFI model and framed it in a 'value for money' approach which was to see an end to wasted government spending and risk reduction. It has been this model that has been rolled out across so many aspects of the government's capital investment programme; to begin with in the larger scale hospitals and now the BSF programme.

The 'value for money' approach in public spending is dictated in the Treasury's 'Green Book: Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government' (2003). In turn the DfES 2005 document *PFI Value for Money Stage 1 Assessment* sets out its policy in accordance with the Green Book. It states that, 'Innovation...will come in three main areas: educational provision, school design and procurement'. It goes on to say 'We want to promote the best designs for all schools. Good design raises educational standards and improves the quality of life within a school.' 'We are doing

## **Chapter 3: Urban Regeneration, Construction and Schools**

this by ...ensuring that, in all plans, those designs are moulded to local needs by local people' (DFES 2005 p11)

### **3.3 Schools and education policy**

The key aspects of the 1988 Educational Reform Act were to pass greater management to schools at the same time as imposing a number of centralisation policies; the National Curriculum, testing, OFSTED and the identification of failing schools (Docking 2000).

New Labour has put education at the centre of its agenda and continued with these policies alongside its 'value for money approach' in public spending (Docking 2000, Dudek 2000).

Crowther however argues that this system may be working against community activities as it 'gives a clear message to schools that they have to focus on the attainments of their pupils above almost everything else', the so called 'standards agenda'. LEAs, he argues, are left to 'transmit' the standards agenda or may be working to develop regeneration initiatives 'which have little school involvement' or with too great an expectation on schools (Crowther et al 2003 p1).

### **3.4 Summary**

Procurement and public sector spending is now dominated by a 'value for money approach' with increased private sector investment, arising in part from a mistrust of professionals in managing the construction process. Where this has significance with urban regeneration is that projects must both work within this new system and achieve measurable positive outcomes. At the same time capital investment must tackle broader issues of social, economic and environmental elements. The BSF programme is placed firmly within the context of these policies and it is this that I will go on to discuss in more detail in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 4: The Building Schools for the Future programme**

This chapter looks at the specific process of BSF, through guidance documents and interviews with those involved in the process. It raises the difficulties arising from a rigidly structured programme in terms of the opportunity for those given the task of designing the new school buildings in tackling regeneration objectives. I begin with a quote from Richard Gooden at Hampshire County Council who highlighted the difficulty of translating policy into practice: 'The trouble is nobody knows what educational transformation actually means' (Gooden 2007)

### **4.1 Introduction to the programme.**

The 15 year £45bn BSF programme has been broken down into a series of 15 waves that will have at least one new secondary school building in every local authority area (DfES 2004b).

This is not before time, school buildings in the UK in the last 30 years had seen very little state investment; 'In 1996-97 annual capital investment was £683m for a capital stock with an approximate replacement cost, excluding land, of £60bn (representing 5% of total public spending on schools). This level of expenditure has proved to be insufficient to maintain the stock at its existing level, and has certainly not allowed for steps to be taken to improve the situation.' (DfEE 2000 p1)

### **4.2 What is the process: The role of Central Government, Local Authorities and Schools?**

The programme amounts to a 400 percent annual increase in spending which is allocated by the Treasury and through the DfES. It is a complex funding process, characterised specifically by the PFI model, and is being allocated to individual schools by local authorities.

At central government level is the public/ private delivery vehicle *Partnership for Schools* (PFS), funded by the DfES and Partnerships UK (PUK), itself funded by the Treasury and a number of private sector companies.

PFS along with the DfES is the source of complex and jargonistic programme requirements and policy which each local authority must adhere to in order to successfully secure funding for their individual programmes. It is prescribed in the document *Strategy for Change* (DfES 2006b), the key points of which are highlighted below:

Part 1: Key challenges and objectives.

A detailed 12 page report which each local authority must submit to central government for approval:

- Must show existing situation regarding education in the area

## **Chapter 4: The Building Schools for the Future programme**

- Must show proposals for future provision, including extended schools
- Must show influence of current policy
- Must include information from other departments, agencies. (DfES 2006b)

All advice and guidance on this document will be through PFS, DfES and other central government advisors.

Once approval has been achieved the local authority can then proceed with Part 2: Detail and Delivery:

Up to 30 pages in length, again to be submitted to central government for approval

- Show how BSF will bring 'added value'
- Include proposals for consultation of stakeholders and communities
- Ensure integration of 'Every Child Matters' policy
- Include a procurement strategy – using a 'Local Education Partnership' (LEP) model. (DfES 2006b)

Again, approval is given at central government level, through a number of departments.

Once these two stages have been achieved and funding has been allocated, a further 9 stages are laid out by the BSF programme that culminate in the construction and operation of the school or schools buildings. It is at the 6<sup>th</sup> stage that the local authority invites bids from prospective private sector consortia to engage in a competitive design process which will result in the selection of a 'preferred bidder'. It is this company that will complete the design and construction of the school with the local authority and school itself.

This is the design stage of the project and differs from the traditional professional system whereby design professionals, commonly lead by an architectural practice, were employed to develop a brief and design documents that were used to select a building contractor through a competitive tendering process.

The default PFI model for the BSF programme removes the direct relationship between the client and design team and sets up one connection with a building contractor who employs professionals to develop the design. In theory this simplifies the process for the local authority client and gives greater emphasis to achieving value for money in their investment. The competitive selection process is merged with the design process so that the private sector consortium of contractor and designers must complete a designed and costed scheme in an eight week period, as compared to perhaps nine months in a traditional process. This compression of the design process has been

## **Chapter 4: The Building Schools for the Future programme**

greatly criticised, not surprisingly, by the architectural profession and architectural press, see for example Crump (2007).

The process described above is augmented by a number of new advisory positions that have been set up to guide the client through the process. CABE supply both project enablers and design advisors to work on briefing and at design stage respectively. CABE also work with Schoolworks<sup>2</sup>. CABE, DfES and others provide publications to support the BSF programme and provide further advice.

### **4.3 How is BSF working in practice?**

Due to the size of the programme it was not possible to carry out full and detailed research into how it is being implemented. Instead, I focussed on interviews with a number of architects involved in school design, both BSF and otherwise. I also interviewed Sharon Wright and Elnor Warwick from Schoolworks and CABE respectively to provide a broader overview, as well as Sadiq Mir from Kings College. The profile of each is listed in Appendix A.

At each interview I discussed regeneration as a concept and how far it was relevant, possible and likely to play a part in the work the interviewees were doing in designing schools or otherwise. It was clear that each of the architects were not much involved in the development of the schemes beyond that of designing the layout and construction of the new buildings, and that any involvement was at least problematic. Both Wright and Warwick were able to recognise a separation between design and regeneration and both saw it as a serious problem for BSF.

All those involved in BSF bids believed the design stage to be too fast, with Bennett describing it as 'panic procurement'. The competitive nature of the process was seen as 'really destructive and difficult to work with' with 'a lot of people trying to manipulate each other' by Marr and was criticised heavily by Wright. Roberts' experience on the City Academy was in contrast a lengthier and non competitive design stage. Instead she focussed on the difficulties in carrying out consultation with the wider community who were not involved at an early stage. This had caused a great deal of opposition to the project.

Wright pointed to a worrying gap at central government level between DfES and PFS, the latter being overly concerned with cost control and programming and with no knowledge or skills in

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<sup>2</sup> Schoolworks was a not-for-profit company, core funded by the DFES. It carried out consultation and looked at best practice in school design. It has now been absorbed into British Council for School Environments. Information is available on their website [www.school-works.org](http://www.school-works.org)

## Chapter 4: The Building Schools for the Future programme

design and education. She saw CABE as too close to the government to provide a critical view. Bennett was also critical of CABE and the number of advisors attending project meetings, he questioned their skills and found their presence overwhelming and without clear reason. Marr saw the advisors as 'Lots of people talking and thinking but not enough money being spent on the end result'.

There were varying degrees of consultation across projects. Marr for example, had experienced a thorough consultation process but one that ultimately led to disappointment with many ideas being scrapped in the eventual cost cutting exercise that returned to the minimum requirements of the Building Bulletin documents. She said this had caused a lot of anger from the teachers. She was also critical of the involvement of Schoolworks, whom she said could not clearly translate the design and its aspirations to the teachers and the community and carried out a consultation exercise that was separated from the work of the design professionals and therefore unable to be of influence. Roberts' believed that most of the consultation that she was involved with had been about 'winning over' the local community rather than gauging their views on what would make a good school.

Warwick's knowledge of a variety of projects gave her a broader perspective. She was positive about the outcome of Academies programme and referred to *The Academies programme* report addressed in chapter 1. In contrast she thought that regeneration was a key aspect that was not adequately addressed in the BSF programme, being considered more like a 'plug on' aspect. She suggested that funding of schools could be more closely linked to deprivation. Mir discussed this subject and whilst he admitted to having no knowledge of the BSF programme and school design in general he felt that the best way to improve pupil performance would be to achieve a good mix of socio-economic groups: 'you wonder whether a school can play some part in rupturing divisions and making a more integrated social fabric within a school'. He explained that his research has revealed that parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds placed a greater emphasis on a school's appearance.

Wright stressed that the key to the success of a new building is a 'positive design and construction process'. Bennett explained that school design is 'an exercise in complexity' having to engage with many issues and agencies. Warwick believed that architects were being held at arms length from the regeneration decisions. She saw this as a negative aspect as it should be embedded throughout the design process. Warwick pointed to a lack of experience in school design across the industry over the last 30 years.



## **Chapter 4: The Building Schools for the Future programme**

My interview with Richard Gooden gave a contrasting example of the procurement process for new schools: Hampshire County Council (HCC) differs from other local authorities in that it has a large property services department with a well respected and award winning architectural and design team. It has a reputation for building some of the best designed schools in the country in the last 20 years, and maintains long term relationships with its school clients through service level agreements with the property services department.

The local authority has avoided the use of PFI funded schemes. Their approach to the BSF programme is to challenge the process by procuring construction contracts in the more traditional approach. Their experience and skills have led them to become the lead authority in the South East Centre of Excellence (SECE). Funded by the DCLG, it represents 74 local authorities across the south east of England. SECE seeks to make local authority procurement more efficient through joining up expertise across the region.

He explained that HCC is the lead authority for the construction workstream and that it uses its skills and expertise to work successfully with other local authorities less well endowed with resources. They have established a framework agreement with contractors for all capital projects, derived from a collaborative ethos. They use an open book two stage tender system, and with the use of the government's Key Performance Indicator measurement process have been able to prove predictability in the construction programmes as well as cost certainty. This he believes achieves the 'value for money' aims of central government policy, but through a mechanism more rigorously controlled at local government level. All this has led to a successful schools construction programme with examples such as Basingstoke Secondary School.

Gooden is a firm believer that what make the real difference in schools are teachers. He is sceptical about measurement of design, and believes that as a society we should strive to do the best in our public buildings and that this will bring about the best results. He sees the implementation of targets in BSF as setting 'unreachable aspirations' that could lead to the destruction of the programme. He asked whether architects are in fact able to address issues such as 'promoting inclusion', and whether there is a tendency for them to 'overplay their hand' in this area. Gooden believes there is a tendency to expect the 'wow factor' in buildings at that this is beginning to characterise PFI projects that are initially spectacular but heavy handed in their execution.

## **Chapter 4: The Building Schools for the Future programme**

### **4.4 Summary**

The process for BSF is a prescriptive system based on PFI 'value for money' and is implemented by local authorities and rigorously controlled and supervised by central government and advisors such as CABE. The issue of regeneration is expected to be addressed at an early stage in the project and is seen primarily as early consultation and integration with other local authority departments and policies. It is separated from the later design and procurement stages.

In practice the level of central control appears to be problematic and does not appear to aid those involved in the design process. The competitive requirement in the PFI structure has had the effect of reducing architects' involvement and speeding up the design process; criticism has arisen from the architectural profession, press and local authorities.

Success in terms of consultation appears unclear and at best may be varied. Other regeneration aspects are not coming across strongly as architects are either not involved or too rushed in their bids to secure and design the projects.

In steering away from the PFI model HCC have been effective in designing and procuring successful school buildings. This is made possible by a strong and experienced local authority department; of which there are few left in the country.

These findings point to a disappointing start in the programme and worrying outcomes for broader regeneration objectives

## Chapter 5: The post war programme: 1945 to 1975

*'The use of building systems in a regime of rigorous cost control is rather like the introduction of the potato as a staple diet in a peasant economy.'* (Ward 1977)

As we have seen, a large part of the school building stock we have now was constructed in the post war period. The deteriorating condition of these buildings and their inability to adapt to 21<sup>st</sup> century demands are a major aspect of the BSF programme; as is clearly stated in current policy. How much can we also learn by looking beyond the buildings themselves at the policy, process and practice of this era? Is it possible to draw parallels between these aspects and the outcomes of the period?

### 5.1 The context

In 1944 the Conservative government brought in the Education Act; making secondary schooling free for all pupils and raising school leaving age to 15, it also dictated a reduction in class size to 30 in primary and 40 in secondary and it introduced the tri-partite system of technical, secondary modern and grammar schools which separated children at 11 years old according to their academic ability.

Atlee's post war Labour government built a consensus of policy across all parties with the commonly held principle that the government had responsibility for the whole population. Therefore the programme for creating and constructing a new school system was one of central government responsibility to provide education for every child across the country.

Eventually 7.5 million new school places were to be created, which in itself required a vast increase in the school stock across the country. On top of these demands was the war legacy; in 1945 there were approximately 5,000 bomb damaged school buildings (Seaborne and Lowe 1977). Following the war, the birthrate rose dramatically creating a need for further places. In addition most existing school buildings were overcrowded and had high class numbers.

Throughout the period from 1947 to 1970, a total of approximately £12bn (in 2005 prices) was spent on new school buildings (Seaborne and Lowe 1977 p153) with an even greater figure given to training and employing the new teachers required to cover the growing school population and smaller class sizes.

This school building programme was the largest the country had undertaken since the Board schools of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The solution to these challenges was found through a combination of technical and organisational arrangements that went hand-in-hand with the educational and political philosophy of the time.

## **Chapter 5: The post war programme: 1945 to 1975**

### **5.2 Process and practice**

The ambitious programme was immediately hampered by the problems of a huge national debt, lack of labour and material shortages; all a legacy of the Second World War. This caused a reduction in spending on school building projects 'per pupil' from £320 for secondary schools in 1949 to £240 in 1951. In addition overall area per school place reduced from 102 sq ft in 1949 to 70 sq ft in 1957 (Seaborne and Lowe 1977 p161).

The process of lightweight prefabrication which is characteristic of this era was first seen as a solution to overcoming ground bearing problems over disused open cast mines in Nottinghamshire; the CLASP system. It was taken up by Hertfordshire County Council who developed the process of production. John Newsom the Head of Education at the Council from 1940, and S.A.W. Johnson-Marshall in the council's architecture department rejected the 'Hutting Operation for Raising the School-Leaving Age' or HORSAs system that had been appropriated from the Ministry of Works and looked for a solution that created an architecture 'based on human activities and purpose' (Seaborne and Lowe 1977 p162). They developed a philosophy of architects, administrators, educationalists and manufacturers working together to produce school designs, reflecting a new style of progressive education (Maclure 1984 px).

Newsom was determined to find the best architects and was won over by the work of the council's architecture department who developed the lightweight construction system which opened up spaces and provided flexibility in future use. Suddenly schools were being built which were about respect for children – adjusting scale and height and creating bright interiors (Seaborne and Lowe 1977 and Maclure 1984).

Ideas about lightweight prefabrication spread throughout the country with the creation of local government consortia which were to lead the procurement and construction of a number of systems built schools such as the CLASP, SCOLA, CLAW, METHOD and MACE construction types. In total these consortia were responsible for 50 percent of new school buildings during this period (Maclure 1984).

This process enabled lower costs to be achieved in construction than the traditional tendering methods. It also reflected the political climate at the time, described as 'socialism with a small s' by Maclure, and arose from a mistrust of the private sector towards the responsibility for school construction being handled by the public sector.

## Chapter 5: The post war programme: 1945 to 1975

This organisation was supported by central government at the Department of Education, which saw its role as advisory rather than controlling the process. Within the Department was the Architects and Buildings branch, from which the Development Group encouraged interaction between 'the educators and the designers' and with central government, local authorities and the church (Maclure 1984). This hands-off approach was also seen to encourage innovation within the local authorities and allowed young architects to experiment with architectural ideas within the prescribed technical framework of the system built schools. This was the period of architecture with a social responsibility and 'the architects themselves felt deeply involved' (Ward 1977 pvii). Indeed it was the 'function of the architects to crystallise and articulate ideas about pedagogy which went beyond the superficial thinking of the educators' (Maclure 1984 px).

Criticisms of the new buildings emerged quickly however; the new schools in Hertfordshire were to some 'glass palaces' and 'extravagant' (Maclure 1984). Worse was to come as many new schools across the country suffered from construction and maintenance problems; leaking flat roofs were not uncommon and many schools experienced overheating in the summer as well as acoustic problems (Ward 1977). Architecturally the uniformly similar style became to be seen as 'unimaginative' with the larger schools having a 'monolithic presence' (Seaborne and Lowe 1977 p190). Others see this though as 'the golden age of school building' (Maclure 1984 p84) and having 'integrity and provenance' (Gooden interview 2007).

Educational policy developed significantly during this period; most notably with the Plowden report in 1967 and the Education Act of 1972. The first was a government report into primary education that proposed a more child centered approach. The second raised again the school leaving age, this time to 16 (Maclure 1984).

In addition and most significantly perhaps, was the move to the comprehensive system in 1965 under the then Labour Government. The so-called 'tripartite' system of selective education was seen to fail those who achieved less well. However, it was not universally established, with many grammar schools continuing to exist across the country. On top of this by 1965, much of the new school building work had been achieved; so that many comprehensive schools were only able to adapt existing grammar and/or secondary modern buildings to attempt to suit their needs.

There was widely differing views as to the nature of secondary education, and one philosophy did not prevail. This can be seen to have lead to a variety of school buildings, layouts and designs across the country from this period. So that although it is often viewed as a period of central control and a common style in building; there is not one clear vision in secondary education or architecture that emerged.

## Chapter 5: The post war programme: 1945 to 1975

Just as the BSF programme is intended to come to an end, the post war programme occupied a finite period terminated by falling roles and economic recession in the early 1970s.

### 5.3 Community

'It shall be the duty of the Local Education Authority for every area, so far as their powers extend, to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community' (Education Act 1944 in Ward 1977).

In 1963 John Newsom produced the report *Half our Future* (Maclure 1984 p243) which highlighted the problem of boys and girls seen to be at a disadvantage due to a combination of social and economic factors, in particular in inner city areas. Its main proposal was to raise the school leaving age to 16 and concentrate on vocational training at 6<sup>th</sup> form age. It looked at student involvement in the running of the school, choice of learning and suggested that part of the day should be spent in the working world; ideas familiar to educationalists today (in Maclure 1984). The report introduced the idea of new ways of learning; for example with team teaching, social spaces and more open plan layouts.

Newsom had held a number of conferences where the concept of siting schools 'within the community' had been discussed in the early days following the war, in line with the objectives of the Education Act (Maclure 1984). The school and the community was not in fact a new idea and can be seen to date back to Henry Morris's vision of community colleges in Cambridgeshire in the 1920s. However, it was not until the 1960s that these ideas gained a more popular momentum. To what extent the school and the community worked together varied dramatically; Seckington reflects on this period as often providing little more than 'making the school premises available occasionally to others' (1999 p73).

Ward's review of schools between 1964 and 1974 cites several examples of secondary schools with sports and recreational facilities designed to be used by both the school and the local community, in particular in this case in Nottinghamshire. He highlights the social aspect of the 1960s and 1970s as being the period when the notion of 'educational priority areas' developed to tackle the problem of educational disadvantages leading from multiple deprivation

A conference in 1968 organised by the RIBA was introduced by its Honorary Secretary and Chief Architect at the Department for Education and Science, W.D. Lacey of whose seven points the first three were:

## Chapter 5: The post war programme: 1945 to 1975

'1. We attach high priority to the detailed study of the changing methods for learning and the changes in school organization, so that our designs for educational buildings do not inhibit growth and development.

'2. We support the concept of the joint use of educational buildings; with additional provisions they should be the centres on which the social life of the whole community in the area can be focussed.

'3. We urge that the implications which this has on town planning should be pursued at national and local level, so that housing and educational facilities can be integrated on this basis to form a new structure for urban planning.' (Lacey 1968 p349).

This conference of 700 delegates produced a number of papers discussing research and practice in a changing field of educational philosophy (Wright 1968 p350).

John Vaizey, Professor of Economics at Brunel University pointed out that the growth in education and those staying on past 15 was primarily benefiting the more 'prosperous section of the community' (Vaizey 1968 p352). Bessey discussed the importance of bringing parents into schools; pointing to the UK as being slow to do this. He believed that parents can learn from teachers, and understand the changing curriculum if they are able to meet in more informal after school situations (Bessey 1968)

Consultation though was seen as problematic: Ward for example points to the difficulty in involving teachers in the design process, as they were most often appointed towards the end of the construction of the building. Nothing is said about the involvement of pupils or the local community (Ward 1977).

### 5.4 Summary

The context within which this building programme existed was one of changing education policy and demographics and a requirement for an increase in the existing stock.

The process used to carry out the programme was characterised by a lightweight technical solution to overcome cost and resources issues. It was developed at local authority level with a philosophy of joining together architectural and educational philosophies, creating a typology of open plan layouts that reflected a new style of education. It was supported but not driven by central government.

## **Chapter 5: The post war programme: 1945 to 1975**

Practical problems were quick to emerge with many of the buildings now beyond their lifespan. However, some see the process as leading to innovation and being the great period in school building.

Regeneration and wider outcomes varied and not enough is known on the subject. Towards the end of the period a healthy debate seemed to be emerging into the use of the school in the community which although embedded in educational and architectural thinking and policy was probably cut short by the end of the programme. This was in line with socio-economic theories of the time as links were being made between educational achievement and deprivation.



## Chapter 6: Conclusions

This report has revealed the complexities and difficulties associated with achieving regeneration objectives in new school buildings in terms of little literature available to influence policy as well as the difficulties in linking design to broader outcomes. What has been useful is to draw comparisons between process and outcomes in the programme today and the post war school building era. This chapter draws together the findings of the report, presented in a tabled summary, and suggests recommendations for BSF.

### 6.1 Table of comparisons between the post-war and BSF programmes

This table summarises the key points arising from the report and presents them side by side for both programmes.

Post war period	BSF programme
Large investment in capital and teaching	Greater capital investment
Local authority lead	Central government lead
Public sector leading private sector involvement	Public/private partnership lead
Technical system to overcome cost and resourcing restraints.	Political and organisational system to achieve cost and quality.
Lack of professionals available to carry out programme in early stages.	Lack of skills across industry to achieve regeneration objectives.
Philosophy of innovation and architectural/ educational collaboration	Very fast design process. Lack of joined up thinking between actual designers and educationalists at early stage.
Practical problems in both short and long term in quality of schools caused by low cost techniques.	Problems emerging with design quality, caused by both cost and process.
Community use encouraged in policy and thinking	Community use encouraged in policy and thinking
Some evidence into use by local community.	Some evidence into use by local community.
Links between educational achievement and socio-economic factors identified. Further development cut short by termination of programme?	Complex links between quality, attainment and deprivation. No conclusions drawn.
Architects/ designers playing key roles in local and central government. Good design linked to positive use by community.	Architects/ designers at arms length from development of regeneration issues at all levels, except as advisors to local government policy.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

### 6.2 Lessons for BSF

There are some obvious similarities between the two programmes in terms of size and of a widely used system based approach. Similarly both periods place an emphasis on the use of the school by the local community.

The post war period of school building was played out over a far greater time scale than that of BSF, as is the length of time given to considering and developing aspects of design and its effect on the users and wider community. The strength of local authorities in developing their own systems of design and procurement as well as working closely with architects appeared to encourage innovation and an architectural and educational collaboration that seems not to be occurring in BSF today. It means that wider and less tangible outcomes are not able to flourish through discussion, development and delivery. However, the success of the post war period in achieving positive outcomes for the local area is difficult to ascertain and did not develop sufficiently beyond the 1960s due to a subsequent lack of capital investment in schools.

Attempts to reposition design in the 'value for money' framework may fail as measurement is problematic and if it is to have a chance of success needs to take place over the long term, going beyond the programme itself.

Ideas about regeneration have developed significantly so for example consultation is seen as achievable; in this BSF policy has high aspirations. However, it is difficult to see how this is translating into practice, with a rigid process driven solution that is not encouraging conversations between designers and users. This could lead to missed opportunities and under use by local communities. This is either through a lack of innovation in terms of design possibilities in creating new architecture to embrace these issues, or from simple overlooking of requirements in a briefing system that excludes designers from the early stages of the process.

With these thoughts in mind I have drawn a number of recommendations that could be considered to improve BSF:

We need to think beyond short term spending solutions to a continued and sustained long term investment in our school infrastructure that we can learn from, perhaps through individual capital infrastructure funds that schools can decide to spend on as and when they choose. In that way we can truly allow involvement and control to work at the school and community level.

We need to bring expertise and skills back into our local authorities giving them the strength to lead by the example of good design and practice, such as at Hampshire County Council.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

We need a procurement process that works for all; framework agreements and supply chain management are both positive structures if used well. Both can promote the use of local labour and material resources and can streamline a cumbersome process. We need to end the competitive design process that wastes time and discourages innovation.

We need to regain trust in the architectural profession, who had at least in part have begun to seize the opportunities offered by user and community involvement. Truly good school design that integrates fully with the local community cannot be realised by playing mean with the complex process of making buildings.

We need government to hand the power to teachers, architects and local people to work through solutions themselves. True local design and management of the process will reduce the cost of central bureaucracy.

Only in these ways can schools be designed that will meet the challenges of providing places for our children to learn and thrive, that are truly part of our urban regeneration and fabric of our cities and that can then possibly be given the distinguished label of 'for the future'.

### 6.3 What further research could be done on the subject?

Policy objectives should draw from more extensive research into past experience and the development of the role schools have played in the community. There is evidence of ongoing research in the area that may reach useful conclusions. Further links should be made between the process of building schools and the effect this has over the long term in the broader local context. Answers will not be arrived at immediately: 30 years ago Ward argued 'Suppose that...change in education is not a matter of abandoning the orthodoxy of the last fifty years for that of the next fifty, but is a constant and bewildering process of adaptation and innovation?' (Ward 1976 px). We still have much to learn.

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## Appendix A

Interviews were held with:

**Laura Marr** is a project architect and Director at Edward Cullinan Architects. The practice have been involved in a number of primary school projects in the 1970s and 1980s and more recently on the Greenwich Millennium School and now a BSF bid in Bradford, both of which Marr has worked on.

**Helen Roberts** is an Associate architect at Feilden Clegg Bradley who are well respected in the field of education design and have won Education Architects of the Year in the 2005 Building Design Awards. They have designed a number of City Academies and PFI schools. Roberts is project architect for the St Mary Magdalene Academy in Islington.

**Lee Bennett** is a Design Director at Sheppard Robson Architects and is responsible for the overseeing of up to ten projects at one time. At the time of interview he was coordinating the BSF bid for two Lambeth schools.

**Richard Gooden** is Assistant Head of Architecture at Hampshire County Council and oversees all projects carried out by the 140 strong department. Hampshire County Council are perhaps the most well respected local authority architect department in the country, of the few that still remain. The department was run for many years by Colin Stansfield Smith. HCC have built many award winning primary and secondary schools.

**Elanor Warwick** at CABE has been responsible for a number of research projects, and was involved with producing the report *Assessing Secondary School Design Quality* (CABE 2006).

**Sharon Wright** at Creative Wit and previously Schoolworks has extensive experience of consultation on school design and has been employed by both private and public sector organisation.

**Sadiq Mir** is part of a team at Kings College London looking at trends in education and gentrification in East London. He is an outsider to the BSF programme but was interviewed for his knowledge of social class and education and the role schools play.

## **Appendix B: Interview questions and structure**

The interviews held with the first three architects were very structured and I ran through a list of questions, as I was clear what I wanted to discuss with each of them. I recorded and transcribed each fully after the interview. The questions I asked developed as I learnt more about the particular problems they were encountering.

Interviewing Richard Gooden, Elanor Warwick, Sharon Wright and Sadiq Mir was less straightforward as their experience fell at least partly outside mine. Therefore I introduced my research subject and began by taking notes on the work they were doing before allowing the interview to develop in a more natural fashion.

### **Laura Marr: Project Architect at Edward Cullinan Architects**

1. Can you tell me how long you have been qualified and how long you have been working here?
2. Can you describe the history of schools projects in this practice since it was founded in 1967? Which ones have you worked on?
3. Can you describe your knowledge of the projects that you haven't worked on and your experience on the projects that you have?
4. I am looking at urban regeneration as a facet of school design. What is your understanding of what urban regeneration means?
5. What do you understand from this definition of urban regeneration? 'comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change.'
6. Have you been involved with any projects that you would describe as urban regeneration? To what extent did design have an impact?
7. Can you discuss the nature of the BSF programme and what you know about it? Why do you think its happening?
8. What do you think are the wider problems of the programme?
9. How much and which literature have you seen that can support you in designing schools?



## **Appendix B: Interview questions and structure**

10. What are the problems for you as an architect designing schools?
11. What do you think is seen as the current teaching philosophy, and to what extent is this reflected in the way architects design schools?
12. Do you think the programme is capable of playing a part in urban regeneration? Do you think it should? What is the role that design can play in urban regeneration?
13. And are you as an architect able to maximise the opportunities of the programme to bring about the changes described or are you hindered from doing so? If so how?

### **Helen Roberts. Project Architect at Feilden Clegg Bradley.**

#### **Introduction**

1. First of all I like you to introduce yourself. Can you tell me how long you have been working as an architect and how long you have been working in this practice?
2. Could you give me a view of the type of work the practice does. How much experience does it have working on 'regeneration' projects and also on schools projects?
3. And can you tell me which projects you have worked on that you would describe as regeneration and which projects you have worked on that are school projects?

#### **Regeneration and schools**

I want to use this interview to talk about the idea of regeneration focussing on the opportunities that might arise through rebuilding schools.

A popular definition of regeneration is:

*'comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change.'*

4. With that in mind, how far do you think that a new school building can go in addressing issues of urban regeneration?
  - Is there a limit; are there things it can't do?
  - Are there other issues that it doesn't begin to address but that it should?

## **Appendix B: Interview questions and structure**

- Is there a conflict between these ideas and the vision for the school, or are there mutual benefits?
  - How much do architects need to understand or become involved with these issues, if at all?
5. In the school project/s that you have worked on, do you think you have been able to tackle any of the issues you mention?
- Do you think there was a successful and lasting outcome to your involvement or the work of others in tackling the issue of regeneration?
  - How far has the process of design and procurement helped or hindered your work in this area?
  - How much external support from publications or courses were you able to use to help you?
6. Thinking particularly about user and community involvement, do you think this occurred on your project?
- If so, to what extent were you involved?
  - Were there any problems?
  - What have been the benefits?
7. Do you think it is possible to articulate the impact that good or bad design of a building can have on the local area and local community?
- To what extent were you able to promote the benefits of good design (or not) on your project?
  - Were you helped in this by any external material or advice?
  - Do you think the design was compromised in any way by people or by the process? If so, how do you think this could have been avoided?
8. How much has the project been able to address the issues of energy use and climate change?
- Do you think that these play a part in regeneration?
9. If you had the chance to carry out the project again, in what way if at all, would you change it to increase the regeneration benefits without compromising the design?
- Think perhaps from a personal perspective too!
  - What do you think are the obstacles to your suggestions?

### **Lee Bennett: Design Director at Sheppard Robson Architects**

I sent these questions to Bennett to consider before the interview.

## Appendix B: Interview questions and structure

*Definition of urban regeneration: 'comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change.'*

The Building Schools for the Future programme is the largest public sector building programme undertaken since the 1960s and will offer the architectural profession the opportunity to work in an area where they have had little involvement in recent years.

Looking at the programme's agenda for wider community use, for example through the 'Extended Schools' policy we can see a commitment to what can be seen as urban regeneration.

How can we compare the last post-war wave of school buildings to this one, to see how the idea of community use has changed and alongside this the role of the architect? In both instances is it possible to see how each process may help or hinder?

How far is it possible then for architects to engage with these issues and design schools which benefit their local communities?

How do architects see the importance of their role in the projects in terms of regeneration, and what involvement are they able to have?

I'd like to ask you some questions about how your practice is involved in the BSF programme and then specifically whether so far you have been able to tackle regeneration.

- First of all how is Sheppard Robson involved in BSF and were you involved in any other schools projects beforehand?
- What has been your personal role?
- How do you see any of the projects being able to tackle aspects of regeneration? Do you think the BSF process, or the people involved are able to help or hinder you in this?
- Do you think the profession ought to be engaging in the issues of the wider community from an architectural perspective, and do you think that they have something specific to offer? Do you think that there may be a lack of expertise and knowledge within the industry and if so what are the reasons for this?

## **Appendix B: Interview questions and structure**

- In your opinion do you see in the programme a distinction between the perhaps less tangible aspects of the project such as 'good design' and 'wider community benefit' and those aspects that are more easily measurable such as environmental performance, accommodation and cost?
- In what way could or should the programme, the profession and the construction industry change to better tackle urban regeneration in our schools programme?