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Public Lectures in Regeneration 2007

“New Islington – a short story about why we should throw away the rule book”

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Deputy Chief Executive of Urban Splash

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Staffordshire University

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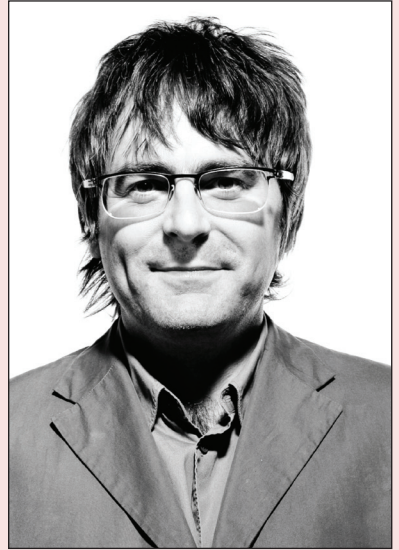
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Nick Johnson

Bolton born Nick Johnson (41) is Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Development at award-winning property developer Urban Splash. A chartered surveyor by profession, he has always been interested in design in the built environment.

Nick has worked with Urban Splash for 12 years, first as a consultant and latterly as a director. He is currently responsible for over £150m of development projects including New Islington in Manchester – designated as Britain's third Millennium Community – where he works with various architects, from Alsop and Simpson through to new architects from across the UK. Nick is also working on the regeneration of Sheffield's Park Hill with architects Hawkins/Brown and Studio Egret West.



Nick is chair of Marketing Manchester, a trustee of CUBE (Manchester's 'Architecture Centre'), a director of the Castlefield Gallery – one of Manchester's leading contemporary galleries - and regional representative for CABE, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. In 2007 he was also appointed as Distinguished Visiting Fellow in Architecture at Yale.

Before joining Urban Splash as a director, Nick was a self-employed consultant, specialising in development advice on many regeneration projects across the north west. His clients included Urban Splash, Castlefield Estates, Hulme Regeneration, Manchester City Council and English Partnerships. His practice, Johnson UDC, was part of the team led by EDAW to assist with the master planning of Manchester in the wake of the IRA bomb in 1996. Manchester City Council retained the practice to assist in the city's £20m Millennium bid. The bid proved successful with the full amount awarded, resulting in the creation of the landmark URBIS.

Urban Splash has established a reputation as a pioneer of urban regeneration and an advocate of modern design. It has won Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Awards

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for Architecture for all its major developments and, in 2002, the company became the first private property developer to receive the prestigious RIBA Client of the Year accolade.

In the last 13 years, from a standing start and through the re-investment of profits, Urban Splash has created over 3,000 new jobs, 1,000 new homes and a million square feet of commercial space.

Urban Splash is currently investing £1 billion in regeneration projects across the country including: Castlefield, Manchester; New Islington - the third Millennium Community at east Manchester; Altrincham, Cheshire; Ropewalks, Liverpool City Centre; Royal William Yard, Plymouth; Fort Dunlop, Birmingham; Lister Mills, Bradford and the Midland Hotel, Morecambe.

For more information: www.urbansplash.co.uk

New Islington – Manchester’s Millennium Community

New Islington, Manchester, is one of seven Millennium Communities set up by national regeneration agency English Partnerships. The 30 acre site, just east of Manchester city centre, is being radically and strategically transformed in line with an ambitious vision from distinguished modernist architect Will Alsop.

The result of collaboration between English Partnerships, Urban Splash, New East Manchester and Manchester Methodist Housing Group, the scheme will employ world-leading architecture to create a new canal and water park, over 1700 new homes, office space, a school, a health clinic, shops, bars and restaurants.

Work started on the new canals and water park in 2003. Historically, the area housed a canal network serving the huge Victorian mills, but during the 20th century the canals were filled in and the mills demolished, leaving a legacy of chemicals and metals in the ground. At New Islington sustainability has started literally from the ground up. Around 100,000 tons of land has been decontaminated and re-used at the site to help create the new canals and islands.

The water park is now physically complete and includes an orchard, Scots pines, public spaces, seating areas and several special features to encourage wildlife. The park is currently maturing in readiness for opening to the public in 2008.

The first new homes in New Islington were completed in spring 2006. Islington Square was designed by FAT (Fashion Architecture Taste), working alongside the current residents. Twenty three houses

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make up the first phase of social housing, which is managed by Manchester Methodist Housing Association. Following a RIBA competition, FAT was selected unanimously by the residents and New Islington partners to design the scheme, which has since received great national and international acclaim.

In March 2007, residents moved into the second phase of social housing, Guest Street. Designed by deMetz Forbes Knight (dMFK), who were also selected through a RIBA competition, Guest Street is markedly different to Islington Square. A contemporary interpretation of the traditional terraced house, it comprises 14 robust, light, and comfortable houses and features sedum planted roofing – a first for a UK social housing scheme. Guest Street has been designed to receive an EcoHomes ‘Excellent’ Rating, in addition to a number of other energy-reducing features, including micro Combined Heat and Power (CHP).

The first homes for public sale at New Islington are 142 apartments within a scheme known as Chips. This is the first UK residential scheme designed by Will Alsop and the properties are already sold, with completion scheduled for 2008.

Development partners Taylor Woodrow will soon start on site with its scheme ‘Botanic’, designed by Liverpool based architects shedkm. Botanic features 200 residential apartments and ground floor commercial space, built by Taylor Woodrow’s homebuilding brand Bryant. The development launch is planned for later this year, with first residents expected to move in by early 2009.

Overlooking the new water park, a state-of-the art £6.5m health centre on Old Mill Street will replace the current Ancoats clinic and house two of the area’s key GP practices. Designed and built by construction company Laing O’Rourke, in partnership with Manchester architects Stephenson Bell, the centre features a minor injuries facility, family planning, podiatry, mental health services and a pharmacy. The centre is expected to open in the autumn of 2007.

As part of a remarkable competition aimed at creating a unique new street - named Tutti Frutti - self builders, architects and budding property developers were invited to design and build their own homes in New Islington. Following a London launch in June, 20 model entries were received and the judges were so impressed with the quality of design that each was deemed a winner. As such, they are entitled to purchase the plot of land and build their home on it. Prices for the plots (approximately 15 x 5 metres) start at £160,000 though the house considered the overall winner will receive the plot free – courtesy of Urban Splash.

Open architecture competitions have attracted some of the most exciting design teams from across the world to New Islington. Tutti Frutti is the seventh competition since the project was announced in 2000 and the second of three open competitions planned for the project this year.

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