

Blog Post :

Meet the designers event

At the beginning of March, we ran two events that enabled us to continue the conversation about the future of the square by talking to residents, workers, families and visitors who use the square to help finalise the brief for the redesign, and to introduce the recently appointed design practice, Tonkin Liu.

The events were attended by 114 people and allowed us to have some really good discussions with neighbours, visitors and fans of Grosvenor Square.

Tonkin Liu presented a selection of their past work and some of the curiosities that inspire them as they start thinking about this project. Anna, Mike and Matt from Tonkin Liu really enjoyed meeting people and hearing their ideas - and are looking forward to working with everyone over the next year!

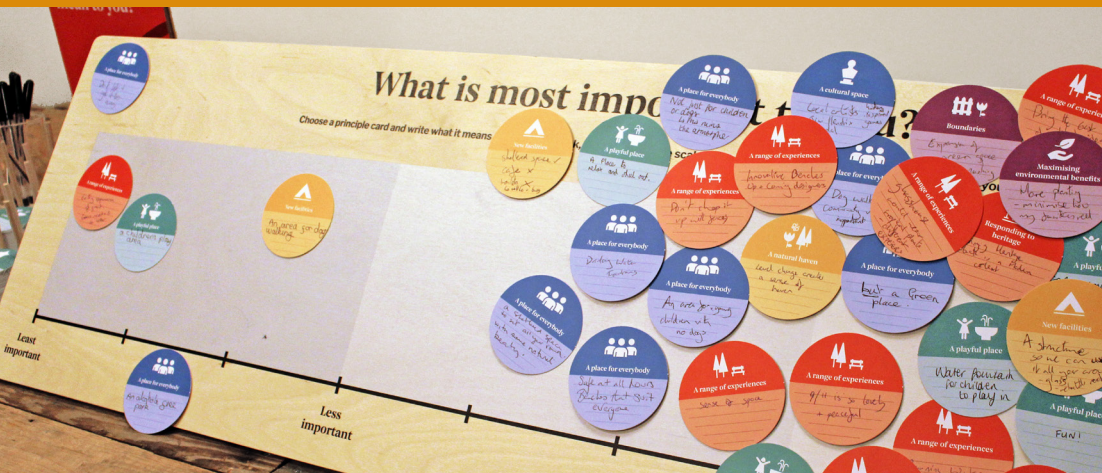
We had three main topics that we wanted to talk to people about:

- 1. Principles**
- 2. How would you like to be involved?**
- 3. Exploring the Contrasts**



Principles

Following our initial engagement, we presented 11 principles for the re-design and asked people to both prioritise them and tell us what they mean to them. These principles will form the heart of the Tonkin Liu brief and we want them to represent a shared vision so this feedback was really important.



Overall, people told us that the most important principles were “A place for everybody”, “A range of experiences”, and “A playful space”, with “New facilities” and “A natural haven” also really popular choices.

Whilst there were some back-and-forth within these topics (there always is), there was general agreement on a new Grosvenor Square that welcomed and provided for all, with distinct areas to allow this including a variety of interesting planting, but that maintained a sense of space, provided sheltered seating and possibly well designed public toilets and a cafe/multi-use room.

“Value everyone’s contributions.”

“A dynamic place, finding new things each season.”

“Comfortable seating. Disguised toilets with architectural flair or historical connections.”

“Not a set playground but fun corner.”

“Select plants cleverly + unique / spectacular”

“Something amazing to connect to nature. A story. Must be MAGIC.”

How would you like to be involved?

We want to make sure that the programme of engagement we plan is something that everyone really wants to get involved in, so this was great to help to us.

There was most interest in talks, drop in exhibitions and walkabouts, with a bit less uptake in workshops and digital engagement. Horticulture was the very top of the list of things people wanted to talk about, so we will definitely be exploring this in more detail!

Over the next few weeks, we are going to be developing a programme of activities that will suit a range of interests and ways of participating, but we will also need to look at new and innovative ways of having these conversations, as we all deal with new ways of interacting with each other in the current circumstances.

Tell us your preferred way to get involved [here](https://www.grosvenorsquare.org).



Exploring the contrasts

The final activity was to explore the contrasting ambitions for the square and start to think about the range of experiences the square may need to accommodate.



We asked people to place a token on a spectrum between the two ideas and tell us why you chose this location, which allows us to build a sense of the qualities people want to experience in the square, and where the key contrasts may be.

There was lots of interest in the “Peaceful - Animated”, “Thoughtful - Playful” and “Modest - Spectacular” spectrums, with people sharing their thoughts on creating a balance of quiet and active spaces, showing that they really cared about bio-diverse planting and landscaping, and telling us that they want the horticulture in Grosvenor Square to be spectacular, mould-breaking and “wow!” We heard that any events would need to be considerate to the surrounding communities and keep the square open and accessible to all.

“Creating the wow moments.”

“A creative bio-diverse space with the capacity to surprise.”

“Peaceful – as a tonic. Tasteful cafe – affordable. Tonic & sanctuary from hustle & bustle locally..”

“Playful to bring life”

“Tranquil relaxing space away from the hubbub of city.”

“Seasonal amazing planting,”

“Tursts of animation – not all the time.”



All of this was really interesting and enlightening, and raised a lot of great points that we, Tonkin Liu and make:good, will continue to address and develop as we continue working towards what you all want the redesigned Grosvenor Square to be.

In the next month, we will be sharing a programme of activities, starting with digital and online activities, so if you want to keep in touch, [sign up to our mailing list here!](#)

