1. INTRODUCTION

The word profession is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as ‘(a) paid occupation, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification’. The validity of a profession is ultimately driven by the purpose of such a profession and the contribution that such a profession can make to its client (and the greater good of society). With the current debate around the professionalization of urban design as a registered profession, this paper endeavours to investigate and evaluate the value (contribution) of urban design.

The purpose of this research paper is to serve as a foundation for further research in this field as well as a reference document for urban designers in the South African context to endorse the profession and the valuable contributions thereof; to establish an awareness of urban design and the competitive edge that can be gained by clients, investors and developers.

Throughout the research it has become evident that good urban design makes a very valuable contribution to the economic, social and environmental context. These contributions range from improving returns on investments, helping to deliver improved working and living conditions, increased sales values, increasing workforce productivity and producing a regeneration dividend while poor design has several negative impacts on the public environment, limiting investment opportunities; physically and economically disconnecting the marginalised from economic opportunities and the diminishing of social value through poorly designed public space (CABE, 2003).

The research project commissioned by CABE and DETR to examine the value added by good urban design (CABE, 2003) was used as a point of departure for this project. The aim of this project was not to duplicate the
efforts of the commission research report but rather constructively build upon the research and investigate ways of using a tool to evaluate and improve the contribution of urban design within the context of South Africa.

This report includes the identification of the key research questions, the research methodology employed to investigate these research questions and the related findings gathered from the literature reviewed as well as the interviews conducted. The report concludes with the main findings and recommendations for future research.

2. ISSUES/PROBLEMS

The research was based on the following key areas of investigation:

- Defining the client
- Defining urban design
- Defining value
- The implementation of urban design

For the purpose of this investigation, good urban design is measured in the value that can be gained rather than an aesthetic appreciation. It consequently becomes important to identify who these affected parties or stakeholders are. Each stakeholder will have a different view on value related to his or her possible returns, benefits or advantages.

DEFINING THE CLIENT:

The Oxford Dictionary defines a client as ‘A person or organization using the services of a lawyer or other professional person or company’. The term originally denoted a person under the protection and patronage of another, hence a person ‘protected’ by a legal adviser.

The above definition implies that the professional person is responsible for the ‘protection’ of the client and therefore to have his or her best interests at heart. The ethics of the profession is for that reason integral when the concept of ‘protection’ is regarded as a measurement of the professionalism and value contribution of an urban designer. There are various stakeholders involved in the process and production of urban design. The research included the following research questions:

- *Who are these various stakeholders?*
- *What are their 'interests' to be protected by the professional (urban designer)?*
- *Who benefits from good urban design?*

DEFINING URBAN DESIGN:
In order to understand what urban designers do, and why their services add value to the public realm it is important as a profession to define what urban design is. The research included the following research questions:

- What is urban design?
- what is meant by good urban design?

**DEFINING VALUE:**

The definition of value according to the Oxford dictionary is: *The regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something; The material or monetary worth of something; The worth of something compared to the price paid or asked for it.*

- Does better urban design add value and if so how?
- How can the value and quality of urban design be measured?
- How can greater value be released?

**IMPLEMENTATION OF URBAN DESIGN:**

In order for urban design to become a relevant profession and make a valuable contribution, it needs to be implemented. Without implementation the profession becomes an academic exercise and the designs decorative wallpaper. The research questions included:

- What are the barriers to realising enhanced design value?
- Do you have any particular projects implemented by your practice which could be used as case studies for future research on the value and contribution of urban design?

**3. METHODOLOGY FOR RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH AIMS:**

With the current debate around the professionalisation of urban design as a registered profession, this paper investigates and evaluates the value (contribution) of urban design as a profession and practice.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**
The research project commissioned by CABE and DETR to examine the value added by good urban design (CABE, 2003) was used as a point of departure for this project. The aim of this project was not to duplicate the efforts of the commission research report but rather constructively build upon the research and investigate approaches to evaluate and improve the contribution of urban design within the context of South Africa.

The issues and problems related to measuring the value of urban design have been distilled into research topics with selected research questions and sub questions. These topics and questions provided the foundation for the research framework which was constructed to include a literature review and interviews with practising urban designers and other professionals in the industry. The framework provided a masterplan for the research which led to findings and identified areas for future research.

The research framework consisted of the following questions related to the value of urban design as reflected in the research framework below.

**RESEARCH FRAMEWORK:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES AND PROBLEMS</th>
<th>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Defining the client</em></td>
<td><em>How would you define your clients?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Defining urban design</em></td>
<td><em>Who benefits from good urban design and in what way?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Defining value</em></td>
<td><em>Who incurs the costs of urban design?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Implementation of urban design</em></td>
<td><em>Who are these various stakeholders?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>What are their interests to be protected by the professional (urban designer)?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>What is urban design?</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>What is meant by good urban design?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Does better urban design add value and if so how?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>How can the value and quality of urban design be measured?</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>How can greater value be released?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>What are the barriers to realising enhanced design value?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Do you have any particular projects implemented by your practice which could be used as case studies for future research on the value and contribution of urban design?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**INTERVIEWS**
- Gary White
- Gerrit Jorden
- Jon Busser
- Nita Mammon
- Khali Jacobs
- Anton Conville
- Neil Schoof
- Francois Bredenkamp

**LITERATURE**
- Barnes, Y. (2013) THE VALUE OF URBANISM.
- Campana, M. (2013) Does urban design add value?
- Thomas, L and Watson, G.B. (2013) DO WE KNOW THE VALUE OF URBAN DESIGN?

**CONCLUSION AND PROPOSED WAY FORWARD**

**PROPOSED FUTURE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH OUTCOME**

The research produced insight into various aspects contributing to the value of urban design. These findings are discussed in the research findings section of the report. The study further provides a platform for future detailed
research and the application and evaluation of South African case studies to demonstrate the benefits. Further research can also be conducted to investigate or produce:

- a delineation and definition of urban design to reflect the broad scope of the discipline
- an analytical tool to evaluate and recommend good quality urban design
- a tool or measurement system to determine value identification in terms of economic, social and environmental benefits through the case studies

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The research project commissioned by CABE and DETR to examine the value added by good urban design was used as a point of departure for this project. The document therefore serves as one of the main references which formed the foundation of the literature review. Other literature included articles by Barnes, Y. (2013) The value of urbanism; Brown, C. 2013. A Developer’s Perspective; Carmona, M. (2013) Does urban design add value?; Thomas, L and Watson, GB. (2013) Do we know the value of urban design?. The various findings in the literature are discussed below under the research topics and related research questions.

The literature indicated that good design brings very specific economic, social and environmental benefits to a range of stakeholders, by among other improving returns on investments, helping to deliver improved working and living conditions, increased sales values, increasing workforce productivity and producing a regeneration dividend. It became apparent throughout the research that urban design is in need of empirical results to emphasise and establish the value contribution of the discipline socially, economically and environmentally.

DEFINING THE CLIENT:

From the problem statement, emphasis was placed on the relationship between the client, the professional and the services exchanged between these parties. It was also noted that part of the professionals responsibilities and duties are to ensure that either the client or his/her assets are 'protected'. It consequently became important to understand who this client is and exactly what his/her assets comprise of. The relevant research questions included:

- **Who are these various stakeholders and what are their 'interests' to be protected by the professional (urban designer)?**
- **Who benefits from good urban design?**

Throughout the research it became evident that the stakeholders can be divided into two predominant categories - the public sector and the private sector. CABE (2013) illustrated that the public sector's role may be progressively directed to the background while the private sector has largely started taking over the development of buildings and public spaces. Nevertheless, the stakeholders identified throughout the literature review included the following groups:

- Investors
- Developers
- Public authorities
Designers or other professionals
Land owners
Home owners
Business owners
Occupiers
Local authorities
Local communities
Everyday users and society as a whole

Urban development affects the various stakeholders in different ways. Each of these stakeholders have different interests, motivations and expectations in and of the urban realm.

'The market required to support a potential development consists of the population seeking services and their capacity to pay for them. The question the developer must ask is: ‘Is the market large enough to support this development?’ The question the public sector asks is: “How is the public interest to be furthered by this development?” (Lang, 1994:375 as referenced in CABE, 2003)

Thomas and Watson (2013) review the value of urban design for different stakeholder groups including the development industry, property investors, land owners, home owners, local authorities, other professionals, local communities and neighbours, businesses, and the natural environment.

Urban design adds value to the development industry by producing a distinguished product which is either different in design or simply of higher quality. This differentiation leads to increased sales values, shorter sale cycles and improved saleability, which enables developers to develop more with improved cash flow. Urban design becomes a key role player to ensure appropriate place-making and sustainable communities are developed in line with the increased delivery of homes.

Property investors and land owners gain from long term property value and increases through good urban design. The neighbourhood and street layouts play a far bigger role in the long term than the design of the individual home. The larger scale of the fine-grain mixed-use neighbourhood becomes far more valuable than the smaller components of work, retail or housing spaces (which can be replaced much easier). Thomas & Watson (2013: 50) quote Chris Brown when he says that ‘the social well-being and physical health engendered in these places is a significant factor in their own success’.

Homeowners benefit in the same way as urbanism remains the significant contributor to better quality places, more adaptable homes, and consumer choice.

Thomas & Watson describes urban design as about problem-solving, lateral-thinking about the built environment, and how places and facilities are actually used. Good design is most successful when it is invisible, understanding and addressing needs effectively and with ‘delight’ (2013: 50).

Local authorities can greatly benefit from the range of economic advantages associated with urban design, in particularly through the contribution of lateral thinking and alternative views on problem solving.

Urban design is about the coordination of various disciplines and establishing the vision of the greater plan. Other professionals can benefit from the input of an urban designer to synchronize and harmonize the collaboration between the different disciplines which would otherwise have functioned in isolation, an urban designer creates the opportunity for the team to develop for the greater common good.
Local communities and neighbours can be empowered through urban design to stand up for the greater common good, it becomes a shared platform that all of them can relate to and become active participants for positive social change in their immediate environments.

The quality design and understanding of the everyday experiences of society contributes significantly to the value added by urban designers for businesses. The insight and comprehension of the effect of street widths, block sizes and links to other spaces among other have a definitive effect on the success and resilience or failure of businesses and their location.

The urban designer further possesses the ability to have a positive effect on the natural environment by appropriate urban design and the integration of green infrastructure. The benefits range from carbon storage, flood mitigation, urban cooling to enhanced property values.

The benefits of urban design is directly associated with the value of urban design. The value of urban design is directly related to the sustainability of urban design. As discussed earlier, the components of sustainability comprises of a balance between the social, economic and environmental factors. The various stakeholders have different focuses and priorities relating to these three components.

CABE (2003:26) unpacked the financial tangibles and intangibles related to the value of urban design as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Value</th>
<th>Social Value</th>
<th>Environmental Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential for higher land values</td>
<td>Regenerative potential (encouraging other development)</td>
<td>Reduced Energy consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher sale values</td>
<td>Better security and less crime</td>
<td>Reduced resource/land consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased funding potential (public and private)</td>
<td>Less pollution (better health)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher rental returns</td>
<td>Higher property prices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased asset value (on which to borrow)</td>
<td>Less stress (better health)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced running costs</td>
<td>Reduced travel costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of value/income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced maintenance costs (over life)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better re-sale values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy maintenance if high quality materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced security expenditure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced running costs (energy usage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced public expenditure (on health care/crime prevention/urban management and maintenance)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased economic viability for neighbouring uses/opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased local tax revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced travel costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial tangibles</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential for greater security of investment depending on market</td>
<td>Reduced public/private discord (more time for positive planning)</td>
<td>Less environmental damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quicker permissions (reduced cost, less uncertainty)</td>
<td>Greater accessibility to other uses/facilities</td>
<td>An ecologically diverse and supportive environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinctiveness (greater product differentiation)</td>
<td>Increased public support (less opposition)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows difficult sites to be</td>
<td>Increased cultural vitality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This research does not include the financial aspects of urban design, but it is important acknowledge when considering the financial impact in relation to value estimating, that the costs should also be part of the equation. CABE (2003:27) listed their view on the economic, social and environmental costs involved with good urban design.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Costs</th>
<th>Social Costs</th>
<th>Environmental Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential for reduced land values</td>
<td>Higher public investment in design – planning advice, guidance, award schemes, etc.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher risk if increased development costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher infrastructure costs (public space and social infrastructure)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher construction costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher design costs (professional fees)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater capital investment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued private sector responsibility for public/private spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher rents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher management fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased design time (not always recognised in fees)</td>
<td>Risk of no development if design standards demanded are too high</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More complex management if mixed use development</td>
<td>Prospect of gentrification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DEFINING URBAN DESIGN:

Urban design is a broad term and profession, and the delineation thereof poses room for further research. It was however important as part of this research paper to gain insight into various definitions of urban design in order to comprehend the scope, value and meaning of the profession.
**CABE** discusses the definition of urban design by starting to exclaim that there are numerous definitions, with one of the simplest being a definition quoted by Cowan (2000) as ‘the art of making places’. CABE identified the most significant definition as being the one found in Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1), central UK government's attempt to define the scope of the subject area. It states that ‘... urban design should be taken to mean the relationship between different buildings; the relationship between buildings and the streets, squares, parks and waterways and other spaces which make up the public domain; the nature and quality of the public domain itself; the relationship of one part of a village, town or city with other parts; and the patterns of movement and activity which are thereby established: in short, the complex relationships between all the elements of built and unbuilt space’.

With the above in mind, CABE (2003: 18) attempts to summarise urban design as consisting of the following:

- all the constituent physical parts of the built environment to which the public have access
- the way these parts fit together to create networks of space and activity
- the functioning of those space networks
- their role as a social venue.

**UDISA** (The Urban Design Institute of South Arica) defines urban design as the following: ‘Urban design is both a specialised and an integrating profession. The unique focus of urban design lies in the understanding of three-dimensional form and space in cities and settlements, and the relationship of this form to land, context, society and history. This understanding is firmly rooted in an awareness of nature, landscape and urbanism and consideration of the needs and dynamics of society, economy and space. Urban design is as much process as product and the implementation of urban design proposals require knowledge and skill in decision-making techniques and structures. The art of urban design, then, lies in shaping the interaction between people and places, environment and urban form, nature and built fabric and influencing processes that lead to the development of successful cities, towns and villages. Integration with the complementary fields of city planning, architecture and civil engineering is essential for the practice of urban design. The role of urban design in synthesising various fields also requires strong connections with other specialist fields in the natural and built environment.

**The City of Cape Town** (2013) defines Urban Design as ‘...concerned with the process of creating holistic and sustainable human settlements. It is a practice which straddles the disciplines of spatial planning, architecture, landscape architecture, road and street design and environmental design. It is focussed on the shaping of the built environment in response to the natural, physical, social and economic factors which influence the form of human settlement. It seeks to add value, through the medium of design, for the good of the environment in its totality and for all who inhabit it, specifically the old, the young, the disabled and the poor whose ability to tap into the benefits and opportunities of urban living is limited.

Urban design applies equally to the organisation of urban, rural, natural and cultural landscapes. It operates across scales, concerning itself as much with overall urban structure of the city as it does with the interface of individual buildings and the detailing of materials. It’s as much about getting the small, individual instances of good design right as it is about managing and guiding the processes of urban formation over time.

Urban design is about the process of place making. It is rooted in social practice, time and space. It is through the application of design that the qualities of a place are transformed, given purpose, become relevant, and have meaning. In this regard the quality of the public domain is of paramount importance because people’s quality of
life and the identity of the city is informed and transformed by these qualities which they experience on a daily basis.

What distinguishes urban design from other development related activities is that it seeks to introduce the creative process of spatial design into land development processes. It is focused on how the design process and the arrangement of built form can enhance the public environment and the interface between the public and the private realms.

Urban design is not about the production of static solutions produced by a single person or one master mind. It is instead a collaborative and fluid process undertaken by a range of role players and professionals in response to real and perceived needs and opportunities which change over time.

The **Urban Design Group** in the United Kingdom defines it as '...the process of shaping the physical setting for life in cities, towns and villages. It is the art of making places. It involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, and establishing the processes that make successful development possible'.

The **Urban Design Group** promotes the importance of urban design as: '...key to making places that are successful both socially and economically, good to live in, and attractive to visit. Urban design is essential in creating community identity. It effective planning in the widest sense, and it can help to deliver better public services. It also helps to achieve value for money in new developments, and to make good use of scarce resources. Careful urban design may contribute to a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour.'

**DEFINING VALUE:**

'Internationally it has been recognised that design, and more specifically urban design, can add value to development processes and play a positive role in urban transformation.' (City of Cape Town, 2013)

The definition of value according to the Oxford dictionary is: 'The regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something; The material or monetary worth of something; The worth of something compared to the price paid or asked for it.'

In order to determine the true value of urban design, it should be measured economically, socially and environmentally. Each of these components will represent different aspects to different stakeholders. The value of urban design is extremely important for the future of the profession. Without substantiation, the profession will only be valuable to those who already know the value (practising urban designers) rather than those who can drive the implementation thereof and commission the execution.

Chris Brown (2013) unpacks various components and stakeholders related to the value of urban design in his article titled 'A developer's perspective'. Where value is often associated with financial benefits, Brown emphasises that good urban maximises both the non-tradable and the tradable value. Where he classifies non-tradable value to include elements such as the ‘joy of knowing your neighbours, the mental health benefits of natural environments, or the physical health benefits of clean air' (2013: 6).

As illustrated in the article by Yolande Barnes (2013), ‘The value of urbanism’, the neighbourhood plays a significant role in people’s satisfaction and overall enjoyment of their everyday lives. The classic realtors approach to property value, 'location, location, location', involves more than the physical positioning of the
property. The location of property is be measured both in relation to physical amenities but also in the pleasure related to the surrounding environment which the inhabitants experience.

Carmona (2013) rightfully accentuates, the issue of the contribution and value of urban design is not debateable among the practising urban designers and urbanists in general. The issue however lies with those who need to make the financial investment in urban design (both in consultants fees and in implementation). Carmona goes as far as to say that we as a collective urban design community have failed to make the case for urban design.

The argument for illustrating and defending the value of urban design is twofold. On the one hand the value contribution can ensure better designed and developed cities and public spaces for all, with the financial, social and environmental benefits associated. On the other hand, it is important to protect the interest and future existence of the urban designer as a professional, by ensuring the profession is valid and important and that the public understands that. Carmona (2013) emphasises the problem by highlighting issues in the United Kingdom such as the absence of a statutory position for urban design in their governance systems (only design as part of planning and highways), and the fact that urban design is exceedingly marginalised as it remains to be regarded as a luxury, ‘nice to have’ if budgets permit.

Carmona (2013) argues that there are four crucial steps towards demonstrating and substantiating the value of urban design. These include econometric evidence (proving the direct link between higher value and return on investment), structural evidence (structural properties of the urban environment related to urban form, land uses, job opportunities etc), experiential evidence (user experience and satisfaction), process related evidence (better outcomes from a more coordinated design process).

CABE started with a study to determine and calculate the financial benefits of good urban design with the research touching on the delivery of higher capital and rental returns on investment, more lettable area, reduced energy and management costs, and occupiers reporting a more productive and contented workforce. This form of empirical research however requires sufficient funding and availability of information.

Carmona concludes with the remark that urban design could benefit considerably from empirical evidence regarding its contribution and value for it is currently mostly involved with subjective perceptions and intangible dimensions of space.

It is clear from all the literature that the future and value association of urban design is in the hands of the urban designers to prove. The evidence of profitability, increased pleasure and land value along with environmental value is yet to be empirically explored and proven. As Brown (2013:6) states: ‘If we can establish the financial value of urban design, and find ways to make the non-financial value relevant to developers, then we can start to influence behaviour’.

How can the value and quality of urban design be measured?

Barnes, Y. (2013) investigates and discusses the interaction between the commercial sector of the building industry and urban design, within a global context.

Research in the UK suggests that people value their neighbourhood (something different from community) as the most important in their lives. Everything from street cafes to safe environments to good schools fall under the definition of
neighbourhood. These high quality neighbourhoods indicate higher land values than directly comparable standardised developments in the same areas.

Barnes highlights that the higher land value is calculated on the total development value including public spaces (not the areas of individual houses as in standard practice). This leads to value added by the total development and best use of land as a whole, rather than individual plots.

As discussed by the various authors, the value of urban design goes far beyond the design of individual houses. The value of urban design is empirically demonstrated through a study conducted in London which found a direct correlation between ease of movement (connectivity and permeability) and property values, while unconnected neighbourhoods indicated lower property values, proving that neighbourhood and street design can be more important to value than the design of individual buildings.

Barnes continues to unpack how place is constructed of more than just linkages and density ratios, and how the finer grain of a neighbourhood influences the land values and perceptions of the place. These include the local florist, corner shop and the local cafe as examples, all within walking distances of the residents domestic lives. These are often found in older more established neighbourhoods and become scarce in new developments. The messiness that grows over time is difficult to replicate and are often omitted to create clean and uncomplicated places, losing some of the character associated with older neighbourhoods.

Barnes discuss how the land value system (measuring the land value of the individual property rather than the area as a whole) becomes part of the problem in measuring the success or financial benefits of sustainable urbanism. While the real value as measured in the neighbourhood satisfaction becomes visible and relevant on street level and in the public sphere.

The key characteristics important to people about where they live, putting neighbourhood first. (Barnes, 2013: 4)

Barnes continues to question the way value is measured and associated with the built environment. She explains that foreign investment is attracted to London partially because the city's DNA, its fundamental form, infrastructure and
layout as a city. Land values are further increased through the qualitative and softer dimensions which makes a city such as a strong economy, good governance, culture and a great vibrancy.

Place-making is therefore more than just the physical form, but rather about the life that can take place in and among these forms. The built environment needs to be adaptable and flexible to accommodate the changing needs of daily life that takes place in the urban realm. Place-making includes the economics and sociological dimensions of the built environment. Development should focus on the public realm and the design of streets and spaces, on a fine-grained scale, creating neighbourhoods if true value is to be gained. Life ultimately happens between the buildings.

Economic forces, demographic trends and social change are all favouring urbanism and quality of place, rather than just architecture. The challenge is how the industry and the built environment can respond to this challenge (Barnes, 2013: 5).

- **How can greater value be released?**

Brown (2013) highlights that the obstacles to proving and releasing urban design's value include the following components:

**Measuring Quality, Outcomes and Impact** - One of the key components to realising urban design's true value lies in proving it. Once urban design quality, the non-financial outcomes, for example health, happiness and well-being can be measured, clients and authorities can be enlightened. It is also very important to be able to measure the impact of urban design on financial and non-financial value.

**Client Skills** It remains the urban designer (and other related designers in their respective disciplines) to educate the client in the benefits and value of design. Most developers and most valuers cannot value good design. Part of this lack of skills and education relates to a lack in understanding of the impact of micro-climate on human emotions, or the importance of noise to people's well-being among other. Urban design is about much more than the physical design, it is about creating the stage where everyday life is acted out, the connections between places and destinations, the interactions and the experiences of city dwellers.

A great deal of research is still required to determine the most appropriate measuring tools for the evaluation of the value of urban design. CABE has worked on Design Assessment Criteria and an Urban Design Analysis Tool both included in their publication (2003) but which requires further inquiry. In order to establish the true value of urban design there needs to be acknowledgement both on a quantitative and qualitative basis. The aforementioned tools focus on the qualitative and often subjective components of such an evaluation strategy.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF URBAN DESIGN:**

Good urban design and the value thereof is dependent on implementation. Without implementation, it remains wallpaper. It is therefore important to understand the barriers to realising the implementation of urban design and how to possibly mitigate these barriers. These barriers will differ between stakeholders and their desired outcomes, contexts and political frameworks. With the above in mind, the following barriers were recurring issues throughout the literature:
Low awareness - The value and quality urban design can contribute to a project is yet not fully understood or grasped. Part of the responsibility lies with the profession to establish and demonstrate the value and contributions achieved thus far. Local authorities often fail to link urban regeneration and good urban design.

Poor information - there exists potential for further research to be developed around the specific needs and preferences of future occupiers of developments. A large proportion of urban design work includes green fields developments where standard design is often used to 'play it safe'.

The timing of a development - The developers perceived risk depending on the ups and downs of the property and investment market will affect attitudes towards investing in urban design quality.

Small and piecemeal development - Smaller developments often focus on the architectural component in isolation and neglects to consider 'placemaking' elements which form part of the urban context.

Costs - High land costs can reduce profit margins which leaves little room for investment in perceived 'quality' and the appointment of 'additional professional' services. Furthermore, occupiers perceive that, even though good design benefits the community, they will be required to pay for it in the form of higher rent, running costs and commercial rates.

Short-term planning - Urban design's real value only becomes evident in the long term. The structure of capital markets, with planning terms of three to five years, makes it difficult for many businesses to engage in the long-term planning necessary for delivery of good design.

Decision-making patterns - The role of the urban designer is yet to be demonstrated to a large portion of the built environment professionals. Currently many of the most important urban design decisions are taken not by planners, developers or designers but by people who may not think of themselves as being involved in urban design at all (e.g. quantity surveyors and accountants). Urban designers can make a valuable contribution to the management and coordination of the larger team, each professional's role and responsibilities and the project roll out.

Barriers to delivering better urban design are complex and require a range of solutions. Showing that good urban design adds value might, however, provide the necessary incentive to overcome many of the market, political and skills-based difficulties that together hold back a general improvement in urban design quality (CABE, 2013: 33).

In conclusion, while there are various good examples of implemented urban design, economic or financial value of urban design remains to be empirically proven. As Thomas & Watson refer to the structural value – such as the number of jobs created – as being another measure which would lead to better understanding of where priorities should lie in improving our towns and cities. Similarly the experiential dimension and translation of qualitative elements of the urban environment relating to what we enjoy – the microclimate, views or social interaction – remains another field of investigation.

5. DATA GATHERING
The second component of the research included interviews and questionnaires circulated to various practising professionals in the built environment, including urban designers. The following section includes their general responses to the research questions.

DEFINING THE CLIENT:

- How would you define your client(s)?

The general response included developers and public authorities or government. Some respondents included investors, everyday users and occupiers.

- Who benefits from good urban design and in what way?

*Investors*

- Greater return on investment in the long term
- Urban design adds value to land
- Financially long term as good urban design input will build in flexibility to layouts to provide for change over time
- Good design also makes good money… mostly

*Developers*

- Urban designers assist in developing a holistic and integrated approach to development across all scales
- Developers receive a much better functional and pragmatic design leading to a more successful project
- Well conceptualised and designed projects have a better chance of support
- Urban design adds value to land and assist in development rights
- Financially medium term; Developments that have a spatial coherency, build on the sites or businesses identity and provide a vision are easier to market.
- Better products that are commercially viable and resolve public interface and statutory processes

*Occupiers*

- More liveable environment
- Occupiers will benefit by the improved environmental performance of the space/place they occupy
- Improved quality of environment

*Everyday users and society as a whole*

- Urban design ensures responsive environment
- Improved quality of environment

- Good urban Design should always take into account needs across the scales and not just at the level of "The Site". Urban design's main focus is always on the nature of the interfaces and interfaces act two ways - User solutions should always ensure the interests of those on either side of the 'site boundary' are looked after.

*Public authorities*

- The urban designer translates the city authorities’ needs for development into a spatial design tool, establishing regulation of development.
- Public authorities receive a higher quality product both in terms of functionality and pragmatically.
- Diverse authorities understand projects better
- Urban design as environmental management tool
- Local Authorities will benefit by having a solution that integrates concerns across departments. Urban Design frameworks also provide long term visions that can guide budgeting exercises. Urban Design should help the Local Authorities to deliver on their mandate which is to look after the interests of the general public

DEFINING URBAN DESIGN:

- How would you define urban design?

Urban design is a discipline that delivers a spatial solution for urban development, optimisation of space, integration of complex systems.

The planning and design of public, private and semi-private space and services adjacent land uses to produce premium functional spaces for people, land uses and transport.

The technical process to design urban areas and make these more sustainable and better functioning.

Urban design is a tool for environmental change management.

Development that adds value, on three scales - economic, social and environmental; create a container for balanced life to happen; you establish a vision, method for protection and good spaces.

The domain between architecture and planning in which the workings and form of buildings are shaped in view of the desired role of the public domain in which it is located.

The design of the public realm - hard and soft landscaping that shapes and gives meaning to our streets and public spaces, consideration for movement dynamics and for the kind of activities that give public space meaning

Negotiation through the tool of design in the interest of public good.

- What is meant by good urban design?

Inclusive design that optimise the use of urban space whilst making places that allows communities to thrive. through understanding of the roles that different parties play within the design process and how their skills could be best utilised.

Urban design that successfully provides for all needs of the users by the correct functional and pragmatic planning of cities, districts, neighbourhoods. Planning that reduces the need for excessive public transport. every need is in walking distance.

Urban design that goes beyond architecture and town planning and moves towards city building as an art form where the city building process is guided to create meaningful and sustainable urban environments

Create a balance between access, choice and environmental issues

Good urban design encourages people using the public street and space network to pause and delay their journeys. When people choose to hang out with each other (in pursuit of happiness) and a variety of activities is accommodated that add vibrancy and interest to our cities then we can talk of good urban design.

One which balances competing interests in creating fantastic experiential quality

DEFINING VALUE:
• Does better urban design add value and if so how?

Yes, spatial inclusivity makes for vibrant environments.

Yes, it has the potential to improve the functioning, use and life of cities, neighbourhoods and streets.

Yes, by creating better functioning urban systems.

Yes, it adds value to property and human life (urbanity) by creating meaningful places for people and investors.

Urban design has the quality to integrate disciplines and diverse visions.

Yes, balance between social, economic and environmental factors; create opportunities; protect and enhance environment.

Urban Design is often perceived to be about beautification but 'better' Urban Design affects the performance of spaces.

Value is in the quality of life rather than in commercial gain.

• How can the value and quality of urban design be measured?

Continued debate (public) should be used to develop a better understanding of the way cities or urban environments work. Spaces or urban design can be measured only on the outcome.

The level of use and inhabitation of the urban spaces. The level of use of the public transport systems (long term). The number of needs that the neighbourhood and city district can provide to its users (within close proximity).

Urban design interventions can only be measured over time and through analysis of the impact of design interventions.

People tend to dwell in successful spaces for longer and the urban environment remains relevant for longer.

There needs to be a balance between social, economic and environmental factors.

Performance of space - sense of security and safety for users including but not necessarily limited to those on foot, intensity of use, vibrancy, business take up/occupancy rate, sustainability of businesses, diversity of land uses and type of operators dependant on local.

Performance for investors - financial sustainability of investment.

It's a bit problematic to measure qualitative benefits; if you can see yourself in space [culture, meaning, identity] then its successful for you.

• How can greater value be released?

Through broader engagement as well as a desire to understand complexity through urban design should realise greater value for client.

By extensive public participation and broad consultation throughout the design process.

Give urban design the platform to integrate the different disciplines.

Maximise potential of property and by establishing a strong vision.

Buy in from land owners, business and users.

Have an urban designer participate if not lead design projects, even if the net result is a minor win for the quality of the public environment then it's been a worthwhile exercise.
IMPLEMENTATION OF URBAN DESIGN:

- What are the barriers to realising enhanced design value?

Budget and time constraints lead to reduced consultant teams. Ignorance of the role of the urban designer.
Financial barriers and changing perceptions of society. Changing people’s habits.
A lack of political will to guide and maintain designed urban areas and public spaces
silo thinking of the disciplines
visions established in urban design dissolves
cost of infrastructure; education (client/public); management; implementation - education; zoning
Buy in from developers and investors in the public realm who see investment in the public realm as a ‘nice to have’ but not essential. There is also very little precedent of good urban living environments to demonstrate what investment in the public realm can do to improve life, business etc
The expense of having "another" consultant and clients understanding our role/benefit

6. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In the short term, the client may be defined as the person, developer or entity paying the urban designer for the services rendered (planning etc), while the users and occupiers of the place will be the clients in the long run. As Urban Designer it is important to protect both the interests of the short term client as well as the future users of the place. When successfully rendered, the result will be a fulfilling pleasant experience for all urban dwellers.

Part of the urban designer’s role is to protect the public interest in the long term. The result of urban design is intended for the wider audience (client), creating a place that will be used and enjoyed by a wide range of different people for different purposes, not only now but in years to come

From the research it became evident that the value of urban design is fairly well understood by the professionals, but remain an area of opportunity to market to the public including investors, developers and everyday users. The profession would gain considerable credit from research and studies providing insight and results of successful urban design projects and their value contribution.
Urban designers need to know who and what they are designing for while clients, investors, developers and the general public need to understand and be made aware of the benefits and value of urban design. Urban design is both a process and product-based discipline. The sustainability of the city and built environment lies in the hands of the built environment orchestrator, the role of the urban designer. Urban design involves much more than the visual impact of buildings and the public realm, it includes the social, environmental and functional dimensions with a respect for the visual or urban form-based concerns.

As Urban Design is focused on the implementation of projects and in shaping the built environment and spaces in between for the long run, the work of an urban designer is important as it will leave a legacy for the future.

The research indicated that good design adds value and bring a variety of benefits, including financial investment returns by increasing the economic viability of development, less crime, a more vibrant public realm, urban regeneration and place marketing benefits, well connected, inclusive and accessible new places and improved health.

7. CONCLUSIONS/FURTHER RESEARCH

The research serves as an introduction to the value contribution of urban design as a profession. The research has illustrated that urban design brings a valuable layer to the built environment which is becoming increasingly important. As the profession and related terms are sometimes relatively new, the future and sustainability of the built environment as well as that of the professional is dependent on the education of the clients, investors, developers and general public. It remains the responsibility of the profession to advocate good design and educate the stakeholders in the relevance and contribution thereof. These will require empirical evidence if the profession wants to be respected and deemed invaluable.

This research is intended to form part of a growing resource of information which can support and strengthen investment and development decisions. In the UK, CABE has been set up partly to advocate for the cause of good urban design. It is recommended that an equal body be developed in South Africa (which might form part of UDISA) to campaign for and develop both urban design education, awareness and sustained research to substantiate the value of urban design, socially, economically and environmentally.

*Well-designed places with happy people are valuable places, as we know. When we think about value, we need to think about it in its widest sense. Going back to economics, Enrique Peñalosa, the former mayor of Bogota sums this up in a simple but profound thought that goes to the heart of what we mean by value. He said ‘Developed countries are places where rich people use public transport, not places where poor people have cars’. (Brown, 2013: 8)*

8. REFERENCES

CABE (2003) The value of urban design. CABE & DETR  

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