
Pioneering educational pilot to uplift under-represented SMEs in the built environment

London School of Architecture, Greater London Authority and The Crown Estate launch Good Growth in Practice



Photo credit: Taran Wilkhu

- Good Growth in Practice is a new, fully funded one-year pilot course by London School of Architecture to support under-represented practice owners across the built environment.
- The programme aims to increase the diversity of the SMEs accessing public and private sector work through tailored upskilling and mentorship
- A cohort of eight London-based practices will be selected through an open call.

Today, the London School of Architecture, in partnership with the Greater London Authority and The Crown Estate, announces a pilot programme to empower the owners of under-represented practices by dismantling barriers to public procurement and creating more equitable frameworks across the industry.

Good Growth in Practice responds to the urgent need to tackle systemic inequities within the built environment sector and is created for under-represented second-stage practices (5–10 years in operation) to take a bigger role within the industry and secure greater opportunities.

With Dian Small – former director of London Region at the RIBA and a leading voice for inclusiveness and sustainability – at the helm, the initiative aims to overcome the obstacles these practices face at a pivotal point in their careers, nurturing professionals through a programme rooted in practical business skills and hands-on mentorship.

“Our aim is to cultivate an ecosystem where under-represented practices can flourish. We will provide tailored knowledge, support and targeted opportunities to empower these firms. By the end of the programme, they won't just have learned about good growth – they'll have practised it, embodied it, and be poised to drive it forward in the industry. It's a journey of transformation, not just for our participants, but for the entire built environment sector.”

– Dian Small, director, Good Growth in Practice

Applicants are welcome to apply until 31 January 2025. The 12-month programme will commence in spring 2025.

A groundbreaking initiative at a time of crisis

Good Growth in Practice arrives at a time when the built environment profession is in crisis. Knock-on effects from Brexit, Covid and wider inflationary pressures have pushed a number of small- and medium-sized practices over the edge.

The programme is an evolution of the Mayor of London's Good Growth by Design programme which draws together efforts being made across the Greater London Authority Group to support equality and inclusion in the built environment, with the support of the Mayor's Design Advocates. Good Growth in Practice delivers on the commitment set out in Mayor's Good Growth by Design Forward Plan (2022) to tackle the chronic under-representation of minorities in the built environment professions, and reflects the Mayor's mission to grow London's economy through supporting diverse practitioners and practices led by people from under-represented groups.

“A built environment sector that is representative of London’s diversity is needed to support Good Growth – growth that is socially and economically inclusive, accessible, environmentally sustainable and contextual to local places and communities. I’m delighted to see the London School of Architecture leading this initiative to support under-represented practices to tap into opportunities in the industry, helping to build a fairer and more prosperous London for all.”

– Jules Pipe CBE, deputy mayor of London for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

An industry-wide initiative

Welcoming applications from architects and beyond, the initiative is aimed at a broad range of professions actively participating in design, construction and building management. It will provide essential business development support to under-represented practice owners, ensuring that a rising generation of diverse voices within the built environment will have the skills and expertise necessary to excel in framework opportunities to win public projects, whilst also enabling the private sector to transition to more robust procurement models to ensure equity across the built environment.

Inclusive initiatives tend to act as incubators for individual talent, helping people at the beginning of their careers find their way into the profession. Good Growth in Practice complements these initiatives with a focus on already-established practices to sustain them through turbulent times and develop their leadership for the future.

Deeply embedded in the sector, the initiative will be guided by an advisory board of industry experts and chaired by Central director, Patricia Brown.

“It is increasingly important that we look at the challenges of diversity within the built environment in the round, encouraging a range of different perspectives to help the sector evolve and succeed. At The Crown Estate, we are committed to supporting early-years career programmes – such as the Reading Real Estate Foundation and 10,000 Black Interns – but also diversity within our supply chain through the public procurement process. Good Growth in Practice will provide an environment for progress across the sector – fostering more diversity to overcome the challenges we collectively face.”

– Clare Harrison, development director, The Crown Estate

Programme themes

The ethos of Good Growth by Design is underpinned by a five-point manifesto: industry evolution; empowerment of underrepresented practices; sustainability and equity; practical skills and knowledge; and an integrated approach.

Rooted in research

Good Growth in Practice is informed by an extensive research process led by Neil Onions, director of Beyond the Box, which culminated in three round-table discussions with industry experts. This work was supported by a focus group with potential participants to address the practical aspects of the programme.

Learning while in practice

Participants will be able to take part in the course while continuing to run their practice. To foster meaningful relationships, the initiative will focus on a small-sized cohort of eight practices.

Good Growth in Practice is structured around three core elements:

- Practice Learning: a series of masterclasses targeted at developing practical skills;
- Practice Mentorship: a thorough mentorship programme that will connect participants with relevant experts, potential clients and complementary business services (including HR, legal, finance and EDI etc); and
- Practice Development: a self-directed project to implement key learnings in a supported environment.

It will furnish participants with methods and resources to undertake future-focused market analysis, fostering the ability to implement robust business development strategies.

With a digital learning experience developed by Daniel Davis, professional programmes manager at LSA, the three learning modules are Market Mastery; Strategic Excellence; and Practice Management. A fourth module will involve the showcase of two 'industry-reforming' projects led by the participants.



Neil Shasore and Dian Small, London School of Architecture. Photo credit: Patrick Dempsey.

“At its core, Good Growth in Practice is about transformation – both of individual practices and the sector as a whole. The reference to ‘Good Growth’ suggests positive growth, balancing commercial imperatives with a need to improve representation across the built environment. To drive this change, the initiative is also focused on practical business skills – hence the emphasis on ‘in Practice.’”

– Neal Shasore, head of school and chief executive, London School of Architecture

Notes to editors

Good Growth in Practice open call

Candidates can apply on the London School of Architecture website via this link:

<https://www.the-lsa.org/programmes/good-growth-in-practice-launch/>

Data on representation

According to recent data on representation across the sector (Architects Registration Board EDI data from 2023), the architecture industry is significantly out of step with London as a whole. London’s working age population is 50% female and 38% BAME, yet only 31% of architects identify as women and, shockingly, only 12%

identify as BAME. The contrast is even more stark for people with disabilities, where the general population is 18% and architects are only 1%.

London School of Architecture

The London School of Architecture is a network of students and practice. It educates future leaders to design innovations that contribute to the flourishing of humanity and the planet. Its vision is that people living in cities experience more fulfilled and more sustainable lives. Its school educates future leaders to design innovations that contribute to this change. Under the leadership of Dr Neal Shasore, the LSA is actively addressing the architecture industry's diversity challenges through three existing programmes:

- Part 0: Creating new pathways for young people and career-changers to enter the profession
- Part 2: A professionally validated program combining academic study with practical experience
- Part 4: A suite of affordable, design-led courses for continuing professional development

the-lsa.org

Dian Small

Dian Small, founder of The Cultural Architect, is a transformative force in the built environment sector. As a registered RIBA Architect, former RIBA London region director, and certified Cultural Intelligence practitioner, Dian transcends traditional architecture to shape inclusive environments and drive sustainable cultural change. Her work serves as a catalyst for broader systemic change, challenging the industry to confront its historical biases and actively pursue a more diverse, equitable, and sustainable future. This makes her a sought-after consultant for organisations across sectors aiming to build dynamic, inclusive cultures that empower difference and drive meaningful societal impact.

culturalarchitect.co.uk

Greater London Authority (GLA)

City Hall, also known as the Greater London Authority (GLA), has one Mayor and 25 Assembly Members who are elected by Londoners. Sadiq Khan is the current Mayor. He provides citywide leadership and creates policies to improve London for all. The Assembly holds the Mayor and Mayoral advisers to account by publicly examining policies and programmes through committee meetings, plenary sessions, site visits and investigations.

london.gov.uk

Good Growth by Design

The Mayor's Good Growth by Design programme seeks to enhance the design of the built environment to create a city that works for all Londoners. This means development and growth should benefit everyone who lives here. As such, it should be sensitive to the local context, environmentally sustainable, and physically accessible. The programme calls on all involved in London's booming architectural, design and built environment professions to help realise the Mayor's vision. Good Growth by Design uses the skills of both the Mayor's Design Advocates and the wider sector. This includes teams at City Hall, the London boroughs and other public bodies.

london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/shaping-local-places/advice-and-guidance/about-good-growth-design

The Crown Estate

The Crown Estate has a diverse £16bn portfolio that includes urban centres and development opportunities; one of the largest rural holdings in the country; Regent Street and St James's in London's West End; and Windsor Great Park. It also manages the seabed and much of the coastline around England, Wales and Northern Ireland, playing a major role in the UK's world leading offshore wind sector.

A unique business established by an Act of Parliament, the Crown Estate is tasked with growing the value of the portfolio for the nation and returning all of our net profit to HM Treasury for the benefit of public spending. This has totalled £4bn over the last 10 years.

Through its activities and investments, The Crown Estate creates environmental, social and financial value both for now and into the long term. This includes:

- Playing a significant role in unlocking renewable energy for millions of homes
- through sectors such as offshore wind and creating opportunities for new
- technologies such as CCUS and hydrogen to deliver the UK's energy security
- transition, resulting in thousands of jobs for communities across the UK.
- Supporting the sustainable transformation of land use in the UK through
- diversified, regenerative agricultural and environmental best practice alongside
- a thriving natural world.
- Becoming recognised as a centre of excellence for environmental and ecological best practice across the Windsor Estate.
- Identifying and creating opportunities for thriving and resilient communities
- across the country to support regeneration, housing and innovation.
- Ensuring London retains its global city status, by fostering a more vibrant,
- greener and inclusive destination for millions of visitors and businesses.

thecrownestate.co.uk