



insight

MOTION CONSULTANTS

AUTUMN 2013

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Inroads to Africa

A feasibility study is being conducted into a new £15 million port development on a peninsula in Southern Tanzania. The site is currently covered in dense mangroves, but could provide port services for a number of large vessels.

The study found advantages in developing the site. Deep water is relatively close to the shore, there is good natural shelter from waves and the long shoreline allows a number of different jetty options to be considered.

Motion was commissioned by Floodline Developments to provide highway design services for the project as part of the on-shore infrastructure proposals. Preliminary design work has been carried out for a substantial area of hard-standing and a new access road. The site is currently accessed by a dirt road, which will need formalising by raising, widening and rebuilding as a tarmac or concrete road.

Neil Jaques, Principal Engineer at Motion, comments, *"This is a really interesting project. It's the first time we've designed an African road and we had to base our work on the relevant local design guide for the United Republic of Tanzania."*

Residential market recovering

The UK housing shortage is being addressed by government pump-priming investment into the residential development market sector, and bankers are starting to provide funds once again. Residential development on green-field and green belt land is a hot topic. Richard Thomas, Partner at Welbeck Strategic Land, shares with *Insight* readers his thoughts on the political and economic drivers.

Welbeck Strategic Land promotes residential developments in southern England with support from two major pension funds, Aberdeen Asset Management and LaSalle Asset Management. The company specialises in schemes of between 100 and 2,500 units. Richard says, *"We look at green-field sites which are likely to come forward in each district council area. We have a particular expertise and track record in identifying these opportunities."*

The company secures planning consent to supply house builders with a product which is ready to build on. Richard explains, *"The negotiations are completed through Promotion Agreements and Options. We take on the risks and the costs. The land is then sold and the housebuilder proceeds with the building."*

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motion



Pete Sturgeon

Drive and Passion

Why did you join Motion?

PS I wanted to be part of something that had drive and passion. I have known the founding directors of the company for more than ten years and knew that Motion worked on challenging, stimulating projects in a professional environment.

What are the challenges you face?

PS The desire to make efficient use of valuable urban land needs to be balanced with the infrastructure required to move people and freight through the city to deliver sustainable development.

What do you like about working in London?

PS Working with developers in London means that you're actively involved in helping to deliver the change and regeneration that helps make the city such an exciting place to live and work.

What would you do if you weren't working at Motion?

PS It would definitely be food related. I'd love to get into food production, selling at farmers' markets and championing great produce.

Asphalt to Ashes

Construction work is almost complete for a new crematorium in Havant. The

Oaks will open later this year to provide a much-needed facility for south east Hampshire. Crematoria in the county are some of the busiest in the UK and at near maximum capacity.

Motion provided infrastructure design services for the scheme, which includes road widening to form a new access and right turn lane. Unusually a concrete sub-base was found during testing of the existing road. Motion's Julian Smith explains, "This was a very tricky interface to work with.

We had to change the detail in the design in the light of what was uncovered."

Southern Cooperative has developed the scheme on former farmland. The building's environmentally friendly design uses local, natural materials.



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Political will Richard Thomas observes two key changes since the credit crunch. Firstly, house builders initially pulled out of the strategic land development market due to financial difficulties. Longer term projects were seen as expensive, time-consuming and counter-cyclical.

Secondly, successive governments have been keen to emphasise the critical need to resolve the housing crisis. District councils now have responsibility for increasing the rate of house building within their area to address the housing shortage and also to contribute to the wider economy.

Inquiry success Richard argues that the real driver of the rate of growth of new housing is the centralised advice in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework, which stipulates that councils must seek to meet objectively assessed housing need. If there are no over-riding constraints a scheme can be taken straight to planning. Councils are vulnerable to appeals if they haven't agreed a five year land supply. Without this there is a double presumption in favour of development.

Slowly but surely, the national policy is having an effect and confidence is gradually being restored. Richard concludes, "It is easier for first time buyers, the financial squeeze is relaxing and the market is picking up. Residential development will recover; supply and demand will prevail."



viewpoint

Insight talked to three senior industry professionals to gain their views on market trends



Danny Scanlon – Co-Founder, OSP Architecture

“The discord between local authorities and developers has meant an increase in the number of public inquiries. Local councils want to see good design presented in a professional way. The standard two-storey house returned during the recession, but we’re now seeing a resurgence of well-designed three-storey housing. House sizes had been getting smaller during the recession to try to create affordable starter and family homes. However minimum space standards may restrict further reductions. We face future design challenges in order to satisfy the house buyer’s requirements for good quality space, storage and contemporary living.”



Romy Rawlings – Design & Development Director at Woodhouse (Street Furniture, Lighting & Signage)

“We’re seeing a continued upsurge in Design and Build contracts, where the contractor takes more of a lead, and this can directly affect the client relationship. It’s a value engineering exercise, where lower costs are often passed, leading to original specifications being overturned. Cost control means the desired design cohesion can be undermined and when projects are driven by economics alone, aesthetics and quality of materials are key challenges. It’s brought about a shift in how we control design detailing, engineering and manufacture.”



**Michael Loates-Taylor
Consultant at 33/44 Architects**

“Some elected members see the sense in creating housing in green belts, when the land around existing settlements is uneconomic as farmland or with little environmental significance. We need a carefully managed transition from towns to new developments in semi-rural areas, allowing for how new housing responds to the landscape and existing settlements. But, we also need to look more critically at brown field sites. We need to create new settlements where both people and the natural environment can thrive. It’s about the right balance through appropriate development and architecture.”

Sustainable travel key to success



The first occupants will soon move into a 308 unit development in north London delivered by Genesis Housing. Sustainable travel initiatives were key to the urban scheme in Barnet gaining consent. The high density residential development is located in a mainly low-rise area.

Motion is assisting the developer with implementation of a travel plan for the site. Households will be encouraged to take non-car alternatives whenever possible. Car club membership and vouchers for cycling and public transport, worth a combined total of £300, are being offered to residents in the first year of occupation.

Steve Parsons explains, “A sizeable application such as this needs to have a travel plan and requires ongoing monitoring, surveys and reports to satisfy sustainable travel policies. We worked with the developer to ensure sustainable transport and travel planning was fully integrated from the early stages of the application. The inclusion of car club spaces within the site was a key part of this approach.”

LONDON CALLING

New associate **Damian Tungatt** was recently welcomed to Motion’s London team by Managing Director **Steve Gosling**. Damian has over ten years transport planning experience, during which time he has helped clients overcome significant development issues. He has worked on major regeneration schemes and large infrastructure projects in the capital.

Damian has a particular interest in development planning and master planning. He believes, “It’s exciting to work on building new communities, where people are going to live, work and play in the future. The economy appears to be getting stronger and this feels just the right time to be part of a dynamic team advising clients on the transportation aspects of their schemes.”

Motion’s London team, from left, Daniel Fenton, Sheila Gough, Damian Tungatt, Steve Gosling, Pete Sturgeon, David Lewis.



Weighing up safety vs aesthetics

The challenges of balancing highway authority concerns with local planning policy were recently highlighted in a Sainsbury's new store development in Melton Mowbray.

As part of the Section 278 highway works, Motion designed a new access for the store which included widening the carriageway to allow space for additional lanes and traffic islands. The four arm junction on the main road into the town will be controlled by traffic signals. A new thirty metre long retaining wall was necessary due to the difference in levels between the edge of the highway and adjacent offices.

Motion's design team successfully balanced the competing requirements of the planning and highway authority. According to Principal Engineer Neil Jaques, *"The local council's priority was for an aesthetically pleasing design, whereas the highways authority's over-riding concern was about safety. The county council stipulated a vehicle restraint system would be required. The barrier would have vertical bars to more closely replicate the existing fencing but still address the safety concerns of the highway authority."*



Appealing change of use in Waltham Cross

Planning permission has been granted following an appeal, for a change of use from offices to an integrated adult substance misuse service in Waltham Cross. The Planning Inspectorate concluded there was no strong evidence to indicate the likely level of potential additional demand for on-street parking would be a risk to highway safety.

Consent was originally refused for the project on the grounds that it would have a negative impact on the living conditions of nearby residents, and there was insufficient provision for car parking.

Strong evidence

Approval was granted after CRI, the social care and health charity behind the scheme, was able to prove that the proposal would not affect local residents. Motion provided strong evidence that the parking was in fact adequate for the needs of the new facility.

Phil Bell explains, *"The parking for the site was provided by an undercroft area, with at least ten spaces. The space available was sufficient for the number of people likely to be using the building at any one time."* The site, located close to Waltham Cross town centre, is also easily accessed by public transport. Provision will be made for cycle parking.

Phil adds, *"By carrying out a parking survey of a comparable facility, Motion was able to demonstrate that the majority of clients would not arrive by private car. We also provided evidence that, should onsite parking be unavailable, other spaces were likely to be found within 300 metres of the premises."*



New stores unlocked in Burgess Hill

B&Q and Pets at Home are opening new stores on a site that had been vacant for many years, thanks to a new access road. The Burgess Hill development was approved by Mid Sussex District Council in June 2012.

The Location 3 Properties scheme provides 7,000 square metres of retail space and parking for 212 vehicles. A new vehicular access to the site will serve the customer parking area. Delivery and servicing activity will take place at the rear of the site from an existing route.

Motion was able to demonstrate that the proposals would not have a detrimental impact on the operation of the local highway network. The site is also accessible by alternative travel modes, including by foot, bicycle and public transport. A Framework Travel Plan has also been produced, with the objective to reduce, as far as practicable, single occupancy car trips made by staff to and from the site.

Phil Bell says, *"The new access was the key to unlocking this site, which was allocated for business development in the Mid Sussex Local Plan but had remained vacant for some time. The development will now benefit the town by providing over 100 new jobs and a greater choice of shops for residents and visitors."*



ENERGISED

local community

The West Sussex village of Thakeham will benefit from new housing and amenities following the approval of an application to redevelop Sussex Mushrooms' Chesswood and Abingworth nurseries. The rural scheme will also allow the company to modernise its operations and consolidate all production and processing activities onto one site.

Steve Parsons of Motion explains, *"There are huge advantages to this development. Operating from a single location will reduce farm traffic on local roads travelling between sites. Modernising production means the plant will produce less odour, and re-use more of its waste in an environmentally friendly way."*

Enabling development

In order to fund the improvements to the mushroom processing plant, an enabling development was also proposed by Abingworth Developments Ltd. This will comprise 146 dwellings, including homes for the open market as well as 51 units for the 55 plus age group, 12 affordable homes and 20 key-worker homes. Residents can also look forward to new facilities including a village hall, doctor's surgery, shop, pre-school, workshops, sports pitches and children's play area. The development also incorporates improvements to access, footpaths, crossing facilities and low key traffic calming measures to improve safety for all highway users.

Motion worked closely with the project team to ensure that the highway benefits of the proposals were fully taken into account. This was key to achieving a positive recommendation from the highway authority. Steve continues, *"Motion provided evidence that the development proposals would result in only a relatively small increase in peak hour vehicular activity. In addition, following consolidation of operations onto the Chesswood Nursery site, HGV and agricultural traffic will be reduced, providing significant safety and environmental improvements."*



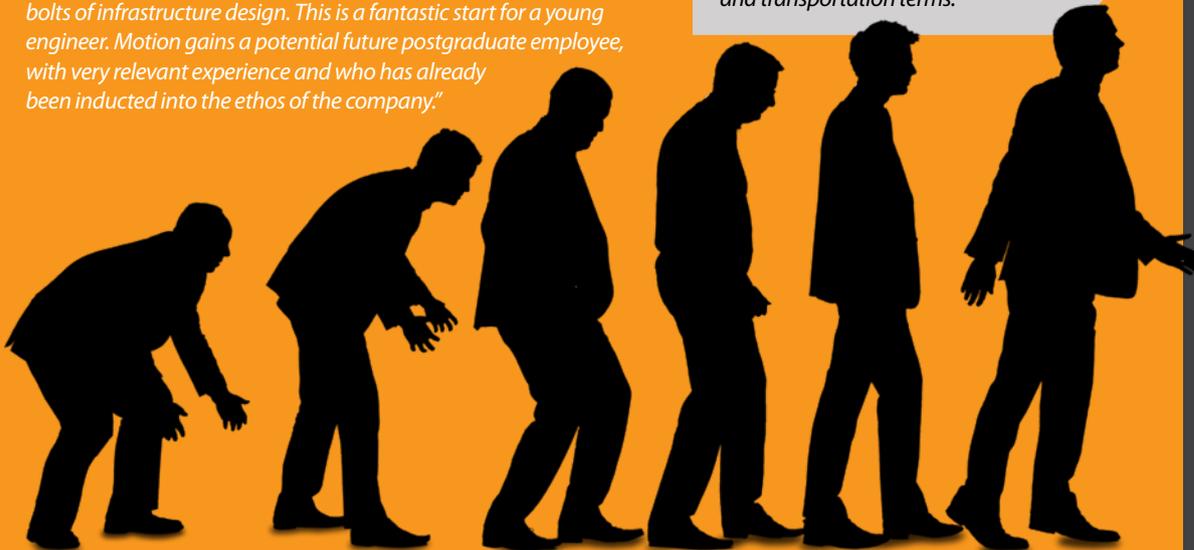
Investors in talent

Having the right people is important for any business, and Motion takes recruitment very seriously. *“Innovation, integrity and initiative are important to us, and we’re always looking for talented people who rise to a challenge,”* maintains Richard Bettridge, Director of Motion Design Services.

One of the best places to find this talent is in undergraduate engineering students. Richard adds, *“We’ve had two 12-month student placements over the last two years, and a third student started this summer. During that time the students get broad-ranging experience of infrastructure design and transport planning, and we get a great opportunity to learn a lot about them.”*

Colin Howard is the Director of Civil Engineering Programmes at the University of Surrey, which has placed two students with Motion. He says, *“Companies looking to offer a placement also gain experience of that student, which is a real advantage when thinking about postgraduate recruitment. It’s like having a twelve month interview.”*

According to Colin, *“The great thing about Motion is that they are specialists in transport planning and infrastructure engineering. The students working at Motion get to really understand the nuts and bolts of infrastructure design. This is a fantastic start for a young engineer. Motion gains a potential future postgraduate employee, with very relevant experience and who has already been inducted into the ethos of the company.”*



Relaxed residential conversions

Recent changes in permitted development rights have streamlined applications to convert existing office buildings to residential. However, Technical Director Steve Parsons cautions that ‘prior approval’ applications may require a transport statement to address potential highway and transportation-related objections.

Steve explains, *“Under the prior approval application, the local authority can consider three key matters: contamination, flood risk and transport and highway impacts.”* Motion has already advised clients on a number of sites since the changes were introduced at the end of May. *“In our experience authorities are focusing on transport-related issues when considering these applications. We have found that by addressing the highway impacts in a brief Transport Statement we can usually demonstrate that the ‘change of use’ is acceptable in highway and transportation terms.”*

Ask Motion



If you would value a preliminary discussion about the transport, traffic or

infrastructure issues associated with a potential development project, why not give us a call on 01483 531300?

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