

# Allies and Morrison LLP

## Practice Social Responsibility Policy



Allies and Morrison acknowledges our ethical and social responsibilities as designers, as an employer and as a member of our local and international community. Our primary contribution to social value has always been through the creation of sustainable and contextual buildings, that contribute to the place they belong, alongside our commitments to the regeneration of towns and cities. Yet we recognise that we have an impact beyond our services. We seek to proactively shape that impact, to make a greater positive contribution through our activities.

This policy outlines the principles that guide our actions as ethical and socially responsible designers, employers and community members, as well as our current implementation strategies.

The foundation of our ethical and social responsibilities to our design work and in the operation of our business is reflected by our commitment to fair working practices and policies:

1. We are an Equal Opportunities employer
2. We are a London Living Wage employer
3. We are an RIBA Chartered Practice who complies with the RIBA Code of Practice
4. We abide by our Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy, Privacy Policy and Supplier Code of Conduct.
5. In November 2021, we published a Diversity and Inclusion Statement which sets out our ambitions and commitments to play a proactive role in making architecture and urbanism more inclusive for all.
6. We actively integrate sustainability into our design approach and have a Sustainability Strategy to guide our work

towards three objectives to:

- i) design all projects to Net Zero carbon ready performance;
  - ii) become a Carbon Neutral organisation;
  - iii) incorporate Post Occupancy evaluation into projects.
7. We provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions in line with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (as amended), set out in our ISO 45001 accredited Health and Safety Policy.

Our policy builds on these fundamentals and underpins what we do: how we design our projects, how we run our practice and nurture our people, how we contribute to the betterment of our local communities, and how we support and inspire the next generation of designers.

When committing to these initiatives, the factors we prioritise include:

- Serving our local communities in London, Cambridge, Manchester, Liverpool and Dublin, or communities with connections to our projects
- Helping to broaden access to education in architecture and design, particularly for those from under-represented groups or communities connected to our project locations
- Helping to improve skills and training, particularly in the field of art, architecture and design

This document sets out our commitments to integrate social value into our projects, our practice life, our communities, and our profession.



**Engaging local schools** Pupils participate in workshops for Stratford Waterfront

## 1. OUR WORK

Allies and Morrison seeks to strengthen and improve the places we create for the benefit of the communities who live and work in and around them, now and into the future. To achieve this we are focused on making our designs more sustainable, on engaging as effectively as possible with project stakeholders and by finding wider community benefits to offer as part of our services.

### Sustainable design

Our Sustainability Strategy sets out a clear methodology to create more sustainable projects and settlements as the priority – being our highest environmental impact.

- We are signatories to the RIBA 2030 challenge and Architects Declare.
- We have appointed a Head of Sustainability to support our delivery of sustainable design.
- We have developed a practice Sustainability Toolkit and review processes to embed sustainability into our design approach.
- Our commitment is maintained through various practice-wide initiatives, including the CPD training programme, all coordinated through our Sustainability Group.

### Community engagement and outreach

We seek to understand the places and context in which we work, so that we develop designs that respond to local needs, which will stand the test of time physically, socially and economically.

- We are committed to proactive and responsive public consultation that seeks and engages with the wider community and reflects stakeholder concerns and aims in the design.
- We seek to develop our consultation skills within the practice
- We seek to design places that are accessible and inclusive in the widest sense of those terms.
- We embrace co-design where this is appropriate to the commission and are building our skills in this field.

### Wider social value initiatives

Increasingly we are identifying wider benefits related to our professional activities that we can deliver through targeted social value offers with our projects.

- We prioritise educational initiatives which help to expand access to careers in the built environment for under-represented groups; our initiatives include schools outreach, work placements, internships and bursaries.
- We look for opportunities to increase health and wellbeing through our designs, and spaces which facilitate local participation in community life
- We support local charities associated with the communities within which we are working

## 2. OUR TEAM

Our practice is based on the talent, experience and skill of our team; our people are central to everything we do. The knowledge and professional competency of everyone in the practice, our ability to do rewarding work with professional care and our health and well being matter to us as a practice and for our colleagues.

As part of our commitment as an RIBA Chartered Practice, Allies and Morrison follows the RIBA Code of Practice and supports our team members through a range of training and mentoring opportunities, as well as subsidised health and social benefits. Our aim is to foster a diverse and inclusive environment at Allies and Morrison which allows and encourages all our people to be the best they can be.

We seek to fully enjoy one of the great benefits of a career in design - the joy of shared creative endeavour and achievement.

### Training and development

Training and development is a priority of the practice

- We sponsor professional memberships (UK and Ireland)
- We support apprenticeships, students in need through bursaries for graduate studies, and flexible opportunities for those pursuing alternative training routes
- We offer a comprehensive RIBA compliant CPD programme to develop competency skills across the practice
- We support personalised staff development through mentor-led strategy and review
- We supplement the CPD programme with tailored training, practice lecture series and study trips



**Studio lectures** Our evening lecture series supplements our core CPD offer



**Health and wellbeing** Staff-led sports teams and activities from yoga to softball are supported by the practice

### Promoting equality and diversity

- We encourage a collaborative working atmosphere of knowledge sharing and inclusive design review.
- Our practice Diversity Champions, and associated informal groups including WAAM (Women at Allies and Morrison), LGTB+ALLIES and EDG (Ethnic Diversity Group), advocate for a more inclusive workplace for under-represented groups
- We support parents with enhanced maternity and paternity benefits. We accommodate flexible working arrangements where we can, for carers and for those seeking an alternative work-life balance.

### Sports, health and wellbeing

- We support our cyclists at work, with secure bike storage, shower and other facilities, while encouraging their knowledge of cycling in the city to inform our masterplan work.
- We encourage staff-led sporting and wellbeing activities such as yoga in the studio and running, football, tennis and softball locally.
- We have a confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) accessible to all staff and their immediate family members. This, combined with HR support, our staff group representatives and our mentorship-based strategy, helps our staff work through simple questions or bigger life worries.
- We enable access to a BUPA healthcare and dental schemes for staff and their immediate family.

### Social and creative activities

- We relax together as well as work together; holding regular social events - sometimes combined with talks or seasonal festivities.
- We celebrate the talents of our colleagues through regular exhibitions of our wider creative endeavours
- We encourage our own development and enjoyment of drawing skills through informal drawing classes in the studio but externally through sponsorship of local school programmes to encourage observation and drawing as a pathway and access to architecture for all.

## 3. OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Allies and Morrison seeks to make positive contributions to the local communities where our studios are based. In London, we are active in the borough of Southwark, our home since 2004, and are particularly engaged with our immediate Bankside neighbourhood. Similar outreach is developing in our Cambridge, Manchester and Dublin offices. Our charitable giving focuses on organisations who provide support for education, drawing, and our local community. We also engage in pro-bono work in support of educational and local charitable projects.

### Community organisations and programs

- We sit on the board of Better Bankside, our local business (Business Improvement District) organisation committed to improving the experience of the neighbourhood for everyone, and through this group participate in learning activities, cultural events and local charity programmes.
- We participate in the Open House Festival, both at our studios and our completed projects, with the ambition to show with pride our projects to the wider community.
- We encourage young people's talents and interest in built environment careers as active supporters of the Drawing in Schools programme at the Dulwich Picture Gallery.
- We seek opportunities to support local schools programmes, including providing work placements
- We support a range of other schools programmes including the RIBA Trust/Arts Inform Architects in Residence program, Open City's Architecture, the Better Bankside Skills Academy summer work experience scheme and the work of the Construction Youth Trust
- We provide annual support to 'Class of Your Own', a certified Social Enterprise through financial contributions, studio workshops, tours and site visits
- We support our staff participation in education programmes at Universities across the UK and abroad
- We participate in careers fairs locally and nationally, offering work placements and advice to young students or unemployed people. At such events, we have connected with local charities and the Mayor of Southwark to enrich our continued charitable commitments to local people
- We support UrbanistasNW, a Manchester based women's support network for construction professionals
- We support the Architects Benevolent Fund



**Broadening access to architecture in schools** We support a range of local education programmes, including Dulwich Picture Gallery's annual Drawing in Schools programme

**Charitable giving**

- Our partnership annual charitable fund focuses particularly on:
  - Southwark...** as an area of deprivation in the UK and central to our community
  - Drawing...** as a route to accessing an appreciation of architecture, the built environment and design for all
  - Education...** with a focus on architecture and design
- We facilitate and support staff participation with local charitable causes
- Pro-bono time, including design work, to local schools and charities
- We donate our used computers and salvaged stationery to local educational charities

**4. OUR PROFESSION**

Allies and Morrison fully supports an inclusive, diverse and sustainable future for the built environment industry, and specifically in our specialist professions of architecture and urbanism. Through involvement with academia, trade associations and independent research initiatives we encourage future generation of architects and designers, whilst contributing to planning policies and industry best practice. We are leading proponents of design collaborations as a means of widening the access of smaller practices to larger commissions.

We seek to increase engagement with local education and skills organisations - with a focus on broadening access to architecture and design as a profession - particularly to those from under-represented groups. Our initiatives range from university and RIBA lectures, career event talks at schools and colleges and bursaries, as well as more structured outreach which offers skills and resources to public sector and community organisations.



**Annual Citymakers Series** We held our fourth annual Citymakers series at the London College of Communication in October 2022



**Careers fairs** Elephant and Castle careers fair, June 2023

**Education and capacity building**

- We facilitate the involvement of smaller practices and practices with diverse leadership through design collaborations on larger projects
- We teach and participate in examinations and reviews in professional degree programmes
- We support school and university students through a range of initiatives, including offering structured annual work experience placements with a focus on local students and those from groups under-represented in the profession. So far this year, we have held bi-annual half day Introduction to Architecture workshops for 24 local students in years 9-12, accommodated 14 students in years 12-13 for a one week work experience placement, and six paid university work placements

**Professional associations and public discourse on architecture and urbanism**

- We are committed to the forefront of professional association with the RIBA and the RTPI; including volunteer positions as Trustee, on committees, annual conferences, teaching and mentoring events
- We contribute to public dialogue on architecture and urbanism and to the promotion of best-practice, by involvement in local professional panels and advisory boards, support for local organisations dedicated to the promotion of architecture and urbanism, and by opening many of our lecture series to a wider public audience
- We promote better design quality by membership on design review panels in our communities.

It is our intention to monitor, review and revise this Policy annually, using it as a baseline for setting future objectives.

*Joanna Bacon*

Joanna Bacon, Designated Partner  
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