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MAGAZINE

Statement

ON REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

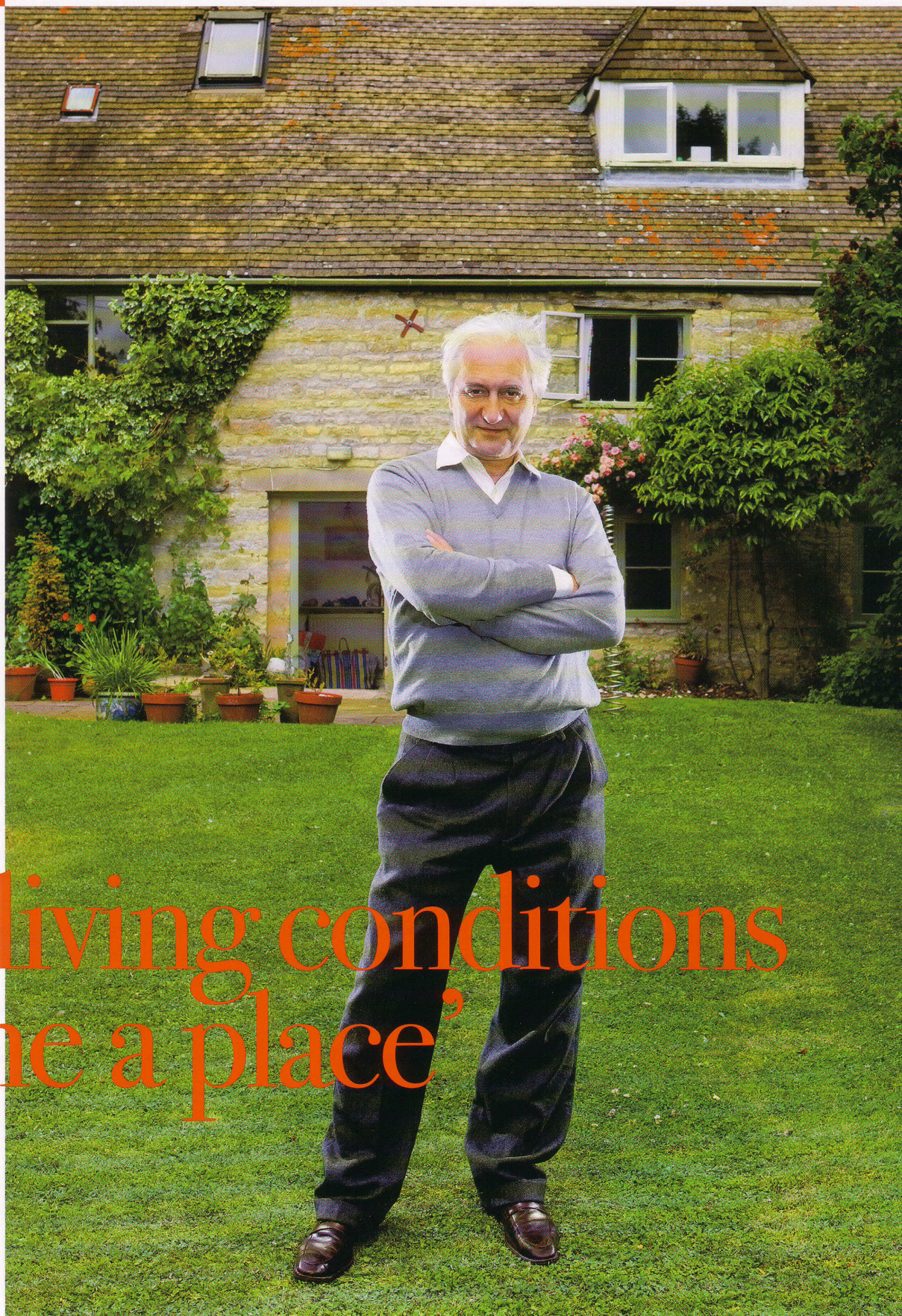
LIVING IN THE
NEW EUROPE

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DE BOTTON:
'REAL ESTATE
DEVELOPMENT
HAS A HUGE
SOCIAL IMPACT'

CHARLES
LANDRY:

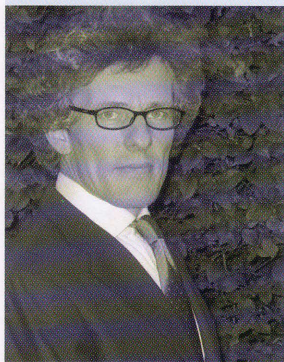
'The living conditions
define a place'

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REAL ESTATE



Accessibility a competitive tool for private players

COLUMN



'What you need is the creativity of private players, not public authority asphalt.' Mobility is inextricably bound up with Living. Dr. Daan H. van Egeraat of the independent consultancy firm Montefeltro researches innovation and accessibility.

THE INCREASING CONGESTION IN LARGE CITIES IS A headache for urban planners. Rightly so: if mobility does not improve cities will soon clog up completely. But despite what many people think there is a solution.

What is accessibility? On the one hand roads, parking places, public transport – typically the domain of public authorities, on the other hand marketing, segmentation and services – typically the expertise of private players. The point is that mobility and accessibility largely depend on perception. For example, research shows that with certain travel motives people do not mind long journey times, or that the poorer accessibility is not a problem as long as attractive plus points offset that 'inconvenience'. In other words, you don't need public authority asphalt, what you need is the creativity of private players.

ON TIME

Employers, through the terms of employment, can give their staff much more choice: forget the leased car, give them money so that they can decide for themselves whether to spend it on a leased car, a bicycle, a new kitchen or a world tour. The same goes for fringe benefits like a fixed workstation or parking place. Provide workstation budgets instead of workstations, then staff can decide whether to come to the office or work at home. That way you get a substantial reduction in the compulsory commuting.

In the entertainment sector a major concern is the optimum utilisation of entertainment centres and concert podiums. But that is not the concern of visitors, all they want is to arrive on time. So provide them with information, reserve a parking place, remove that cause for anxiety. Another case in point: retailers are dependent on accessibility for their turnover. But a run shopper's perception of accessibility is very different from that of a fun shopper. So look at customer behaviour and gear the service to that and, if required, differentiate it at the individual level. Someone is a customer as soon as they decide to visit the shopping centre, not just when they step onto the escalator. Bear in mind that the perceived journey time is always longer than the actual journey time. So inform customers about the expected length of the journey, about the available parking space and public transport times. Offer them valet parking or, even better, send a taxi to pick them up from home. If necessary, link the expenditure in your shopping centre to what you wish to spend on actually getting customers your shopping centre. With such individualised packages you can offset much of the accessibility loss caused by congestion. Even better: you can enlarge your catchment area and therefore your turnover.

INDEPENDENT

In the hands of private players accessibility is a competitive tool. High-quality, the favourite concept of developers and urban planners, is much more than the physical form of a building or the spatial quality. High-quality is also largely determined by the quality of the service to customers or staff. And what is more, if you approach accessibility from the service perspective you no longer need any extra asphalt at all. Minimise your dependency on infrastructure-building public authorities, use your own creativity and your own marketing insight. That will bring tremendous opportunities. <<<

DAAN VAN EGERAAT