

Elliot Lipton



Name:
Elliot Lipton

Position/occupation:
Managing Director,
First Base.

Residence:
Westminster.

“For me, it is not just about creating a sustainable building, but enabling people to live a sustainable life.”

Five years ago, Elliot set up First Base as the urban regeneration developer that specialises in delivering sustainable, high quality and affordable homes for everyone. First Base developments are created using sustainable materials and design principles, and the company is dedicated to creating sustainable communities. As Managing Director, Elliot sees his role as ensuring the company performs to the sustainability principles upon which it was founded and continues to set new standards for sustainable design and construction.

For Elliot, the best thing about London is the diversity the city offers through its people, culture and experiences and the things London needs to improve are crime, transport and affordable housing. In 2050, Elliot hopes London continues to be a vibrant and exciting place, shaped by the work that is happening today in creating new neighbourhoods. “London has the opportunity to set the standards from which the rest of the world can learn but we can also learn from what is happening in other places.”

Sustainability experience

Setting up First Base has been a career highlight, and sustainability has always been core to the company’s values. The company is currently working to deliver key worker homes through national regeneration agency English Partnerships’ London Wide Initiative and is involved in consortia delivering projects that will be key to London now and in the future (such as the development of Stratford City and the regeneration of Elephant and Castle). “Personally, I have experienced a shift in trying to make my lifestyle more sustainable, especially

since having children. Professionally, I want to do what I can to enable other people to live more sustainable lives by pushing the boundaries of sustainable design and focusing on creating long term, thriving and sustainable communities.

“At First Base we have always pushed the boundaries in the building industry and shown that there are ways of doing things more sustainably. As a business, we are responding to an increasing consumer trend for sustainable products, but this also presents an opportunity to raise sustainability standards across the entire delivery process. Knowledge sharing is key to this - we are founding members of the UK Green Building Council and have seen the benefits that have come about from setting this up. When knowledge is shared and people work together, the opportunities for win-win outcomes and improved experiences is enormous.

“Sustainability does not just mean energy - it’s a much broader definition that encompasses achieving the right economic, social and environmental outcomes and minimising the impact of everything we do as a result of living in London. As a housing developer, it comes back to understanding the impact of housing on the people living there - the impact of the house to their health, their employment and so on. Our existing projects are already focused on achieving the Eco Homes ‘excellent’ rating, but we want to stretch beyond this, such as creating zero carbon homes in advance of the Government’s 2016 benchmark. We set out to provide the best house we can so residents can achieve the best they can in the other aspects of their life and lead a truly sustainable lifestyle.”

The sustainability challenge

Elliot’s inspiration for becoming involved in sustainability stems from the belief that we can no longer go on being ‘resource greedy’ without serious environmental and social consequences. “In every major city in the world now, sustainability is becoming increasingly important and as Londoners, each of us has to consider what parts of our lives we are prepared to change or give up.

“We are not starting from a neutral position in London. The biggest sustainability challenge facing us is reversing our massive ecological footprint and this will not be easy.” In Elliot’s view, housing development, ‘fit for purpose’ infrastructure and reducing carbon dioxide emissions all present significant challenges to London’s goal of becoming a leading sustainable city.

“The Mayor has set a clear direction of encouraging more sustainable lifestyles by undertaking to improve transport networks, penalise private car use and reduce waste through recycling. In the housing sector, the impetus in London is to provide new housing to meet growing demand, yet new build housing accounts for only 1% of total housing stock in London. Existing stock is the pivotal sustainability issue.

“As developers, each of us needs to take a broader view and look outside our own narrow area to demonstrate that sustainable solutions are viable and do not have to cost more. In the housing sector, for example, collaboration between developers and utilities companies could result in combined heat and power facilities being provided that may not have been viable when considered as part of a single development. Existing products need to meet sustainable standards and new products must produce an economic payback to the developer as well as a wider social benefit.

“We are delivering the infrastructure now that our children will use and our children’s children will use so it is our responsibility to minimise the impact on London’s environment.” Elliot firmly believes the move to a more sustainable city must be customer led. “Customers should demand the most sustainable products they can get – it is this demand that will drive change.”