

122 URBAN DESIGN

Spring 2012
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**TEMPORARY
URBANISM**



**URBAN
DESIGN
GROUP**

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Championing excellent design quality in public realm projects is a notion that could easily be overlooked by local authorities given current economic pressures. It is heartening to see the promotion of design quality in the public sector projects for the recent UDG Awards, and a flagship public realm project come to fruition through the efforts of one local authority.

The flagship project is the transformation of Exhibition Road in London, sitting within the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and the City of Westminster. This street connects Hyde Park to the heart of Kensington and Chelsea, the Natural History Museum, residential properties and other high profile places, including the Royal Albert Hall.

The proposal to re-pave the route as a single surface was brave and controversial. It is now complete and being embraced by pedestrians. Car users negotiate warily across unfamiliar diagonal patterned paving, rather than kerb-and-channel and yellow paint.

While not a shared space or surface – the carriageways, parking spaces and pedestrian areas (though not cycle lanes) are separate and subtly delineated – the unifying paving pattern and increased pedestrian space gives greater confidence to people to fully occupy and meander across the carriageway at will.

The over-scaled diagonals track across pedestrian areas, carriageways and parking spaces, comfortably dominating the field of vision at ground level, while the central lighting shafts create strong verticals, successfully reflecting the classical and modern columns on the museums and a new Imperial College building.

The reduced carriageway does appear to confuse a few drivers, slowing their movement, and the overall impression is one of an

extended piazza, vastly improving the settings of some of London's most popular buildings as well as encouraging people to walk further along the street just for pleasure.

Are there any criticisms? Most of the obvious problems are easily solved by adding stuff – more benches, cycle stands and motor bike parks for instance. A more difficult issue is the lack of trees and the familiar underground services excuse does not make sense with such a wide road and existing trees begging the question.

But these points notwithstanding, the high quality transformation of this well-known street into a genuine place is clearly a triumph for Kensington and Chelsea in particular, as the instigators of the change. We can only hope that the project points the way for more public sector-led public realm projects at all scales and various locations around the country.

● Amanda Reynolds

UDG NEWS

The Annual General Meeting of the Urban Design Group will take place at 6.00pm on Wednesday 20th June 2012 at The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EJ. If you would like to stand for election to the UDG Executive Committee as a full or corresponding member, please contact the UDG Office by 6th June.

URBAN DESIGN LIFT PITCH £100 COMPETITION

If you happened to get into a lift with a VIP, possibly a Secretary of State for Environment and Housing (or the equivalent), and had three minutes to tell them what urban design is, and why it mattered, what would you say? We are inviting entries and you will need to provide justification for what you are saying, without simply making assertions. Please avoid jargon, and use no more than 300 words. The deadline is 1st June 2012 by email to Robert.Huxford@udg.org.uk. There will be a £100 prize for the best entry; and fame for anyone shortlisted.

BESPOKE INSURANCE SCHEME FOR URBAN DESIGN PRACTICES

While the risk of incurring a liability may seem remote, it is generally accepted that a professional engaged in any kind of design work should maintain Professional Indemnity insurance (PI). Clients expect to see it in place and the cover gives peace of mind, but at what cost? There are differences between policy wordings, and care is needed to ensure the correct wording is selected, but beyond that, and the choice of appropriate limits and excesses, PI cover is largely bought on price. The problem has been that the urban design discipline has not been recognised by the UK insurance market as distinct from, and crucially presenting a lower risk profile than, related fields like architecture and town planning. Thanks to the discussions by Amanda Reynolds, myself and underwriters, there is now a solution available. The results speak for themselves. Pilots with a couple of UDG members have shown savings of between 35% and 40%. We can usually obtain a quote from a copy of the renewal form, so minimal additional input is needed to see whether such savings would apply to any particular practice, large or small. Of course, the wording chosen is appropriate for the profession

(it is RIBA compliant) and it is often possible to include additional protection, like legal expenses cover. A small percentage of the premium is passed to the Urban Design Group, so our on-going good work is supported while improving the practice's profitability. Please get in touch for more information.

● Robert Huxford

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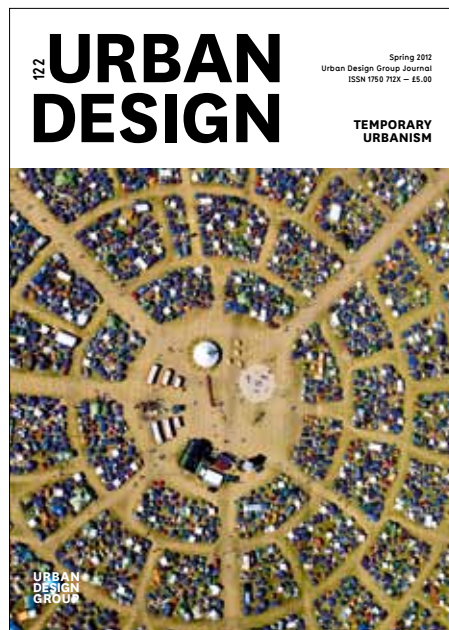
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Roskilde Festival 2008, Agora in the camping area. Photograph by Carsten Snebjerg, ROCKPHOTO

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DIARY OF EVENTS

Unless otherwise indicated, all LONDON events are held at The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ at 6.30 pm. Tickets on the door from 6.00pm. £3.00 for full price UDG members and £7.00 for non-members; £1.00 for UDG member students and £3.00 for non-member students. For further details see www.udg.org.uk/events/udg

WEDNESDAY 25 APRIL 2012

Temporary Urban Design

With the global financial crisis biting hard, temporary urbanism comes to the fore. This event, led by UDG Patron Irena Bauman, features many of the contributors to edition 122 of the journal and we hope to be welcoming speakers from Denmark.

WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2012

Garden Cities

Housing Minister Grant Shapps has revived interest in Garden Cities as a model for new development in the 21st century; but how well does Ebenezer Howard's concept fare in the modern era? Speakers include Patricia Craggs on Letchworth Garden City. Please check the UDG website for details of a UDG visit to Letchworth earlier in May.

TUESDAY 12 JUNE 2012

Local Authorities:

How to Create a Quality Town

What should local authorities be doing to raise the quality of the areas for which they are responsible? This event showcases local authority best practice as exemplified by entries for the Urban Design Public Sector Award over the past two years, including the latest developments in quality measurement, planning guidance through to political leadership.

WEDNESDAY 20 JUNE 2012

Urban Design Group AGM and Chair's Choice Event

The Urban Design group's annual general meeting will take place from 6pm, followed at 6:30pm by a speaker personally selected by out-going Chair Amanda Reynolds. The evening will also see the official launch of the Urban Design Awards 2012-13

WEDNESDAY 11 JULY 2012

Urban Design and Localism

What does localism mean for urban design? Has localism been at the heart of urban design right from the start? What are the best ways of involving local people positively in the future of their community? This event will feature contributors to issue 123 of the journal.

TEMPORARY RICHES

In this issue we see interesting examples of temporary urbanism in many forms, set up by different types of people. At its more conventional this verges on short-term cultural animation in urban spaces, which is well understood by designers but only sporadically found or experienced in most towns and cities; at the other end of the spectrum is the hippy developer with a keen eye for acquiring and managing free space without squeezing the profits too hard, and a messy enthusiasm for other people.

In times when new investment and developments are in doubt and many places are quietly closing down shop-by-shop, the idea of temporary places and ventures means less risk, less financial commitment, and potentially more fun. These engaging places can also be undertaken by anyone. It is this aspect that urban designers need to understand better; like localism, does this temporary approach warrant the urban designer’s involvement at all? The underlying themes in these articles from England and Denmark are reminiscent of the issues raised in *Urban Design* issue 108 (Autumn 2008) on

In Between Spaces. A richness, diversity and passion emerge when there are no rules and regulators, permanent or top-down.

SAVE THE DATE

18-20 October 2012: This year’s Annual UDG conference is being held in Oxford, marking the 40th birthday of the Joint Centre for Urban Design (JCUD), Oxford Brookes University. Running from Thursday to Saturday in the city centre and at the JCUD, the topic will be the value of urban design. We will shortly be inviting members to host workshops and posters. The programme will include a JCUD-led urban design master class on a live project in Oxford, alumni workshops, walking tours on public spaces, modern and infill development, and perspectives on urban design from leading figures in the development industry.

● Louise Thomas

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Kevin Lynch Annual Lecture: Christopher Alexander

23 November 2011, The Gallery, London

Christopher Alexander commanded a full house. He was a pertinent speaker for the Kevin Lynch Lecture of the Urban Design Group. John Worthington kicked off the dialogue with Alexander in front of an audience seated in cabaret style for greater conviviality and participation. Alexander illustrated his approach to ‘architecture as intuition and intent’ with his Eishin Higoshino High School and College Campus in Tokyo built in the late 1980s. Intention enables Alexander to discover things, whereas upside-down thinking assists him in creating a harmonious relationship between his projects, their neighbourhoods, the character of the existing sites and nature.

He adopts a thoughtful, slow, gradual, but also an intuitive and instinctive approach to making spaces as a builder. With his own company he is erecting physical things in layers of increasingly larger components. He does that in contrast to mass production whose monolithic units are unable to adapt, thus unable to connect to human feelings which, for him, explains the failure of mass housing over decades.

He gets inspiration from X-rays of embryos between 11-15 days which show changing chemical processes, generating jelly of different colours and consistency during this early period of formation. Observing these processes of DNA reveal how parts of the embryo transform into solid state. Similarly, he finds it essential to transform his ideas into a liveable place through continuously processing impressions in interaction with others. He chooses his partners during long conversations for their simplicity and humbleness. He uses techniques grounded in traditional vernacular processes. This is what he calls ‘world system A’ as opposed to ‘world system B’ which produces egocentric ‘Big Bang’ architecture. He captured the generative grammar of ‘world system A’ early on in his *Notes on the Synthesis of Form* (1964), *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* (1977), and *The City is Not A Tree* (1965). Interestingly, they are experiencing a revival like other alternative ideas on cities of that time, namely Jane Jacobs’ *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961). He develops his experiences further in his *Nature of Order* Books published in the noughties and in a forthcoming tome.

He bases his work on organic wholeness and scalable self sustaining systems. The Oregon experience illustrates how he promoted the long-term empowerment of people and use of local materials instead of masterplanning. He codified a community

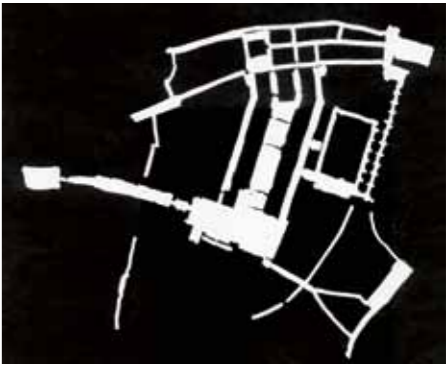
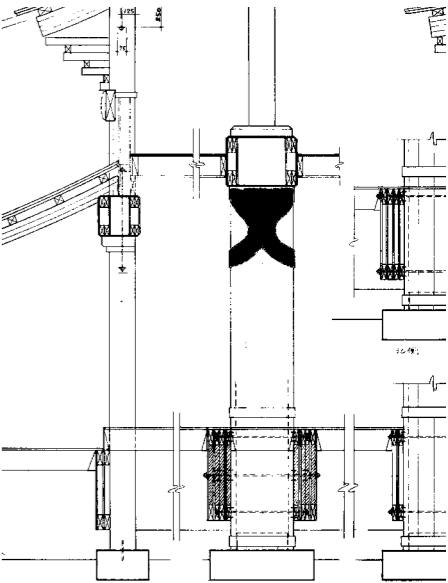


based approach to campus planning, which has been adopted in part by various cities. He continues to work with what he calls ‘instructions’, instead of masterplans and working drawings, an anathema for urban designers. During the discussion some wondered how he dealt with development control and is able to obtain planning permits, no mean feat for a \$10 million campus on 9 ha of open land. Others showed sympathy with his approach outside established design rules. Some noted though that his pictures included detail drawings and the odd section.

Costing projects in their totality before commencement is essential for Alexander. Costing - and probably cost approval - enables him to realise projects within budget and in time without modification. This still gives him the freedom to modify and refine the spatial configuration of buildings when implementing the project.

His work method consists of walking the site, taking measurements and notes on existing conditions, and flagging landmarks and relevant characteristics before conceiving a project of buildings with landscaped spaces between them, integrated into their surroundings. He works with 3D models and voids, some of them full scale, resting on skilful calculations, based on a cost plan. This enables him to produce workable buildings by resorting to the simplest solutions.

He aims at an integrated and benign scale, sensible for architectural imagination. For him, scale and parameters arise from discussions with the client which determine heights and massing, not gross density but always in a holistic context. Size does not matter to him as such. What counts is that every part fits and that they focus on each other, thus intensifying the harmony of buildings and the layout overall. He continues to refine and adapt well beyond the completion of the buildings during their use. For the Eishin campus he adapted Japanese decorative (vernacular) styles which were modified during construction to adjust to their surroundings. In such splendour of ordinariness users enjoy the buildings and the organic continuity



between them and their surroundings. Perhaps British urban designers will take a leaf out of Alexander’s book when they enjoy the freedom of building high quality developments on green field sites opened up by the Localism Act.

● Judith Ryser

8 November 2011, The Gallery,
London

With effective communication the timeframe in which a message takes to be understood can be shortened. Methods are available to convey conceptual, analytical, technical and perceptual information. With the increased role and importance of graphics comes a need for integrity too. Can good graphics make bad urban design look better? Some developers clearly think so as they now approach graphic design companies with ready-made schemes to be given the wow factor eg the walk-through visuals and computer generated images, but missing out the design process in the middle.



5 January 2012, The Gallery,
London

The Urban Design Group had prepared a soft landing for its members at the start of the New Year with a film night, popcorn and all, attended by a full house. Preceded by a short animation film about human movements by Ryan Larkin sponsored by the National Film Board of Canada in 1968, the UDG screened the documentary on *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* produced by William H Whyte in 1979 as a companion to his book on the same subject published in 1980.



Janine Tigou of *Designhive* spoke about the importance of a clear story in order to communicate with your audience. Two case studies illustrated the potential. In Victoria, London a fly-through visualisation dramatically enabled cluttered and traffic dominated streets to be calmed and swept clear. This clearly makes a quick impression and is the type of visual that major developers are demanding. A second visualisation, the Helix Residential Towers, was focussed on the street in response to a specific planning concern; the visual was instrumental in persuading members of a committee of the potential public realm and streetscape benefits of a development.

● Tim Hagyard

↑ Konza Technology City,
Kenya



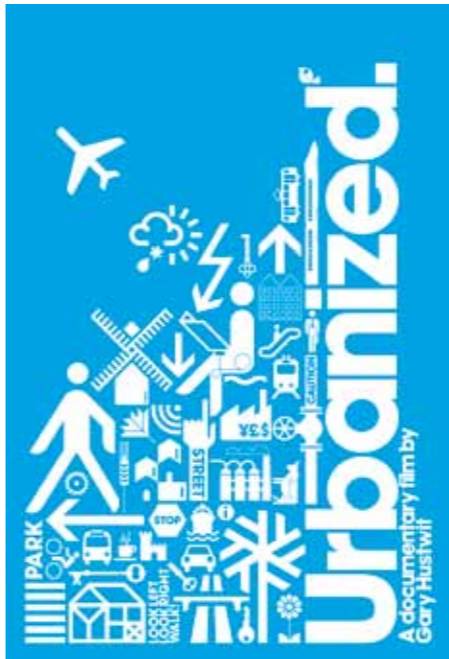
So what made the success of popular

● Judith Ryser



18 January 2012, The Gallery,
London

Following an introduction by PAL's Alison Borden, there were short two minute presentations: past UDG Chair Duncan Ecob of Devereux dealt with biophilia - using natural materials, daylight, water, vegetation and natural ventilation to bring benefits to mental, emotional and general wellbeing. Stephan Bradley Architects displayed a paraplegic, sports and conference facility in



Fast food is a major concern for Waltham Forest, and Gordon Glenday, Head of Planning Policy and Regeneration reported on the success of their Supplementary Planning Document in refusing the opening of 23 proposed hot food takeaway shops (HFT), and appeals successfully upheld. Only three HFTs have been given planning permission, and

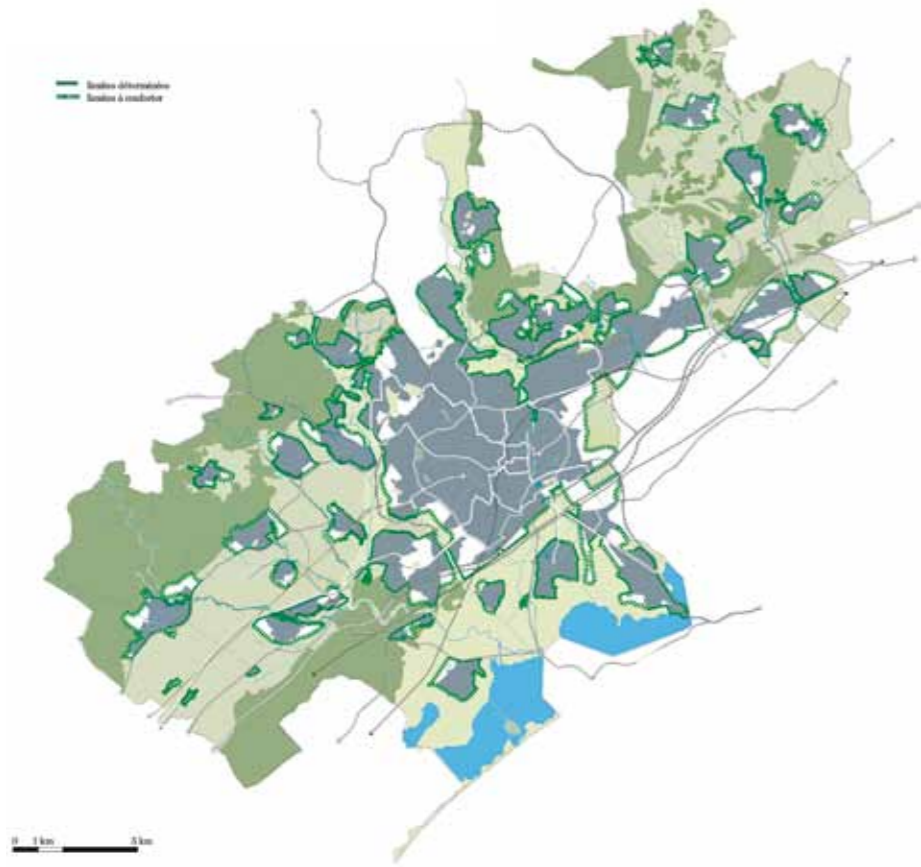


● Robert Huxford

Hustwit's subjects make the case for a collaborative form of urban design in which citizens make cities: where they don't, cities fail. Peñalosa pedals along Bogotá's high grade cycle routes next to the unmade road for cars, telling us this is democracy in action; Stuttgart's green campaigners clash with police as they attempt to halt the High Speed Rail Plan; migrants choose between the bathtub and the water heater in the

- Michael Owens

Limits to Localism



In the conclusion to his review of *Nonplan: an Experiment in Freedom* in issue 120 of *Urban Design*, Karl Kropf implies a link between that publication of 1969 and the latest non-planning initiative, which hides behind the mask of Localism. In suggesting that a genuine experiment in freedom would ‘give real control to Parish, Town and City Councils – not merely planning powers but fiscal and financial freedoms’ he may have in mind our experience of making plans for small settlements in France in the 1990s. These have both planning and fiscal powers, and it certainly was an invigorating demonstration of localism when the elected Municipal Council (for a settlement and nearby hamlets of 2,500 souls surrounded by forests and agricultural land) would meet on a Thursday night to make decisions so that the following day the communal public works department (with a total workforce strength of three) could go out and change the road signs on non-departmental roads.

However the big defect with this system is that our lives are not constrained within the medieval boundaries of parishes or communes. In recognition of this reality, for the last three decades France has been trying with little success to assemble larger units for plan making – just the opposite of what seems to be happening in this country now. Certainly in a country with 37,000 communes

i.e. planning authorities, this problem was more acute than in England. Three decades of effort to amalgamate communes has met with mixed success (*Cahiers français* 362, 2011). Their fiscal and other responsibilities have been amalgamated into 2,599 Etablissements publics de coopération intercommunale (EPCI). Since 2000 in order to provide a degree of planning strategy which meets the way that contemporary housing and labour markets work, the French have introduced a voluntary planning scheme for groups of communes. The Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale (SCOT) usually covers the conurbation around a large or medium sized city or, in more sparsely populated areas, linked networks of settlements.

Before its practical (if not virtual) extinction CABE recognised the same problem that ‘People are travelling much further nowadays in their daily lives, which means that the way in which we plan and design our towns and cities and rural areas will need to change’. It invested considerable resources in investigating possible solutions to what was initially called Strategic Urban Design (StrUD). The results of this work, which had begun to highlight some interesting directions and even question some conventional wisdoms of urban design, have since been entombed in the national archive under the title *Large Scale Urban Design* – presumably StrUD sounded

too much like an early English expletive.

In its work CABE used a number of case studies ranging from Cambridge Futures via the Emscher Landschaftspark to the Jeddah Strategic Framework, to demonstrate a range of solutions to the challenge of large scale urban design. Among those selected was the SCOT for Montpellier. This plan, covering 31 communes centred on the city of Montpellier, ranges from strategic decisions which are conurbation-wide for such matters as the protection of the natural environment through specific boundaries, to urban development for all of the settlements, to site briefs for key projects.

However a glance at any plan included in this SCOT reveals that a large area to the south east is omitted from consideration. For example the plan (left) not only shows this gap in the coverage, but also what a short length of Mediterranean littoral has been included in the SCOT. Questioning of the planning officers responsible for the work reveals that six communes had withdrawn from the SCOT in 2004 – two years after the initial boundaries had been established. It was suggested that this democratic decision was the result of reluctance on the part of these relatively wealthy communes to share their tax base with the rest of the conurbation. Not including in the plan those communes which cover a large proportion of coastline with all of its environmental management issues and an international airport, really begs the question of the efficacy of the SCOT. It clearly demonstrates how local democratic planning without a higher level of effective planning can frustrate any attempt to resolve larger scale issues.

● Ivor Samuels

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Montpellier SCOT

↑ Limits to the expansion of built up areas

Creating fertile ground for the civic economy

The Compendium for the Civic Economy (2011) by Indy Johar and Joost Beunderman of oo:/ sets out twenty five international case studies, which explore emergent trends in how places are being shaped and organisations developed to fit society’s changing needs and ambitions.

In the past year, we have seen growth in this civic economy. The People’s Supermarket in London or Manchester’s FabLab for DIY product development show how places can offer people different ways to participate in the daily economy. Community-owned wind turbines or the Monster Store, an out-of-school learning programme modelled on New York’s Brooklyn Superhero Supply Store, show how this could reinvigorate key infrastructures. Recently we have seen development of the fertile ground needed to make further progress. The Localism Act, combined with planning reform and other government initiatives such as the *Portas Review* of High Streets, have all played a part in creating the conditions for further civic economy growth. In January 2012, Prime Minister David Cameron, who provided a foreword for the *Compendium*, launched the new Cooperatives Bill at Hub Westminster, itself a prime example of the civic economy in action. The Bill will simplify 17 existing pieces of legislation to make it easier for entrepreneurs to innovate and make better use of existing physical assets.

By better understanding the kinds of actors in this new economy, urban designers, planners and others can harness the entrepreneurial spirit to revitalise places and spaces.

DEFINING THE CIVIC ECONOMY
We define the civic economy as comprising people, ventures and behaviours that fuse innovative practices from the traditionally distinct spheres of civil society, the market and the state. Founded upon social values and goals, and using deeply collaborative approaches to development, production, knowledge sharing and financing, the civic economy generates goods, services and common infrastructures in ways that neither the state nor the market economy alone have been able to accomplish.

Long before the current economic crisis, the outlines of a profound economic and cultural shift have been visible and chronicled by a wide range of observers since the late 1990s (at least). At its core this shift is rooted in an increasing overlap between traditionally distinct domains in the economy:

- A reforming state and public services, where the co-production of public goods and services between users and providers

is becoming an established principle.

- An increasing number of values-driven private sector companies moving beyond traditional corporate social responsibility to put social opportunities and ecological concerns at the core of operations, alongside a proliferation of hybrid business models that build on and bend traditional ownership structures.
- An increasing recognition that innovative working practices in and between organisations – based on the use of new social network technologies collaboration tools and creative approaches to self-organisation, and tapping into both global and local connections – can create better outcomes.
- A widespread trend amongst the public at large to be directly involved in the (co-) creation of cultural and other products either in digital or physical spaces – through the established third sector or, just as often, in new ad-hoc groups or networks.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PLACES?
Such trends have the potential to transform how places are shaped. This is particularly important now that much of the regeneration and place-shaping practices of the past decade or so have run out of steam. Not only has the property boom fizzled out, but more fundamental doubts have been raised about some of the key tenets of what was known as the ‘urban renaissance’.

Not all regeneration projects genuinely looked beyond bricks and mortar; many localities relied heavily on public sector expenditure; town centres proved narrowly dependent on the consuming (and debt-laden) public; the public retained sceptical about their ability to actually influence area change; and risk-averse, routine-driven approaches to regeneration resulted in a creeping homogenisation of places. As the impact of the recession and its aftermath continues to affect places across the UK, choices need to be made about how localities can best support a genuine recovery, particularly in the context of scarce resources.

RE-IMAGINING EXISTING ASSETS
A key lesson is that fertile ground for the civic economy needs not be ‘built’ anew or from scratch: the civic economy requires no expensive business parks or physical infrastructure. Instead, it is about rediscovering the resources that already exist, whether physical or human, and growing them. Therefore we need a shift in focus that starts with such existing assets, and values them as seedbeds for a low-cost, low-barrier-of-entry innovation economy. Urban designers and others that shape places should take a primary role in identifying how assets, both physical and social, can be activated into new perspectives for places.

- Opening up underused buildings and spaces to local entrepreneurial initiative should not be seen as a recession-time-only



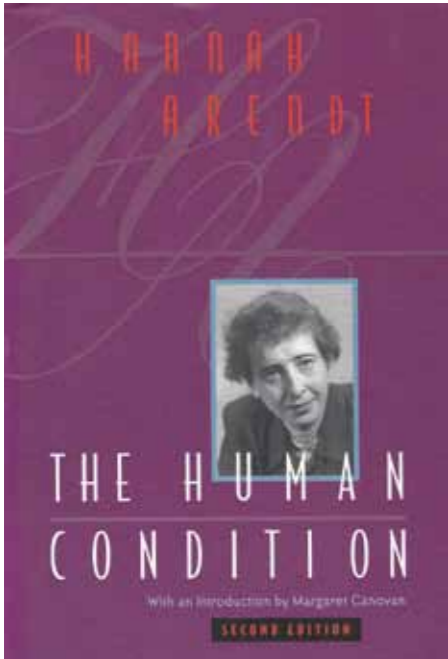
phenomenon but as part of a healthy approach to regeneration and a start-up economy: permanently maintaining a diversity of space typologies (in terms of ownership, unit size, rental levels and lease types) is crucial to make sure that local ventures can have access to affordable and flexible space and thus to the wider market at all stages in the economic cycle. Developers and landowners should be helped and incentivised to maintain or create these conditions both for vacant buildings and new development projects through, for example, planning gain conditions

- Enabling more creative and participative use of underused space depends on making clear what the pathway to re-occupation looks like. Much of this requires testing in practice, and seed-funding communities to take manageable risks in taking on local challenges. This may actually be a very effective way of using scarce public money and of kick-starting change without comprehensive masterplans
- Despite the pressure to make savings, localities need to retain and attract those individuals capable of providing leadership for the civic economy. Many of the case studies in the *Compendium* could only happen through creative collaborations across the organisational silos of planning, economic regeneration, community development and education or care – through genuinely opening up to local civic entrepreneurs inside or outside established organisations, and finding new ways to invite them and work with them to shape better places.

● Rachel Fisher and Joost Beunderman
The Compendium for the Civic Economy was commissioned by Rachel Fisher, Head of Policy and Communications, Design Council Cabe and Laura Bunt, NESTA

The Urban Design Library # 4

Hannah Arendt: The Human Condition (University of Chicago Press, 1958)



‘What are we doing?’ The conditions of mankind are something that we rarely theorise. It is very fashionable to study the compression of space and time, self and identity, mobility and migration, production and consumption, modernity and post-modernity, language and meaning. But very few philosophers or political theorists take the time to observe and analyse what it means to be human. To understand the life of both ‘man’ and ‘men’ is the task Hannah Arendt set herself in *The Human Condition*.

Arendt (1906-1975) is probably best known for her writings on totalitarianism (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 1951) and her highly objective and unsentimental reporting of the trial of a leading Nazi Adolf Eichmann. When the *Human Condition* was published in 1958, she described it as a ‘reconsideration of the human condition from the vantage point our newest experiences and our most recent fears.’ Her subject was not her contemporaries but inhabitants of the Modern Age – the period from the enlightenment to the First World War. She argued that events during her lifetime such as the use of the atomic bomb and space exploration were giving rise to a new imagination.

As well as a significant impact on social thought, the book has had a limited but nevertheless important impact on writers on architecture and urbanism. For example, the architectural historian Kenneth Frampton says that he never recovered after reading Arendt in the 1960s. Her categories inspired

his anthology *Labour, Work and Architecture*.

The interest of many urban writers is motivated by Arendt’s belief in the *polis* as a space of human action. ‘Wherever you go, you will be a *polis*’. These famous words expressed the conviction that action and speech create a space between the participants which can find its proper location almost any time and anywhere: ‘It is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly’. The space of appearance – the arena in which man is active and conscious of his actions among men - inspired the theorist-historian George Baird. Richard Sennett, too, is much taken by Arendt’s *polis* as a form of urban life in which speech is open and full, seeing it as a way to engage with the modern fear of exposure in cities. He highlights her idea of natality: one’s birth is not one’s fate, but rather natality is the birth of will to make oneself over again as an adult.

What Arendt provides is a method for looking at life, or the totality of human existence, which deals with both humanity and the man-made world (human artifice) and how they interact. She writes; ‘The reality and reliability of the human world rests primarily on the fact that we are surrounded by things more permanent than the activity by which they were produced, and potentially even more permanent than the lives of the authors.’

At a time when there is considerable confusion over - not to mention a blurring of boundaries between - the concepts of public and private, Arendt’s work is especially useful. She describes the significance of man as a public being and the distinction between what we do privately to survive (labour); what we do collectively as a result of the fact that we live in close proximity to each other and therefore interact in the general running of our day to day lives (work); and, what we do collectively as a matter of choice – as an act of democratic participation (action).

The Human Condition is Arendt’s encouragement to look again at the concept of public life from first principles. Man is, by his very nature, a social being, but ‘the public’ is a feature of society that is not naturally reproduced, but is reliant on autonomous individuals who choose to exercise their judgment about the progress of society. She describes historically the importance of the ‘potentialities of action’ that are generated by urbanisation, by men living close to one another. Talking about the public realm she says that unless ‘it is the scene of action and speech, of the web of human affairs and relationships and the stories engendered by them’, it lacks a *raison d’être*. She continues; ‘without being talked about by men and without housing them, the world would not be a human artifice but a heap of unrelated things to which each isolated individual was at liberty to add one more object; without the

human artifice to house them, human affairs would be floating, as futile and vain, as the wanderings of nomad tribes.’

In this single paragraph she manages to capture the relationship between the public realm – as a political entity and the public realm as a physical thing – and their interdependence. Her insight is particularly useful in our age where what passes for public life is not really public at all according to Arendt’s definition.

Today, institutions such as government sponsored agencies, local authorities and even central government itself are substituted for the public. Public pools, libraries and public events are generally government organised or institutionally directed activities designed to create a sense of our social obligations and responsibilities. The issue of ‘public’ and ‘private’ is often emptied of any real content and reduced to the administrative question of ‘who pays’. Our culture has become enveloped by proceduralism, risk aversion and superficial accountability. As a result our understanding of public life is often reduced to little more than the management of liability, an all embracing insurance policy that often prevents us from acting in the public realm rather than facilitating it.

Arendt does not talk specifically about buildings and places, but she does address themes which those of us who do, have a great difficulty dealing with. The question of how we as individuals and society are conditioned by the world we have already made – is at the heart of all contemporary discussions about planning and place-making. ‘Men are conditioned beings because everything they come in contact with turns immediately into conditions of their existence.’

● Penny Lewis, course leader for the Masters Course, Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and the Built Environment, Aberdeen

READ ON

Sennett, R (1990) *The Conscience of the Eye* (Norton, New York)
Baird, G (2003) *The Space of Appearance* (MIT Press)
Sotskey, W (2008) *Privacy: A Manifesto* (Princeton University Press)

The Urban Design Interview: Ludovic Pittié

What is your current job and how long have you been there?

I lead a team of twenty Landscape Architects and Urban Designers at Mouchel. I joined in October 2005 as a Senior Urban Designer and have climbed the corporate ladder with increased responsibility in the direction of the team and technical delivery over the last three years.

Can you describe the path that you followed to become an urban designer and what motivated you?

I studied Urban Engineering at the Engineering School of the City of Paris (Ecole des Ingenieurs de la Ville de Paris, EIVP). I had a choice of numerous schools, but there was something endearing, magical and mysterious about cities, which made me chose the EIVP over the Naval Academy or other civil engineering schools. During the completion of my masters, I did a number of internships abroad in management, civil engineering, infrastructure design and project management. After two years as a project manager for the Urban Utility Centre at Brooklyn University, I joined the New York office of EarthTech (now part of AECOM) as an engineer. After working as a highways engineer, I started to work also as an architect, becoming the intermediary between architects and engineers on a number of projects. Following work focused on the reconstruction of Lower Manhattan and the World Trade Centre site, I completed several masterplans and studies. I then actively sought to formalise my career in Urban Design after working on its fringes for several years.

What do you find exciting about your work?

It provides a good balance between the creative and analytical parts of the brain. Seeing projects built and recognised is an accolade that validates the excellence I strive for. The four awards that we received last year were a big boost not just in confidence, but also made me feel that I had made the right career choice. What is exciting for me is making a difference to the lives of others, on a small or large scale.

What do you think are the most important skills of an urban designer?

The most important skills are enabling dialogue, listening and analytical skills to frame the evidence into solutions that will ultimately be endorsed by the community.

What would you like to be doing in ten years’ time?

The international market expansion in the field provides a unique range of opportunities. I could be working at the OECD on International Development projects with the World Bank, heading my own company or the urban design department of a consulting company. I definitely will remain in urban design but I’m not sure yet where it might lead to...

As an urban designer, do you have a role model?

Yes and no. I can’t hide the fact that the work of Baron Haussmann, Robert Moses, Jane Jacobs and Jan Gehl has had an influence on me. However, I can’t say that I have a role model per se. What I definitely had was a great mentor in David Orr.

If you were to recommend an urban design scheme or study (past or present) for an award, what would you chose?

I really enjoyed the southern part of Exhibition Road – I thought the scheme really shone there as it represented a great canvas that responded well to the local range of activities (cafés, restaurants and land uses around it).

Where is your favourite town or city and why?

New York. Paris. Stockholm. Bordeaux. Manchester. There is a long list, depending on the mood and who you’re there with, but no one clear favourite.

Where is your most hated place and why?

My hometown! Just joking... can’t really think of a most loathed place!

What advice would you give to UD readers?

It might sound cheesy but I’d say ‘follow your heart’. I would also advise on using precedents and case studies carefully, making sure the transferability of the legal, economic and social context can justify their use. Everyone appears to have jumped on the shared space bandwagon, but without always understanding that the highways code, insurance and legal context in Europe is quite different to here; but I’m glad to see steps taken towards addressing the misconceptions around it by DfT and others.

What should the Urban Design Group be doing now or in the future?

I was pleased with the Urban Design Group taking the lead in setting out a form of professional accreditation. I still feel awareness raising should continue, de-mystifying what urban design is and the role of an urban designer – not so much as an academic path but in professional participation and continuous development.

Finally, who would you like to see interviewed by UD?

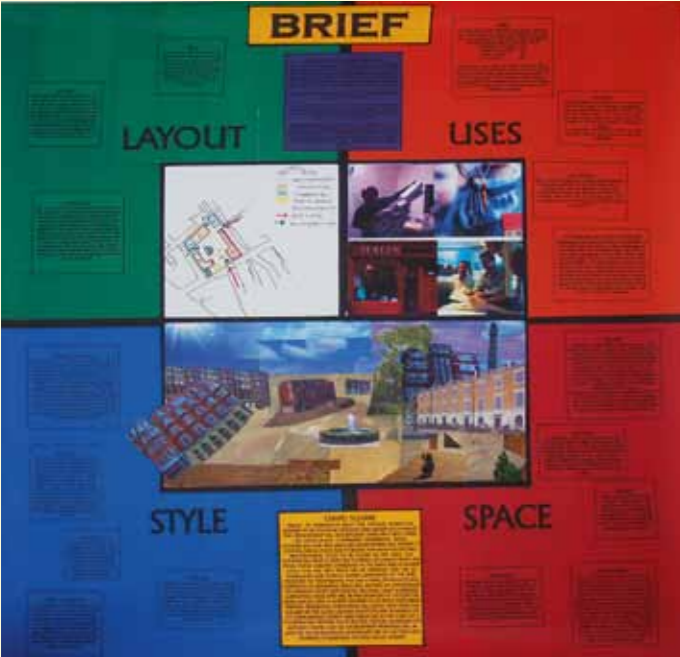
Good question - I’d suggest Peter Rowlinson, Service Director Planning and Regulation Services at Rochdale MBC.



↑ Listening to the community
↑↑ Reclaiming the Streets project: Townsend Street
↑↑↑ Design consultation workshops
↑↑↑↑ Mason Street

REFLECTIONS ON AN URBAN DESIGN EDUCATION

Catherine Kedge provides this warning: this article does not contain a CAD masterplan



I had twenty years’ experience in human resources management when I decided to take an undergraduate degree in Urban and Environmental Planning at London South Bank University. There was no carefully thought-out career plan; I wanted to make a change, but was not sure what I wanted to do. My manager at the time advised against leaving with the (probably sound) advice that, ‘no-one’s going to pay you to ponce around in art galleries’. Listening to the radio one morning, a working from home perk I could enjoy along with the wearing of pyjamas during conference calls, I heard an interview with a woman described by the interviewer as a town planner. I never did catch her name, but as she talked, it started to dawn on me that the work she was describing was what I wanted to do. All the things I was interested in seemed to be in the job description – architecture, conservation, art, social issues, politics, economics, history, geography, construction. Manpower planning versus urban planning – which would you choose? I handed my notice in before I had filled out my UCAS forms: there really was no carefully thought-out career masterplan. A few months into the undergraduate course, it dawned on me that the career described by the interviewer as town planner was really that of an urban designer - not a field of work I had even heard of before. But the undergraduate

course allowed me plenty of opportunity to explore this field, with urban design units throughout the course and the chance to specialise for the final semester dissertation. We looked at places where we lived, researching their history, considering potential futures and developing the skills to describe places and spaces and understand how people and activities affect them. We put our design skills to the test with projects in Brick Lane, Bankside and Borough Market. When I decided to stay on and take my Masters degree in Planning Policy and Practice, it was with the knowledge that I could again take an urban design specialism for the final project and dissertation. **MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL** The project work took place around the Middlesex Hospital site in London, which had recently seen the collapse of the Candy brothers NoHo Square development plans and was the subject of much speculation and rumour as to its future. It was three acres of prime development land in the centre of London with some pretty bruised and upset neighbours determined that they did not want ‘New York Living’ imposed on their area. We visited the site – as a class group, in twos and threes and on our own when time allowed. We had maps, some of us had sketch books and HB pencils, but

mainly we had our digital cameras held to our faces. We came back to class for a charrette day where ideas were swapped, rough designs drawn up and discarded and eventually presented. And they were great, huge fun, innovative, some practical, some pure fantasy. And at this stage, the neighbours would have hated them. As individual work progressed we had regular studio days and some one-to-one tutorials. Hints and suggestions were given, tailored to the direction our work was taking with the intention of pushing us to look a bit further, pointers towards useful books and alternative design techniques. We started to look at the practicalities – how much floorspace could you get on the site, how to balance the developers’ need for maximum return with a wish to create a place where people would want to spend time? For me, my enjoyment of trying to understand new surroundings by observing the people and activities of a place (a trait I generally kept quiet about for fear of being accused of nosiness) was validated and given direction when I was introduced to Jane Jacobs ‘sidewalk ballet’ as part of an optional Place, Performance and Social Usage unit. This unit included a study of movement through public places and required a bit of movement on our part. Terrifying for someone whose last experience of public choreography was country dancing with the Girl Guides, but



✓ MA project work showing the vision and design brief

ultimately enjoyable and rewarding. The interaction of people and place became the underpinning of my design ideas.

NOHO: NO WAY The people who objected to the NoHo development were not resource or time-rich middle-class NIMBYs who did not want to share their area - most of them cared deeply for the history of the place and wanted to see something built that added value to the area and would survive as long as the Georgian town houses and the Victorian pubs already there (albeit probably changing over time and quite possibly not being used as originally intended). They understood the genius loci of the area, the character or spirit which made it unique. I put down my camera - people are more willing to engage with you if you don’t look like a council bin inspector - stopped just watching and talked to people.

The attempted imposition of the NoHo Square name had deeply offended people’s sense of history and belonging. Many that I spoke to were alienated by what they considered bland computer generated designs and displays, and the photoshopped impressions of the completed scheme which seemed to show little relationship to the surrounding streets or people who used them. Eventually, it was the conversations I had with people around the hospital site that became the basis for my vision. My brief for the area was presented in poster style, bright colours and small pictures that meant you had to stop and look closely. I would like to think that the people I spoke to would have approved, or at least be willing to use it as a starting point for a development that wouldn’t be an imposition on their area.

CAD is a valuable, even essential tool, but people struggle to engage with those aspirational masterplans in soft shades of grey, blue and green which they know will often bear only a limited relationship to the finished project. They invoke either indifference or panic, both responses caused by the uniform styling and lack of intimacy or connection. Later during the summer, I watched from a mezzanine coffee bar as a team of planning consultants set up a public exhibition on the floor of a shopping centre below. Out came the display boards covered with CAD drawings of big grey blocks

and grassy green squares, a table full of feedback forms and some free chocolate bars. The consultants stood in front of their exhibition in black business suits and smiled. Passing shoppers glanced over, but no-one went near them, not even for free chocolate.

The urban design projects undertaken during my undergraduate and postgraduate courses have taught me some valuable lessons. I am confident enough now to know that my work won’t suffer if I turn off the computer, put down the camera and just stand, walk, watch and talk – to really learn an area and meet its people before I try to design for it. I don’t need display boards and glossy leaflets (although they have their place) to engage with an area and present my ideas. And I hope that the result of putting what I have learnt during this project into practice will help me to produce design proposals that will draw people in and not be met with indifference or distrust. ● Catherine Kedge, London South Bank University student, 2007-11

↓ Scenes from Fitzrovia area and site visit



DARK CITY

Mark Major calls for more considered planning of cities after dark



We carefully plan our cities by day to work for the people that use them. Each street, square, park and building is designed within a strict planning framework to balance its utility, diversity and aesthetic harmony. Identifiable districts and neighbourhoods emerge, voids between buildings become places for people, and buildings become landmarks or part of the urban grain.

Once darkness falls however our cities change and become revealed through multiple layers of light provided by a variety of hands. Publically owned street and landscape lighting vie with private architectural lighting, retail frontages, advertising and security lighting, often creating a chaotic scene, in which carefully considered daytime planning strategies are liberally reinterpreted or ignored. The delicate architecture of the local church, clearly articulated in sunlight, disappears next to the overstated lighting of the neighbouring hotel and the vivid displays of light and colour of commercial interests; office interiors, concealed behind reflective glass by day, are now on show; and, previously welcoming green spaces become scale-less and isolated.

Whilst the city can be an exciting place at night, it can also be incoherent, disorientating, de-humanising - even threatening. So how do we address the urban environment once darkness falls? Should we allow a free-for-all where different layers of light randomly collide, or exercise control? If we masterplan

places by day, should we not also masterplan them by night? What are the key considerations in planning urban light and meeting the requirements of those who use cities after dark?

VISION & PERCEPTION

The first consideration is vision: the need for artificial light arises from this basic requirement to see. Historically, whilst cities like London and Paris had organised public lighting systems well before the 19th century, in general lamps were portable - you took your light with you. With the development of industrialised lighting systems towards the end of the 19th century (first using gas and then electricity), we were suddenly freed to use light on a seemingly limitless basis. Whilst the initial reason for introducing light into the urban realm was to facilitate vision after dark, the reasons have since become more numerous and complex.

The second human factor is perception – how we feel. During the day the built environment is visually intelligible but at night it often is not, because normal visual clues like direction, scale and spatial relationships can disappear or become distorted. This can make people feel disorientated and, consequentially, uncomfortable, even fearful. Using light to make space more legible and to aid way-finding helps put people at ease. This is often best achieved through illuminating vertical rather than horizontal surfaces and, in an urban context, illuminating key

routes, meeting points, visual boundaries, vistas, landmarks and thresholds.

NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS

Darkness is often seen as a negative in urban environments, perhaps due to an innate fear of the unknown or cultural conditioning. The modern city is filled with light: our quest to vanquish the night has virtually expelled all darkness from our urban lives and disconnected us from nature. Yet darkness has a very positive and important role to play in cities: it provides intimacy, peace, privacy and relaxation and so should be an integral part of city life.

SAFETY

Lighting is critical in supporting safety, helping to manage the conflict between people and vehicles and define changes in level and obstructions. Making the city safe after dark involves considering how much light is applied and where. Good vertical illumination at the kerbside is more important to a driver seeing a pedestrian than high levels of light in the middle of the highway. Whilst safety is about vision, security is about perception. Good lighting supports surveillance – both casual and CCTV. However, the relationship between light and crime is complex. Various studies have attempted to link improved and brighter lighting to a direct reduction in crime, but there is little hard evidence to support this. Crime is often a question of opportunity, which can arise during the day or night. Lighting can however certainly reduce the fear of crime by helping people to feel safe and secure through providing good recognition and a legible environment.

CHARACTER & IDENTITY

Another role for lighting is to create character and contribute to place-making. The importance of making places for people rather than simply creating space is a well-established principle of urban design. It is perhaps surprising how little attention is given to this once the sun goes down. Handling light properly, and in a contextual manner, takes considerable understanding and experience and goes far beyond the specification of fixtures. Understanding how light should fall on a surface to in order to effectively define form, activate materials, reveal colour and enhance texture is critical. Light can also

✓ New Street Square, London: defining a human scale and vistas. Photograph: James Newton
→ Wharf Green, Swindon: vertical surfaces and landscape features heighten perceptions of security and a sense of place. Photograph: James Newton

create an identity for a place experienced on the ground, as well as transferred around the world via photographs and other visual media. Good lighting therefore adds considerable value by contributing not only to place-making but also to identity and branding. As a result, engaging good lighting designers on public realm projects is becoming increasingly important to creating high quality experiences of cities.

ACCESSIBILITY

Lighting also supports accessibility – extending the use of the built environment into the hours of darkness for as many people as possible, including those with disabilities and special needs. Lighting can be used to assist those with visual impairments by, for example, preventing glare and avoiding strong contrasts; ageing eyes and the changing demographic of many cities will make this an important consideration in the future. Light can also become an integral part of city way-finding and visual information systems – from simply using marker-lights or beacons to supporting material and colour systems, to integration with environmental graphics and digital media.

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

The final and key consideration is to create sustainable solutions in terms of reducing environmental impact, supporting social needs and reinforcing the night-time economy. Light is a very visible form of energy use - we can clearly see when we are wasting light and, as a result, wasting energy. Unoccupied buildings with their lights left on and light pollution over our cities are well reported, but less well known is the issue of over-illumination. The US Department of Energy estimates that over-illumination wastes around 5 per cent of the total estimated annual consumption of oil in the US. Over-illumination is a major issue that arises from lighting areas too brightly, using inappropriate light sources, directing fixtures incorrectly and not maintaining and controlling them properly; this in turn leads to light trespass and light pollution. Whilst a reduction in the view of the night sky is often cited as the main problem, light nuisance and light trespass are more problematic, creating unwanted impacts on bio-diversity and human health and well-being. Over-lighting can also play

↖ King's Cross Lighting Masterplan revealing the history after dark. Image by Speirs + Major
↗ Trafalgar Square, London: appropriate quality and quantity of light enhances heritage areas. Photograph: Paul Bock
↘ Devonshire Square, London: making cities more legible after dark. Photograph: James Newton

havoc with our circadian rhythms – our bodies are simply not physically attuned to the almost constant presence of light. Adopting a truly sustainable approach to the after-dark city involves balancing environmental needs with the positive social and economic benefits that light can bring. Apart from the ability to extend working hours, the night-time economy is now a valuable feature of any urban centre, bringing people into the city to enjoy late night shopping, entertainment, dining and the benefits of urban living after normal working hours. This is particularly important in the northern hemisphere where a good part of the normal working day takes place during the hours of darkness.

DARK CITY

Combined with our understanding of human vision and the benefits of darkness, the problem of over-illumination and light pollution gives rise to the concept of ‘Dark City’. Cities do not need to be lit brightly to be successful, but rather carefully illuminated and then managed. Towns and cities may use more light than rural areas to meet the combined challenges of safety, security and accessibility, but the degree to which they need to be lit deserves much wider study. Just as the city builders of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries realised that cities required extensive areas of green space to make them healthy and beneficial places to live, so our cities need areas of lower light levels and even total darkness to enable them to thrive. Lighting every square metre of the city is the equivalent to concreting it over and should therefore be resisted.

INTEGRAL TO URBAN DESIGN

Good lighting is fundamental not only to our enjoyment of the built environment but is an integral part of urban design. Rather than being seen as a technical subject or cosmetic addition, well-designed lighting can make a huge contribution to our enjoyment of urban life: meeting our basic needs for vision as well as creating a positive ambience, keeping people safe and secure, assisting with accessibility and way-finding, and supporting communal and economic aims. Having light requires using energy and valuable natural resources, so we need to treat it as a more precious commodity - carefully considered at all stages of design



and properly managed and controlled to avoid unnecessary pollution and waste. We can create a sustainable approach to lighting that will not only allow our cities to be enjoyed after dark by us, but also by future generations.

● Mark Major, architect and lighting designer, Director and Founding Partner, Speirs + Major

TEMPORARY URBANISM – THE STEPPING STONES TO PLACEMAKING



There is an almost universal acceptance that the future is riddled with uncertainties which seem, for the first time since the Ice Age, to be beyond human control. These include: approaching peak oil supply and a lack of replacements for fossil fuels; a growing awareness that we need to curb our greedy use of natural resources; the changing climate; the rise of global financial markets; the exposed fragility of institutions too large to fail (and the fact that most of us do not understand how banks and money actually work); an almost simultaneous awakening to wealth discrepancies in many western countries (and the social damage that brings); rapid population growth; increasing multiculturalism; and, the relentless and exhausting advance of technology. All of these render the structures of decision-making

that worked well in the 20th century, antiquated and ineffective.

But amidst the liquidity of our times, vast proportions of cities and towns remain familiar – they are changing physically but at a slower rate than the activities within them. The physical fabric is therefore all the more important because it provides an anchor to all that is shifting. Nevertheless there is constant pressure for the urban fabric to modify and change: shrinkage, expansion, densification, new transport, new building typologies, and changing ownership patterns are but a few of the drivers. Meanwhile the rate of change, weakening economies and the undermining of local political power in relation to global forces render the usual tools of urban design and masterplanning futile. Policies change before draft strategies become adopted documents, chief executives hop onto the next job, or economic conditions alter almost before the ink on the masterplan is dry.

These are the conditions that give rise to the notions of temporary urbanism. Meanwhile spaces, pop-up shops, beaches in the city events, cultural outdoor festivals, markets, urban gardens, and squats all come under this umbrella.

The trend is emerging and is in the early stages of analysis and theorising. It signifies a shift from

city-making through the construction of permanent physical fabric, to the emphasis on the city as a backdrop to activities, a laboratory for experimentation in new ways of being.

Many temporary urbanism trends and projects have already been documented in publications such as *Urban Pioneers: Temporary Use and Urban Development in Berlin* by Urban Catalyst published in 2007; *Everyday Urbanism* by J L Chase, M Crawford and J Kalinski (2008) and *Insurgent public space – Guerrilla Urbanism and the remaking of the Contemporary City* edited by J Hou (2010). The most comprehensive publication appeared this year: *The Temporary City* by Peter Bishop and Lesley Williams.

There is a danger that the temporary ways of managing space could be misrepresented with careless claims that some of these titles imply. Temporary urbanism cannot ever be a city in itself – it can only be an element within or a layer of a city. The real strength of this emerging form of urbanism is in the lightness of its touch that allows for experimenting and prototyping, and for possibilities to be tested, evolved, monitored and understood in a way that none of the large conventional regeneration projects ever could. So much urban design has been delivered at great cost without understanding place, engaging with those who live there or testing a prototype to establish validity and sustainability.

We invited six writers to explore the specific power of temporary urbanism to act as the stepping stone to more permanent regeneration. The British experience by Cany Ash

focuses on three projects in London and Leicester, which explore the potential of the temporary to act as a catalyst to permanent adaptations of neighbourhoods. John Harrison examines the power of temporary projects in Dewsbury to engage local community and change perception of the town.

Danish experience and thinking are explored in further three essays. Jes Vagnby and Peter Schultz make a case for temporary urbanism as an inclusive process allowing the citizens to be co-producers and co-designers of their own city, through the impact of the Roskilde Festival on the city. Henning Thomsen investigates the story of squatters in Prags Boulevard 43 in Copenhagen, and the necessary pre-condition of temporary urbanism to break rules and orthodoxies in order to find new, persuasive ways of regenerating deprived neighbourhoods. Tina Saaby, the city architect of Copenhagen, firmly defines temporary urbanism as one of a number of tools for fixing temporary problems and explores this through three projects led by both the public and private sectors. Lastly Florian Kossak reflects on how temporary urbanism facilitates discourse on radical urbanism, as well as the possibility of politicising students and providing alternative processes of making architecture and places. This family of essays will hopefully contribute further to the evolving discourse about this new way of urban design.

● Irena Bauman, Bauman Lyons Architects

WHEN PEOPLE TAKE CHARGE

Henning Thomsen looks at squatting in the city today



Once it was called squatting – occupying an abandoned unoccupied space or building that the squatter does not own, rent or otherwise have permission to use - today it is called ‘temporary urbanism’. This is used pro-actively in urban development sometimes to make citizens familiar with new potential development areas, and sometimes to kick-start urban development by involving the grass roots creative classes, to make an area more lively and energetic before planning begins and new buildings are constructed. Has squatting become mainstream or have the squatters and the establishment simply found ways to join forces that benefit both of their individual endeavours as well as the city?

SQUATTING: A COMMUNAL ACTIVITY FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES

On a few occasions in recent times, Denmark has experienced events similar to civil war. Almost all of these events have ties to the squatting community that grew out of both poor housing conditions, as well as a lack of more accommodating and unregulated places in the city for young people to gather, a situation characteristic of many larger cities throughout Western Europe in the 1970s and 1980s.

The first large squatting event in Denmark that also became the most widely known and longest living was the 1971 occupation of the empty buildings on the former military area of Christianshavn in Copenhagen, Christiania, or as it came to be known: the Free City of Christiania. Although there have been incidents of a violent

nature associated with the history of Christiania, by and large, this was and remained a very peaceful occupation.

The most violent civil war-like events took place on 18 May 1993, in the wake of the Danish referendum on the Edinburgh Agreement, when Danish police fired guns on demonstrators in the streets of Copenhagen. Although the demonstrations on this particular occasion were tied to a national political situation - the reversal of the Danish people’s decision to say ‘No’ to the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 in a second referendum on 18 May 1993 with a majority of parties in the parliament now supporting a ‘yes’ - the connection between the events during the night of 18 May 1993 and the squatting community is undisputed.

The foundation of the early squatting movement however was very much political. Apart from pointing towards unreasonable housing conditions in many larger cities, and in particular for young people, the movement also laid bare the fact, that many buildings stood empty, while certain groups in society had a hard time finding places to be, and spaces in which to express alternative ways of living in the city.

This was seen as an unfair and undemocratic situation created by a certain political and economic system - capitalism. A socialist foundation is evident in the squatting movement and the analysis of what was seen as the fundamentally unjust nature of a modern capitalist society created a fertile ground for various other political dialogues. Many of these, and this needs to be acknowledged, have resulted in political actions that have helped to

shape cities in ways that are more accommodating to a diversified society.

SQUATTING: A COMMUNAL ACTIVITY FOR PRIVATE PURPOSES

The original squatting community developed from a peaceful beginning in the 1970s and 1980s to become a more radical movement in the early 1990s. Several incidents with police interference, not least the dramatic events of 18 May 1993, helped to form a core community, with a military-like organisation that did not refrain from using violence. This part of the movement in the late 1990s and onwards, developed into what has become known as the ‘autonomous movement’ – a somewhat more radical movement with a limited political agenda. Squatting, as we knew it, seemed to become extinct in the late 1990s.

In recent years we have seen a revival of what might at first glance seem to be a new form of squatting. Empty factory buildings or warehouses are being taken over by groups of people in search of a place to carry out various activities. Often these are of an artistic nature but also more entrepreneurial and commercial activities, such as start-ups in the creative business sector; looking for affordable places to stay and grow, they are attracted to these unassuming yet flexible spaces, usually located in less commercialised areas away from the traditional business or office districts.

What is remarkably different from the original squatting movement of the 1970s and 1980s is that the buildings and spaces are now occupied in agreement with or even on request by the owners of the abandoned buildings, whether they be private property owners or the municipality. The activity of occupying buildings is no longer an action against the existing society and its unjust nature, but rather aimed at optimising individual opportunities and the ambitions of various people.

To understand what might be going on I visited one such example in Copenhagen, Prags Boulevard 43, a temporary take-over of a former lacquer factory.

TEMPORARY OPPORTUNITIES – THE STORY OF PRAGS BOULEVARD 43

‘The spaces may be temporary, but the relations are lasting.’ They think it sounds a bit pompous saying it like that, but the term relations keeps coming up when Christian Fumz and Jesper Kofoed-Melson, the two men who initiated Prags Boulevard 43, speak about the project. I meet them on a sunny day among the urban gardening plant boxes at Prags Boulevard 43 on Amager in Copenhagen. The site and buildings belong to Akzo Nobel, a large chemical manufacturer, and used to be the location of the Sadolin lacquer factory. The property has been abandoned for several years. Christian Fumz knew of the place because he used to live in a trailer not far from it – he may also but he is not certain, he says with a twinkle in his eye, have visited the property at night some years ago.

Christian Fumz trained as a primary school teacher. He has prior experience from Bolsjefabrikken (The Candy Factory) with initiating and managing a user-driven culture house. At Bolsjefabrikken the idea of ‘space for everybody’ was the guiding mantra. Jesper Kofoed-Melson graduated from Roskilde University Centre in



Pedagogic and Performance Design. For some years he has worked on a project with the city as a stage for cultural exchange. For a while he was the manager of the cultural space Under Vandet (Under Water).

Christian and Jesper consider Prags Boulevard 43 as the completion of their apprenticeships in user-driven culture. They initially talked with the owners Akzo Nobel. Just two months later the first projects were able to move into the empty and abandoned buildings. They have the right of use of the site and buildings for two years. When I meet the two guys more than twenty projects and 120 people are using the site and buildings.

My initial thought is that it would be quite difficult to get commercial property owners like Akzo Nobel to accept this deal of the free use of their property. But Christian and Jesper make it sound very simple. The same goes for the various projects that now inhabit the site. They knew of some of them beforehand, but most approached them on their own initiative and because they had heard about the place from friends. *‘And then they stopped by and asked if they could move in. And we have been able to say, Yes, of course you can’.* Getting out of the chair and doing something for yourself is an attitude that Christian and Jesper generally appreciate.

Christian explains: ‘I have this fundamental belief with regard to our society that we get way too much served on a plate. We get an education, and it seems as if a road is laid out for us and then we can just walk along and no one is harmed. But the personal responsibility, the individual taking a stand, is not necessarily something you come across on that road. That is, until you come across a place like Prags Boulevard 43 and until you meet this free space, where you have to make decisions and meet other people that may or may not have quite the same outlook on what a place like Prags Boulevard 43 is and should be. This is bound to cause friction and this I see as very healthy in the process of creating something new. You should never get too comfortable.’

The occupiers and projects that have moved in pay a very low rent. It only covers basic communal needs like water and electricity, and the spaces are made available as they stand; whatever interior decoration is needed is up to the individual user.

↖ The contemporary Art Space gallery
↖↖ Jesper Kofoed-Melson and Christian Fumz, the initiators
↑ Internal spaces being built

↑ Prags Boulevard 43, the Akzo Nobel site – a former Sadolin lacquer factory



Walking around inside the buildings I am quite astounded by the ingenuity of the many users - whole interior cityscapes have been created with the help of wood and plaster boards – temporary spaces in the temporary opportunity.

A large communal workshop has been set up with tools ready for everyone to use. There is also a large communal space that the users can occupy temporarily for larger projects that require a big space. Currently Danish fashion designer Henrik Vibskov’s carpenter is at work here preparing the next show that will take place in Berlin in a few weeks.

On our tour of the buildings I am shown both a motorcycle garage and a landscape architect, who has moved in to finish her thesis work. She occupies an office from where she can overlook the activities in the urban gardening project in the yard below. The art gallery, 68 sq m Art Space is situated upstairs, and currently showing contemporary Thai video art. No projects are deemed unsuitable. The site and buildings will become full up, but this is just the way it goes, they say. It is rewarding to be able to say yes and see creativity blossom. ‘A couple of ceramic artists moved in. Next to them some spaces stood empty. Jesper and I were discussing what would be the next project moving in. But before we even finished our deliberations the ceramic artists had already appropriated the spaces – they had always dreamt of a space, where they could invite foreign ceramic artists to come and work for a while and at the same time inspire their own work... this is amazing, is it not?’, says Christian.

Jesper again mentions the word relations. ‘We are very attentive to relations, the cross disciplinary connections we can help nurture. We can see that great dynamics come to life when you encounter so much diversity. This is what we try to be, the entity that connects owners and users. We try to create new ways of organizing activities, ways that go beyond the existing institutionalised ways.’

Christian and Jesper talk about the difference between passive and active culture users. ‘Being an active user is what this place is about. Being in dialogue with other people, meeting other people instead of just taking care of yourself and your own project,’ says Christian, and Jesper agrees: ‘We give people an opportunity, a temporary

opportunity – what direction it takes hereafter, is not for us to decide. The user has to take charge. This is what it is about.’

At the end of my tour of Prags Boulevard 43 I ask Christian and Jesper what they think is particular about a place like this. As if speaking in one voice, they say, ‘The particular is that the place is inhabited by committed people who have found a free space in which to express themselves. You don’t find many places like that in our modern and very orderly society. You don’t find many public places in the city you can go to without having to spend money. Even the public culture institutions make a living from selling coffee today. You have to spend money. Giving committed people a space and a roof over their heads, that they can actually afford, gives them the opportunity to work on their own projects – and this is our project.’

Viewed through an historical lens, it would seem that the two versions of squatting are distinctly different. The earlier squatting took place in opposition to the existing conditions in society, not least the existing political and economical conditions. More recent squatting seems very much to take place in accordance with existing conditions, not least in accordance with political powers and the workings of the economy in general.

CONCLUSION

Viewed through another historical lens, there is perhaps more that connects the two different versions of squatting than separates them, maybe what connects them is this: people taking charge of their situation. Even if one version, the original, at first glance may seem more politically committed, the other more recent version seems to hold a lot of promise for the transformation of our cities into more accommodating and inviting environments for people to take part in and take charge of - just without the violence.

The fact that people increasingly want to take charge of their living situation in the city has dramatic repercussions on urban design as a professional activity. This though is another story. ●



● Henning Thomsen, architect, political scientist and writer, in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Head of Planning at Schonherr, Denmark.

URBAN LIFE FOR EVERYONE – TEMPORARY MEASURES AS A PLANNING METHOD

Tina Saaby asserts that the city of Copenhagen offers urban life for everyone



In the City of Copenhagen we see temporary measures as a planning method that can be used when planning urban life and architecture in the short term. It does not replace masterplanning, local planning and other strategic planning tools. But it can inform, inspire and motivate planning procedures, helping to create urban life here and now.

The focus on urban life is key to discussing what kind of city we want in Copenhagen. We have recognised that by discussing urban life and what architecture does to us, more than how architecture looks, we can establish a dialogue with citizens about how the city should develop.

METROPOLIS FOR PEOPLE

In the strategy from 2009, *Metropolis for People*, we define urban life as the experience, the expression, the movement and the meeting of people. Urban life is not just about café life and tourist spots, it is what happens when people walk around and hang out in public spaces. Urban life happens on the squares, streets, in the parks, playgrounds and when cycling through the city. The point here is that urban life is much more than buildings and urban space, it is also much more than what we as architects and planners can design.

Overall the City of Copenhagen has an approach to urban design where we consider urban life before urban space, and urban space before buildings. This approach gives us a better opportunity to discuss what a city should be like as well as to evaluate how succesful our different initiatives eventually are. By going beyond what the city looks like and taste as a defining parameter, we are much more able to establish goals and accompanying markers on which we can collect data and evaluate progress.

GOALS FOR URBAN LIFE

In the City of Copenhagen we have established three main goals for our ambition to create more urban life. The first goal is ‘More urban life for everybody’, the second is ‘More people to walk more’, and the third is ‘More people to stay longer’.

Even with these three goals, we are aware that we cannot as a city administration create urban life on our own. But with citizens, landowners, the business community and experts of various kinds we can create a city that invites people to take part. We can also make it easier for people who want to get involved and who have ideas on how to make the city livelier through initiatives.

One such initiative is called ‘Gang i København’ (Making the city happen). This is a task force group that works strategically across different administrative sectors and ensures that people with projects share a common administrative gateway to the municipality. One point of contact makes it less complicated for people and businesses to make things happen. When events are run in the city - a festival, a sports event, a temporary business in a container, a bike selling food, etc. - you are a part of a temporary project in the city and part of urban life.

The initiative ‘Making the city happen’ also aims to make it easier to set up temporary projects and to use temporary measures in the urban development of the city, from the large scale and ambitious to the more modest and unorganised. Several publications help to inspire people to work with temporary projects as events but also in the form of more physical projects.

But how does all of this work in practice and what can we learn from working with temporary measures in urban development? Three very different case studies from Copenhagen explore this - the Plug-and-Play park in Ørestad, the temporary

↶ and ↷ The Plug and Play Park, Ørestad
↑ Sundholm South lighting project
↗ Experiencing the Carlsberg rope shelter



lighting project in Sundholm South, and the use of temporary measures in the re-development of the former Carlsberg brewery site.

ØRESTAD – PLUG-AND-PLAY PARK

The Plug-and-Play park in Ørestad in Copenhagen is a temporary park for various urban sports activities. The aim was to make an urban attractor, a destination on an empty site in an area where investors eventually will be building new housing and offices, but which is currently vacant. Ørestad is a new urban quarter less than ten minutes from historic Copenhagen, close to Copenhagen Airport Kastrup and the bridge to Sweden, Ørestad is the geographic centre of the Øresund Region and a gateway to Copenhagen because of its exceptional traffic connections, and there is a vision for Ørestad as mixed use urban area. About 5,000 people live in Ørestad today and 10,000 people work for businesses there; in 15-20 years’ time, Ørestad is expected to have about 20,000 inhabitants and 60,000 – 80,000 people working in the area.

In August 2009 the 25,000 m2 new Plug-and-Play temporary park was opened. The park has been specially designed for use by skaters, parcoures practitioners, basketball, volleyball and football players and dirt jump riders. The idea at the outset was to attract both traditional sports as well as to give space to newer street-oriented sports activities. It was the first designed parcoures field in Copenhagen and it attracted kids that normally never go to Ørestad, who now suddenly take part in the urban life in this part of the city.

In order to also attract more advanced and demanding sports practitioners, the design is of a very high quality level - the investment of nearly 15 million DKK - was not insignificant in the light of it being temporary. Another important aspect in the conception and design of the park has been the involvement of stakeholders who would eventually be the users of the park. Thus the organised and semi-organised urban sports communities became involved very early on and throughout the design and construction of the park. Together with the financial contributors that range from the City of Copenhagen, the City & Port Development

Company (the public-private owners of the site), and various foundations, the process of creating the Plug-and-Play park is evidence of the multi-level and multi-actor approach, that is deemed necessary to make urban development projects a success today.

Apart from attracting new visitors to Ørestad and establishing a more positive and youthful identity, the project also helped to create a new focus on the whole street sport scene and insights into how these urban sports have their own visual and architectural expression - changing our perceptions of a playground.

TRANSITION – TEMPORARY LIGHTING IN SUNDHOLM SOUTH

‘Transition’ in Sundholm South, a temporary lighting project with light installations in five different locations, is a part of an urban renewal scheme. It puts special focus on the spaces that are empty, during the period when plans are still being finalised and everyone is waiting for the permanent foundation stones to be laid.

In Copenhagen we have several urban renewal projects. Part of the strategy for this is that they involve local people in developing urban space projects alongside the other renewal initiatives that are taking place in the area. Citizens in an urban renewal programme often attend workshops or public meetings to discuss how for example empty spaces can be transformed into more active areas. However, this can take years of negotiation and planning, and are processes that the average citizen has no access to. To use light in temporary projects has an enormous architectural effect and for a limited budget big changes can be achieved. The lights have brought attention to the area and helped residents to re-discover their neighbourhoods. One resident said ‘I’ve never noticed that entrance to the park before’ and another ‘It is a new sensation to walk through the passage now that there is light on the trees’.

The temporary lighting project takes place in the spaces that people use every day and therefore is a strong vehicle for citizen involvement and changing behavior in the use of the city. The project creates a dialogue and alters the experience of the neighborhood before it is transformed through more permanent projects.

CARLSBERG

In 2010 three new temporary spaces at Carlsberg opened. Carlsberg is one of the new developing areas in Copenhagen situated in one of the old city districts. In 2006 the Carlsberg brewery decided to move beer production away from Copenhagen. More than 160 years of brewing had come to an end and the door was opened for a totally new use of the site in the heart of Copenhagen covering an area of more than 30 ha (75 acres).

In 2007 Entasis, a small Danish architecture office, won the masterplan competition to transform the site. Entasis’ plan emphasises the spaces that people share rather than focusing on individual buildings. Urban space is essential. When the detailed plan was finished in 2009 the financial crisis had already started and the development of the area was slower than expected. In light of this Carlsberg started to let the exisiting buildings on short-term and very affordable leases focusing

on creative businessess and cultural activities, to create attention and interest for the Carlsberg site as a whole. Furthermore Carlsberg, together with the City of Copenhagen, began a temporary transformation of the public spaces to attract visitors and create urban life, even before work on site had begun. The assumption is that this will also help to generate interest from investors.

Three new temporary places have been created in this process, with a special focus on how to move in urban space in new ways, combined with an urban design that also invites you to stay and rest. The design is being done in collaboration with movement experts and architects.

Thus the temporary projects take advantage of the rough industrial surroundings and also offer new experiences that are particular to the Carlsberg site. The new temporary spaces therefore help to strenghten the identity of the area as a creative hub. The new urban spaces in Carlsberg are also very much in line with the overall aspirations of the City to create urban life and make people stay longer in the public spaces of the city.

These spaces have been analysed and evaluated in order to understand how people use them and think of them. When asked to choose a particular word to describe the new urban spaces, more than 25 per cent of the people interviewed chose words like ‘different’ and ‘alternative’. – they seem to have a quality that makes them distinctive. This would indicate that we need to consider individual quality and atmosphere, and to try not to equip all of our urban spaces in the same manner, but to cater for differences.

To use light in temporary projects has an enormous effect and for a limited budget big changes can be achieved

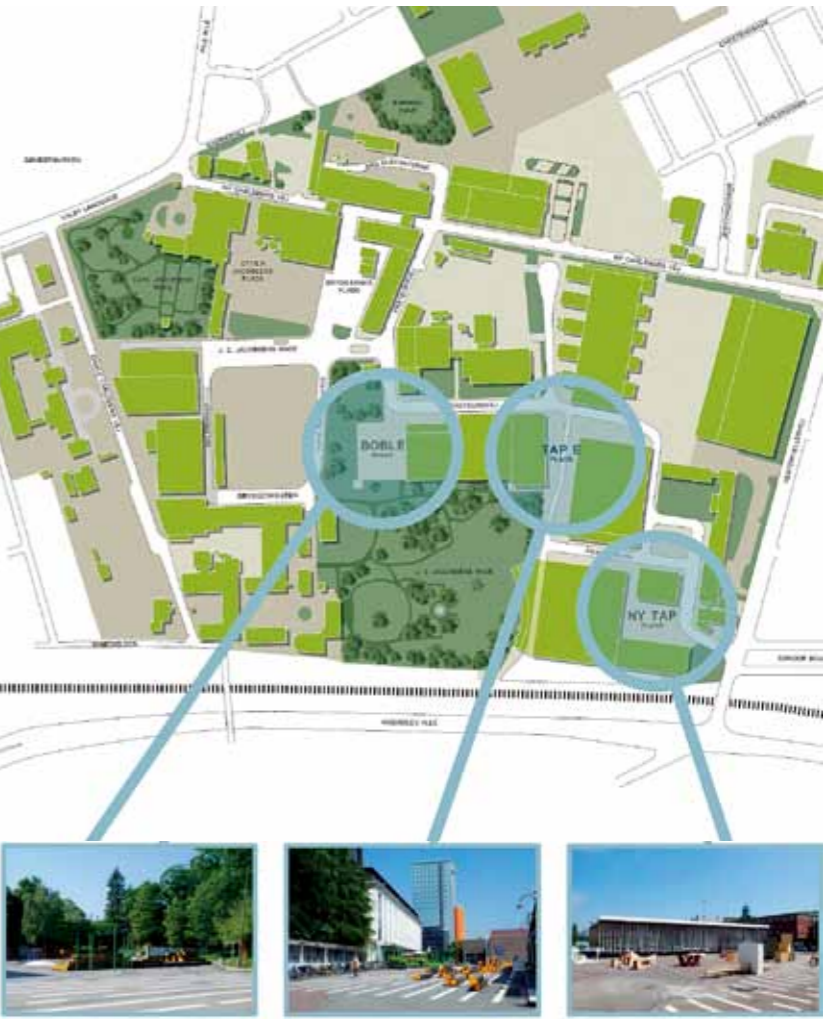
A further aim in these projects has been the attempt to create urban spaces that inspire physical activity without being laid out for traditional sports activities. The sculptural quality of the temporary spaces invites people to use them to climb and jump, and they have been used by parcoures practitioners as well as for modern dance.

Carlsberg has concluded that the ambition to make more people aware of the area and to attract them to walk through the site before the transformation of the site as such has begun, has been succesful. The waiting list for the short-term lease of spaces for office and other uses has also grown, with more people now wanting to rent spaces at Carlsberg.

TEMPORARY MEASURES AS A PLANNING METHOD MAKES SENSE

The three cases show different ways of working with temporary measures. In Ørestad it creates a new destination and acts as an urban attractor. In Sundholm South it is a way of creating dialogues and changing people’s behavior, and at Carlsberg it creates stories and identity.

In all three examples we also see innovative architecture, experiments in how people work



together, new materials, and a new understanding of urban design. Temporary measures can help us to push the boundaries and discover new opportunities. In Copenhagen, we find that working with temporary measures as a planning method makes sense in a lot of different ways. ●

↑ The Carlsberg rope shelter
↑↑ The Carlsberg Site master plan and key projects

● Tina Saaby, City Architect, Copenhagen, Denmark

↑ Sundholm South lighting project

CITIZENS AS URBAN CO-PRODUCERS

Jes Vagnby and Peter Schultz Jørgensen describe Roskilde Festival's ethos and influence



Since the 1960s, most major European cities have seen squatters and various political activists bring new urban qualities into action. With great conviction they have shown the need for certain dissociations from the established notion of the city, as well as presenting alternative forms of urban life. The establishment has often reacted by clearing out derelict areas – with or without the help of the police – to maintain norms and forms of order.

In spite of opposition, this socially conscious activism has inspired architects, planners, authorities and investors to come up with new architectural solutions, urban ecology, forms of urban life and more fluid urban spaces, and created more diverse aesthetic languages and a relaxed, free-and-easy urban design. It has become evident that less hierarchical processes of democracy do work in urban redevelopment.

An offshoot of this movement is a new trend in urban life, but without the same radical values. It is a global trend, where creativity and ideas occupy urban spaces within temporary projects. Some urban communities – which include many architects and artists – have reclaimed spaces, and turned them into laboratories and stages, in changing locations to allow for a lifestyle that transforms unused space into cool places. This contingency, moving from place to place in the city, usually lacks a social dimension and becomes simply a symbiosis between developers and the urban 'grasshopper', which seeks to attract people to their place to increase the value of their next upcoming project.

As was the case with the original urban movement in the 1960s, this other and more recent

movement also is a sign of our disjointed times. The previous industrial city must be followed by something else – which we have just begun the search for. Perhaps the most important realisation now is that cities are fluid. We have only just glimpsed the kind of dynamic urban society, which will give way to new and more complex urban structures, where our urban communities work together. Planners, designers and all involved in the development of cities need to address these issues: new functions, active interaction between buildings and urban spaces, socially engaging design, a dynamic aesthetic, a new sensuality, and most of all, new forms of democracy in the city. All of this needs to be developed and find its equivalent in education, professional practice and the way that municipalities work. We see citizens as co-producers and co-designers of their city, together with a more fundamental social restructuring of society, as something very important.

Being temporary is but one dimension of the fluid city. Temporary measures are both the means and a condition that help to dissolve and reconfigure the otherwise petrified city. In this process of change, new forms of democracy can come to life adding to established ideas. The city can be set free and become a growth factor in an economy otherwise stagnated.

ROSKILDE FESTIVAL

Roskilde Festival is an annual event held since 1971 in Roskilde, Denmark. The festival has about 80,000 paying visitors, 30,000 volunteers as well as 5,000 musicians and members of the press. The

festival is conceived as a city, built over the course of a few weeks and active for eight days. In many way it resembles a real city with main roads, streets, paths, quarters, squares, neighbourhoods, residential areas, restaurants, supermarkets and shopping. It is divided in two main areas:

The camping area has an open structure formed around the varying topography of the landscape created by local gravel extraction. The first four days of the festival take place in this area only.

The music area, open to the public the last four days of the festival, presents itself as a more closed, flat urban structure. It is inspired by dense cities like New York, where crossing the street allows you to move from one atmosphere to another. The festival team has learned a lot about how to create well-functioning and open urban spaces from the self-organising planning of places and activities carried out by the many festival participants over the years.

This temporary city is based on a humanistic foundation. The main idea informing both the planning and execution of the city is 'the meeting': the meeting of people, of people and art, and the sense of community and inclusiveness that the festival and its structure engender. This logic has created a city with a multitude of public spaces, cultural offers and opportunities for participation. The temporary city is open to spontaneous events and thereby hands the initiative for the shaping and content of the city over to its inhabitants.

The real difference it has from a real city is that the festival city is temporary and planned on the basis of values that put people and social space at the heart of it all. A spirit of freedom and opportunity is present that allows the festival participants to share in and co-create the social function of the city, its main values, its physical structure and mental qualities.

By putting so much weight on social processes and participatory spaces, the festival creates a democratic situation, where the participants become creators and experience a sense of ownership. Because the festival only lasts a few days, there is a city plan that determines the main structures and framework for participation. The strategy in the physical plan has three main components: musical/ artistic opportunities for development; social opportunities for development; and, intellectual opportunities for development. The temporary nature of the festival has led to many experiments with various architectural structures, elements and themes such as time/ space, text and context, dramaturgy, mapping and dynamic authenticity.

One of the starting points for the processes of participation is in the many agora within the camping area. These agora contain fireplaces for cooking, cell-phone charging, toilets, shops and chill-outs areas. But equally important they also are kept free to allow for the festival participants' own initiatives. Parties, construction activity, sculpture and other art installations have come to life in the agora, as have libraries, ecological food and drink stands, dating spots and the infamous naked run. The agora are often planned with the help of social media in the months before the festival opens, which helps participation and co-creation by the festival participants.



BLACK FENCES

The black fences are important physical and architectural frames. They delimit the festival from the world outside and divide the festival area into smaller areas. They are minimalistic in order to liberate participants and stimulate their own activities. In daylight the black fences create a geometrical frame and a black background, that let the diversity of the festival participants stand out. Installations have a sculptural, decorative expression that attracts people.

At night the black fences blend into the darkness and the spaces appear drastically different. The many different installations and art works stand out poetically. When darkness falls their characteristics change and they become scenes of inspiring lighting designs.

The spaces and installations are designed to stimulate the individual festival participant to take part and challenge themselves – both individually and in collaboration with others in projects that supports the community. This is a very specific characteristic and one that makes Roskilde Festival stand out from all other festivals. Installations are positioned between different music stages, and are aesthetic in themselves, but also demand the participation of the festival visitors in order to fully come to life.

SHADOW CUBE

The shadow cube is a 10x10x10 meter scaffolding construction allowing the audience to get to a viewing platform via a spiral staircase. The stair winds around a core of powerful light, and the exterior of the cube is clad in white fabric, making shadows appear whenever someone walks up the stairs. The festival participants are invited to perform their own individual shadow theatre as they climb, and it makes looking at the cube from the outside very entertaining. A natural dialogue between inside and outside, between actor and spectator is created.

SEATING

In the areas that are not musical spaces, a multitude of different sorts and individually designed seating is positioned, with the aim of encouraging social behaviour, play and fun. All will allow you to sit in or on them; some are



deliberately made too large for one person, but also slightly too small for two people. Others are small houses that give shelter from the rain, while others are large soft plateaus big enough for many people at a time.

The experiences from Roskilde Festival could – with some translation and adaptation – be used in real cities. As the physical structures are only meant to last a few days, the advantage that the festival has is that every year it has a new opportunity to incorporate lessons learned from former years. It has also time to make plans based on the needs of the citizens. Temporary in this context means working with the city as an organic entity in a constantly changing process with and for the people. In the real city this is very different. Musicon in Roskilde is an example of how Roskilde Festival and Roskilde city have begun to work together to take the lessons beyond the festival itself.

MUSICON

In 2003 Roskilde municipality bought a 24 ha former concrete factory on the southern outskirts of the city. The municipality had just developed an urban strategy focusing on culture, creativity and music, and the city council therefore decided that this new part of the city should be developed as a musical neighbourhood – Musicon. The many musical dimensions in Roskilde were to become the tissue from which the city should grow. The idea was that the new part of the city would take its cue from the activities that would arise in Musicon and draw inspiration from Roskilde Festival, which meant so much to local people. The many local volunteers that help to create the festival every year and their many skills constitute a culture of their own, and one which it has taken many years to establish.

It is our belief that Musicon could not arise anywhere else, but is a product of a specific culture and that the planners and politicians in Roskilde paid attention to it at just the right time. Being able to read the qualities of a city, note the momentum, and transform this into progressive actions is a skill that planners should be very careful to nurture. Too often solutions are sought in globalised hyped-up ideas from elsewhere,

rather than from within small towns, where surprising but overlooked potential exists.

Musicon is very much a part of the city that is being created by citizens and local stakeholders. No final master plan has been produced, as this would inhibit and reduce the opportunities that could arise from a more unstructured and dynamic approach. A few guiding principles have been installed and a few structuring elements decided, such as traffic, scale and certain pollution-preventing elements. But the most important element is dialogue and the participation of the social, cultural and economic layers of the city.

Three new major projects, collectively named the ROCK magnet, are underway in Musicon and they are all connected to Roskilde Festival. A foundation is responsible for how the festival shares its profits and donates these to various projects. The Danish Rock Museum is one of the projects that will benefit from a donation. It is a new knowledge centre, social meeting place and involves a museum, which has come about via the initiative of Roskilde Municipality, Roskilde Museum and the rock milieu in general.

Another institution is the Roskilde Festival High School that has been started by Roskilde Festival. The High School will connect culture and innovation in an environment that nurtures engaging, responsible and critical citizens. The Roskilde Festival, Musicon and Roskilde city will be used as a test bed, because the school puts great emphasis on practice and social involvement rather than theory alone. The Roskilde Festival headquarters will soon move into new premises in Musicon, and the doors of these new institutions will open in 2014.

FROM PLYWOOD TO RABALDER PARK

In 2004 Roskilde Festival established a skate park located in an open field. Over the last three or four years local skaters have established a dynamic and highly active skate milieu in Hall 12, a hall that once belonged to the concrete factory. The skaters were some of the very first users of Musicon and were given the right to use the large hall free of charge. They were given plywood and started to design and build ramps. Hall 12 has become the heart of a youth environment that today also plays an important part in the continuing development of the Musicon area. The Hall 12 users were very much responsible for putting the idea of Rabalder Park on the public agenda and also took active part in the development of the project itself. The four-hectare Rabalder Park opens in 2012, and is a hybrid place. It is both a park meant for physical activities such as skating, BMX riding, parcoures and picnics, as well as a rainwater catchment area with 60-90cm canals draining water to three large basins. The open areas are used as tracks and bowls by skaters, roller skaters and BMX riders, and a 145m long canal system will lead to a large bowl. In the US skaters have been using dried out cement canals and riverbeds for the so-called snake runs, and in Musicon these will be integral to the dense urban environment. The surplus soil from the canals will also be used to create a landscape of hills. This is an environmental consideration as it is expensive to remove surface soil, but acceptable to move it around within individual land parcels. In other words the environmental regulations are being used

as design factors. Another advantage is that some of the funding will come from the waterworks of the city, as they would have to create canals anyway.

The park is laid out on a former landfill site that still requires gas venting. Part of the area will be a park in the future, while other parts will be built up when the land is stable. Part of the park therefore is temporary, although in existence for quite sometime. Although the skate area is constructed from earth, it will contain many urban elements such as stairs, railings and edges, originally not designed for skaters but used by them. The urban design lives on and becomes part of the park.

Another example of the collaboration between Roskilde Festival and Musicon is Pixlpark, a digital playground. Many of the elements of Pixlpark were created for the festival first and then integrated into Musicon later. Pixlpark combines technology with playing, physical movement, sensibility and social activities.

Developers think of individual buildings and not about the city fabric and its social dynamics; and the city we get depends on the process we use

FROM TEMPORARY TO PERMANENT

Interesting things happen when large scale building takes place. Often cities have had ambitious building programs and great visions, but these have only led to disappointment. City planners’ imaginations have not been able to keep up with reality, and developers and architects have not understood them or not played by the book. Enthusiastic developers have appeared with star architects and tried a more traditional approach, but without understanding the need for the co-creation role of citizens. Developers have a bottom-line of their own to pay attention to, and this bottom-line is not necessarily the same as the one that the city lives by. They think of individual buildings and not about the city fabric and its social dynamics; and the city we get depends on the process we use.

To encourage better outcomes, Musicon has set up the *Creative Project Guide: How to carry out projects in Musicon*; for the administrators of Musicon, and for developers and investors the absence of a formal master plan is an advantage. The voices of citizens can continue to inform the projects and it would be difficult for all parties involved to keep track of the opportunities and needs at any given point in time. Before building can commence projects must go through five phases that are carried out on the basis of a contract. The intention is to optimise the needs of Musicon as well as those of the investors. In the first phases the potential of the project for Musicon’s aims are established. This is not a one-way dialogue, as the positive contribution that Musicon will make to their projects often surprises investors. The project is scrutinised in terms of function, character, sustainability, partnerships, coordination with other projects in Musicon, how the project allows



for common ownership with the neighbourhood, and whether the project belongs in Musicon at all. It is only when this has been settled that the final deeds are signed.

In this process individual projects become connected in a dialectic between building and the urban environment. The constant focus on the overall urban environment also makes the individual building better, and it becomes possible to tie buildings together across plot lines. The challenge is to move the focus from individual business and privacy to the common good and co-creation. But the world is not ideal. Musicon has to be able to maintain its idealistic vision when the investors’ need for profit and the more complex and different voices of the musical stakeholders come together. We believe that citizens wish to make the city their own and we should support this so that the city can be a co-creating partnership that allows urban cultures to flourish in a dynamic way, and on a democratic foundation. ●

↑ Social furniture at the Festival

● Jes Vagnby, former architect in charge of the physical and aesthetic development of Roskilde Festival and author of *Temporary architecture and the physical planning of the Roskilde Festival*. Peter Schulz Jergensen, architect, urban planner, freelance writer, and former consultant employed by Roskilde Municipality.

↑ Musicon, the PIXLMOVE experience

A TOOL TOWARDS ADAPTABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Cany Ash calls for locally derived urban vitality



We have recently been developing the idea of adaptable neighbourhoods, or the notion that sustainable development of challenged city areas is best carried out incrementally, using existing economic and social networks as its basis. This model deliberately opposes itself to the more orthodox form of comprehensive redevelopment, which requires the erasure by means of wholesale demolition of pre-existing urban and social patterns. This article looks at how temporary projects can embed that crucial ingredient of adaptability, which alone can enable blighted neighbourhoods to thrive in difficult economic times.

OCCUPY

Over the last year, three Occupy sites in Madrid, New York, and London (as well as a myriad of smaller ones) have activated discussion and demonstrated a version of live negotiation about space in the city – who owns it and how it should be used. In all three cities, protesters occupied sensitive public spaces, and camped out in them. In Madrid, Plaza del Sol became a compass and miniature map of the larger city, with each neighbourhood hub as an embassy relating back to its *barrio*. In New York the issue of so-called public space turning out in fact to be private was acted out in real space and time. Ironically the fuzzy red line of the police barricades not only sustained the protest site, but the discussions about territory actualised and dramatised the underlying issues behind that protest. The surprise in London was that the issue of the sacred and

profane could play out on a rather small patch of paving around St Paul's Cathedral, revealing the cracks in a truce between the state and church brokered in the sixteenth century. The Church of England is territorially strong, but appeared suddenly uncertain of both its powers and, more fundamentally, of its remit. For a while these three places will have had a heightened psycho-geographical presence for participants, other citizens and tourists. Is this enrichment a form of urbanism? Clearly the answer has to be yes, but it must also be acknowledged that the activities of these protesters illuminated a profound nervousness on the part of city authorities and other vested interests about the issue of change instigated bottom-up.

Another form of occupation of the city, long hallowed by tradition and tightly controlled by city authorities, is the street market. Is a regular street market a form of urbanism? The answer is yes, and we argue that if the ebb and flow of goods, services and people is the life-blood of cities, then shouldn't urban designers focus more on the implications of interim uses such as protests, festivals and markets?

Three current projects we have initiated at Ash Sakula explore the urban possibilities of temporary or interim uses. Leicester Waterside is an unnecessarily blighted brownfield site ripe for incremental development. Canning Town Caravanserai has a five year temporary life on the site of some over-hasty housing demolition in east London. Leather Lane Stars is an attempt to use social networking to help to save a rapidly shrinking traditional London street market. The value of

sharing these three stories is the opportunity for real anecdotes to shed light on aspects of temporary urbanism, to argue for recognition and the support of bottom-up urban shaping, and to challenge the currently unhelpful rhetoric of place-making used by the regeneration industry.

All three projects occupy difficult urban territory, places generally ignored or patronised by the development industry. Abandoned buildings and landscapes are fickle. In dull light, their neediness is unattractive, but in the right company, at the right moment, they offer a promise of freedom. Then momentarily escaping the normative plans of the landowners, new urban inventions can take root. The problem is these cracks in the system are all too rare. Under normal circumstances, property is just not a place where people can 'try things out'. Novelty in the serious world of real estate is restricted to marketing tactics rather than any fundamental rethinking about how we live, work, and consume. This contrasts with, for example, drug development, manufacturing and even advertising, where ways are devised to mock-up future scenarios; and running back to new starting points with data to launch improved variants is completely respectable. By contrast, in property development, we have built an ossified system around the business of making cities, and with every year the burden of more risk registers, more commercial confidentiality and more planning consultants' fearmongering means that it gets more rigid and further away from people.

Trying things out on the ground is an antidote to the mystification latent in most 20th century manifestos of architecture and urbanism, where there was insufficient room for anecdote, or for evidence that refused to settle into the expected patterns. As a result, over the last 50 years every city in Britain has produced inexplicable barriers to urban life: giant objects which have been insufficiently loved, mass housing that doesn't hold its value, confusing disjunctions where one urban nostrum hits another. Jane Jacobs was amazed by the rejection of urban vitality and the failure to absorb 'in your face' evidence. As she presciently wrote half a century ago, 'The pseudoscience of planning seems almost neurotic in its determination to imitate empiric failure and ignore empiric success.'

LEATHER LANE STARS

British street markets are temporary urbanisms of an often successful kind. They may be less elegant than French or Spanish markets, but they make up for this with a more raucous vitality: places of theatrical trade. Leather Lane Stars is a project to promote, publicise and reinvigorate the historic market of Leather Lane in the Holborn district of London. The traders are the real stars of Leather Lane, Camden's longest street market, playing a key role as hosts and animators of the public realm within the city. We have identified three different types of star. Established Stars: traders who have been on Leather Lane for more than ten years, and the ones who really know how the market has changed over the years: some have been here their whole lives. Rising Stars; some have been here for months, others for years – the relatively more recent traders that make up the community of Leather Lane market. And Supporting Stars,



the shops that exist on this side street because of the market, but also bring people to the street and sustain longer trading hours.

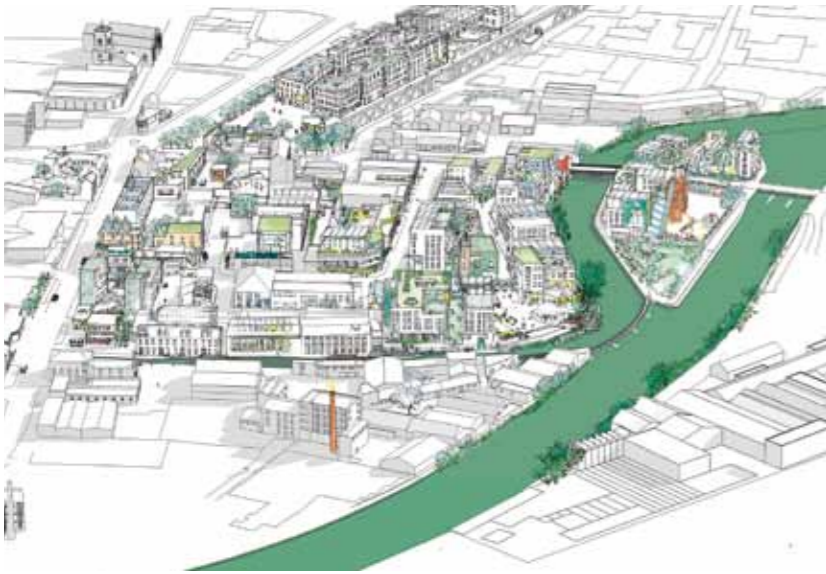
↑ Spaces for playing chess and socialising

Leather Lane has recently lost half of its stalls. However it is in the interests of this symbiotic mix of networked Stars that it should thrive. During Green Sky Thinking Week in September 2011, we set up stalls and events which led to the creation of the Friends of Leather Lane, run by a mix of local business, stall traders and shopkeepers with the aim of attracting new kinds of commerce and publicity. We are looking at a Business Improvement District for Leather Lane and Hatton Garden which will focus on street level activity and local employment. We have made strong connections with other London street markets who are further along this road. We are convinced that real change must come from the Stars themselves, but they need a vocal fanbase to turn around the fortunes of the market. See www.leatherlanestars.wordpress.com to join in.

CANNING TOWN CARAVANSERAI

Last year we won the Meanwhile London competition run by the London Borough of Newham with a project called the Canning Town Caravanserai. The project takes a large, barren site on Silvertown Way, opposite Canning Town train station, where old housing has recently been demolished. Redevelopment will not take place for at least five years, and in the meantime we have been given the site to attempt an urban experiment. Our proposal is for the creation of a new public space filled with many different complementary activities designed to be relevant to and to engage with the needs of locals and visitors, kickstarted during the 2012 London Olympic summer. These activities include small creative micro-enterprises involved with trading, making, cooking and eating, housed in containers and some innovative integrally printed lightweight enclosures; a café; a performance space; a garden; a mini-golf course; and a small caretakers' residence consisting of three eccentrically stacked shipping containers which overlooks the whole project.

We are working with Groundwork London and Community Links in Canning Town on training and entrepreneurial opportunities for the building



↑ Leicester Waterside

and running of the site. This hybrid commerce garden will be programmed so that it can change its spots - at times restricting entry to the under fives; or being ticketed for a whole site performance; but most often aiming for a beer garden ambiance where the siloed generationally-defined activities of London life are eroded and children are welcomed into the adult world. This is perhaps the purpose of attempting the project, to prove that neighbourhoods can host a mix of social enterprise including young children's activities, adult games and activities and a licenced café which allows for socializing between families, young people and the elderly. Go to www.caravanserai.org.uk to watch progress.

LEICESTER WATERSIDE

Leicester Waterside was going to be entirely flattened and rebuilt, but now there are no real plans for the area because its land values have been re-calculated as zero. Like the adjacent riverside site of Frog Island, it is threatened by falling occupation and strange fires. However there seems little reason for this neglect. The site has impressive resources, a varied collection of buildings of all ages, a range of committed local businesses, and a position abutting the main road into the city. It fronts the River Soar and a weir where the river meets the Grand Union Canal. There are herons and cormorants, protected reed banks and water lilies. The opportunity to investigate the potential of the site arose when we won an ideas competition for Loughborough University's sustainability think-tank *Adaptable Futures*. The brief called for a demonstration of material concepts around adaptability. However we were keen to tackle the physical challenges of adaptability in tandem with real life economics in an environment where economic and human factors are key drivers.

We started with existing uses and businesses and established a forum on the ground and online. The diversity of businesses on site is impressive. There is a simple breakfast café, a coffee bar, an ancient pub with a yard that was a bear pit along the old Roman wall, the beginnings of a nursery under the Baptist Church that has taken over the first floor of a factory, an independent singing school for children and teenagers, a jeans factory, an electronic assembly line, warehouses

for shoes, an empire of toys, two wholesalers for decorators, an electrical retailer and a national firm of builders' merchants, recording studios, bodywork garages, auto rental services, white van sales, and others. Our first forum, held in the café on site, was an immediate success. We found that while some people already had some contact with their neighbours, they all found it interesting to network, and discuss future life on the site without the pressure of comprehensive redevelopment. See www.adaptableneighbourhoods.com/waterside.

We are not there yet but can already start to imagine regeneration without the middle men, generating jobs directly with local businesses without the dislocation and upheaval of a new build vision. Such a vision is insulated from economic shocks because it refuses to lay all its eggs in one basket. Instead, adaptable and incremental development can help to foster a broad range of enterprises of all sizes, occupying buildings of many types, so that can each respond in their own way to the winds of change.

At Leicester Waterside, we are rethinking what success might feel like for a city. In the short term, creative new signage is used to shout about the local businesses, pop-up gardens, events and markets in the left over spaces. To start with there are small modifications to buildings, like enlarged openings on the ground floor to enliven the public realm. In the longer term, flexible licenses and varied forms of tenure will help generate and maintain a rich cluster of small-scale enterprise and experimentation, all operating with an ethos of low carbon living, alongside new housing that makes the most of the site's proximity to the city centre.

In June the local recording studios will open up the vacant sites belonging to the HCA for Leicester's Riverside Festival. We have been working with Groundwork Leicester and Transition Leicester on funding proposals for a new Urban Nature Reserve on the site, which will act as a demonstration project for pocket gardening and vertical greening around existing business uses. Regular events and new environmental credentials will bring people across the ring road to discover this other side to Leicester on the banks of the River Soar. Seasonal change coupled with seasonal market activity will attract new audiences and activities to an ignored area. Not all of these initiatives will have a long life: their temporariness is a virtue in itself. When developers are once again vying for the land, local businesses hopefully will have the confidence, economic power and political influence through a Neighbourhood Plan to retain the character of the area.

CONCLUSION

We have high hopes for all three of these projects, but we are working against the odds. Unfortunately any city keen to see some action in a recession is still packaging up bigger and bigger parcels of land for unimaginative single or mixed use development. Often a single flashy façade is all that is on offer in exchange for the draining of local commercial energy for miles around. In this activity is the stalemate, the dead space where sounds die, the purgatory of the might-have-been and the oblivion of hope; but it doesn't have to be this way. ●

● Cany Ash, Ash Sakula Architects

STEPPING STONES: A NEW APPROACH TO COMMUNITY-LED REGENERATION

John Harrison describes temporary interventions in Dewsbury



I first visited Dewsbury as a child in the late 1980s: a bored Saturday afternoon shopping trip with my parents to the nearest Do-It-All. I remember the raw newness of the sandstone cladding of the retail park sheds and vast retaining walls of the ring road. Seven or eight years later, I started high school in the town - a sixteen-mile daily bus journey to the nearest Catholic school - and left sixth form college there aged eighteen. I've lived in the town for six of the subsequent eleven years.

In those twenty five years, I have heard Dewsbury attached to the word 's***hole' more than any other adjective. Perhaps that is a reflection on my schoolmates, my friends and my past colleagues and on me. Aside from the truth of the matter, Dewsbury retains a sense of the gradual decline of the town during at least the last thirty years, but offers some insight into the semi-affectionate attitude of those who stick around regardless.

A SHODDY METROPOLIS

Dewsbury is the quintessential northern English, post-industrial mid-sized town. The settlement grew around the medieval Minster on the banks of a river, and a market developed and served the regional trade routes that became the road system and later the motorway network. From the Industrial Revolution, mills worked wool from the surrounding hills and subsequent waves of

immigration - first from Ireland then the Indian subcontinent - supplemented a growing labour force. By the mid 20th century the manufacturing base had entered a slow decline. The 1980s and 1990s saw the rise of the edge-of-town retail parks which - with a new ring-road aimed at reducing congestion - gradually drained footfall from the traditional town centre.

Today, although Dewsbury is close to average on many of the standard socio-economic indicators, low average family incomes, low levels of qualification attainment and comparatively high unemployment underline the long-term problems faced by a significant proportion of residents. Nonetheless, there are a number of major light industrial employers scattered throughout the town's hinterlands, and Kirklees College retains more than 1,000 students and staff less than a quarter mile from the town centre.

But the long and sustained decline is most evident in the town centre. The market remains a regional draw (Britain's Best Market in 2007) and there are successful local businesses. But the layer of supermarkets, mass-market clothing stores and DIY chains that circle the ring road dissolves the town's centre of gravity and creates an effective concrete barrier between the fine Victorian fabric of the urban centre and the neighbourhoods beyond.

↑ Dewsbury town centre



YOU COULD BE LIVING IN DEWSBURY

In this context some major retailers have left the town, either in administration or in favour of suburban retail parks closer to nearby motorway junctions. Much of what remains falls into narrow categories: the any-town triptych of Boots, WH Smiths, McDonalds; network mobile phone shops; high-street banks; discount and £1 shops. Although these are all integral parts of many contemporary townscapes and serve necessary functions, their predominance in Dewsbury reduces both the distinctiveness and value of the retail offer. This effect is intensified by the breadth and scale of the edge-of-town parks and the thin strip of civic amenities (library, sports centre, job centre and Minster) located just outside the ring road.

Smaller local businesses, especially to the north of the town centre, suggest the potential for a vibrant, distinctive destination, particularly on market days. But that promise is precarious. Recent figures show that the proportion of vacant units has hovered between 15 and 18 percent since at least 2003, perpetuated in part by relatively high rents and absentee landlords. There are a number of long-term, near-terminal empty properties. Moreover the area of empty space on ground floor level is dwarfed by the vacancy and under-use on upper floors.

Vacant spaces have been a critical issue for the local authority, Kirklees Council for a number of years. In September 2011, the issue was brought to national attention on BBC2's *Newsnight*, when the anchor quipped that if people thought their town centre was bad, they shouldn't despair because 'you could be living in Dewsbury'. Unfortunately Dewsbury has found itself the focus of national attention a number of times over the last decade under more tragic circumstances. In the aftermath of the 2005 London Tube Bombings and the 2008 Shannon Matthews case, Dewsbury was cited in the local and national press as being emblematic of two parallel Englands: of a murderous Islamism and of a feral white underclass. These gross misrepresentations served to over-simplify these tragedies and hastily projected a deep social and normative crisis on a population of just 55,000 people. Journalists wrote of 'the town that dare not speak its name'.

↑ Temporary badminton in the shopping precinct
↗ Aztec under the fly-over
Heather Stockwell. Image by Rachel Codling



A PLACE WORTH STAYING IN

In 2009, within this setting and with the backdrop of the ongoing global economic crisis, Kirklees Council appointed Bauman Lyons Architects to develop a Strategic Development Framework (SDF) for Dewsbury town centre. Their twenty-five year vision is based on the idea that Dewsbury might 'tap into the capacity of its people to build up Dewsbury's economy as a thriving market town', based on the potential of its young people, the development of a distinctive economy and the physical reconnection of the centre with the surrounding neighbourhoods. The strategy identifies long-term, capital investment projects alongside a programme of short- to medium-term stepping stones that can help carry that vision through to 2035. These provide a set of ambitious but necessarily contingent proposals that aim to mobilise present relationships and optimise the extant qualities of the town centre.

STEPPING STONES

Our practice was introduced to the project as collaborators once much of this formal work was in place. At that point our own work had been mainly concerned with temporary, informal urban projects and we were invited to work on a series of short-term interventions that would be used to demonstrate some of these ideas. As a result we set up six proposals throughout the summer of 2010 that drew on the themes of the emergent masterplan. We used materials sourced exclusively within Dewsbury town centre and delivered all the projects on a very short timescale and within a total budget of just £3,000.

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Although hugely challenging, these parameters were ultimately thrilling. One of the principles that we established at the outset was that nothing should be fabricated or faked, and that the interventions should occur with very little publicity. This allowed the ideas to be realised against the immediate backdrop of everyday life and in that respect what the interventions lacked in buzz, they gained in an unmediated interaction with the reality of life in Dewsbury. The success of the interventions confirmed the potential of connecting people and organisations in unconventional ways.

The first project aimed to explore one way that the sports centre facilities could be introduced into the public realm. We set up a full-sized badminton court (81m² of emerald green fabric machine-stitched in our studio) and a ping-pong table at opposite ends of the main shopping precinct. The overcast mid-summer sky suggested an end-of-term sports day. For the afternoon we were joined by a procession of initially amused then surprisingly competitive shoppers, an unemployed couple on their way to sign on at the job centre and school-leavers keen to fill their summer days between GCSE

exams and whatever would come next for them. A pair of ladies and a foursome of gentlemen from the Owls Sports Group arrived from across the ring road and put casual players - often fifty years their junior - to shame.

Another project sought to address imaginative re-uses of vacant space. The Broken Window crunched multiple activities - bakery, bike shop, gallery, coffee house - into one day and onto the ground floor of a long-vacant furniture shop in one of the town's Edwardian arcades. Two brothers in their early twenties provided a range of fresh breads and cakes. Their venture in a nearby town was closing after a year and poetically, the project was their last bake in the last week of the lease on their premises. They sold more bread and cakes on that one day than during any one week of the preceding year. A local chef's chutneys and ketchups sold out before midday. Families, groups of friends, wandering pensioners all visited and sat amidst custom-built bikes (for sale) and enjoyed one of the under-appreciated, gently beautiful spaces that now sit empty. Earlier in the week while we were clearing and repainting the unit, Tony, a local window cleaner, popped in to tell us how he had dropped a wardrobe down the stairs on his first day of work forty years earlier. He cleaned the windows, thick with dirt, on the promise of a loaf of bread.

Mid-century Dewsbury boasted five picture houses before the grip of the multiplex tightened in the 1980s, and a new cinema was one of the most common ideas to come from the Bauman Lyons' community consultations. We sought to address the shallowness of Dewsbury's cultural and night-time economies - which is currently formed around the nexus of chain pubs and takeaways in the centre and the cultural programme of the Council-run town hall - with a film evening amidst the charms of the train station pub. The unusual, exciting and intimate occasion nevertheless demonstrated that a greater level momentum would be essential to longer-term success.

A collaboration with undergraduate fashion students from the Dewsbury campus of Kirklees College saw six young designers invited to create a piece that expressed what Dewsbury meant to them, within a micro-budget of £20 and a three-week deadline. Fabrics and accessories would be sourced exclusively from within the town centre. The diversity of their final work was stunning. An Aztec priestess was caught beneath the swooping flyover, while a six-foot punk in heels and suspenders prowled the train station platform, and a ballerina performed in an empty parking spot. A clown tip-toed through the market and a placeless, nomadic wanderer sought sanctuary in the Victorian arcade. The designs made unusual, vibrant and profound connections with Dewsbury's architecture, culture and heritage, and demonstrated how open and malleable perceptions of the town might be. The project showed the potential interaction between a vibrant campus and the town centre.

A sewing café in the covered market on a quiet Tuesday afternoon aimed to bring together people who enjoyed the same pastime but who might never usually meet. Seven people arrived, each from a different neighbourhood and invited by the Dewsbury Community Action Research Team (CART), and enjoyed an elegiac July afternoon of tea and home-made scones.



The final project was a candle-lit community table in the covered market. Local residents and passers-by shared a fish-and-chip supper with local councillors and community leaders, sitting around market stalls dressed in table cloths and decorations produced by the sewing café. A security guard shared chips with some young men who, wondering what the fuss was about, had drifted over the road from the adjacent Central Station pub. The simple fact of candle-light and chatter offered a rich, friendly animation of an under-used space.

BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD

Although individually successful, we are aware that none of these projects have constituted real achievements or changes in the town. But the interventions do present a minor rejoinder to any pat dismissal of Dewsbury, while supporting and supplementing the vision for Dewsbury articulated in Bauman Lyons' Strategic Development Framework. Alongside significant investment aimed at the socio-economic and built fabric of the town, these smaller projects suggest methods through which existing organisations and groups can negotiate sustained and positive changes in the town.

A key element of that process could be Dewsbury Town Team. Initiated by Kirklees Council and Bauman Lyons, the volunteer organisation provides a vehicle for citizens to realise this kind of social action in the town centre. The group is beginning to deliver its first projects and make positive achievable plans for 2012. Although it is too early to tell whether the initial promise will be realised, the group includes and continues to attract people with the skills and commitment to contribute meaningfully to the improvement and the ongoing life of the town. As individuals we remain closely involved in that process, not because of the rhetoric of the Big Society, but rather because of our hope in the promise of collective, sympathetic action in the place that we live and work. ●

↖ A one-day sewing café
↗ Candlelit Community Dinner in the market. Image by Rachel Codling

● John Harrison lives and works in Dewsbury, and co-founded Studio Dekka, an architectural lighting and design practice

TEMPORARY URBANISM: ITS RELEVANCE AND IMPACT ON TEACHING URBAN DESIGN

Florian Kossak argues for radical temporary urbanism

The earlier articles have dealt with various temporary urbanism strategies in different urban contexts. They have portrayed success stories as well as the risks or problems that are associated with temporary urbanism. Overall they have made the case that today temporary urbanism is not only an indispensable tool in the gradual development and regeneration of European cities, but that it is also a crucial field of activity for urban design professionals.

One could argue that this is reason enough for incorporating temporary urbanism into the architectural and urban design curriculum, and if we agree on this, several questions arise. What form(s) of temporary urbanism do we want or ought to teach postgraduate urban design or architectural students in general? This question is particularly crucial as we are potentially dealing with two very different student cohorts who will operate in very different urban contexts. These two groups – either overseas students from fast growing cities in China and India, or UK students who have to deal with de-industrialised cities and who will operate for the foreseeable future in a climate of economic stagnation – have inevitably very different understandings of temporality and temporary, let alone urbanism.

What are then different elements, moments, and layers of temporary urbanism that are relevant to these different students? And, *how* do we teach temporary urbanism to students? Can the curriculum itself incorporate elements of temporality? Can we actively engage in temporary urbanism, in temporary urban acts – and if so, how?

Going back to the first of these questions, *what is temporary urbanism*, one can assume that the first and prevalent understanding of temporary urbanism is that it acts as a test for future more permanent developments, it is used as a catalyst to support future development, and it acts as place holder in times of economic stagnation. One can also assume that all of these are more or less moments of temporary urbanism in the interest of established planners, developers, investors, city officials, and corporate business (even if they are disguised or promoted as user/ community driven, bottom-up urbanism).

But there is another second rationale for temporary urbanism that is of equal importance. It is a temporary out of necessity. It is where the actors/ agents do not have the means and interest to create more permanent situations/ structures. Temporary urbanism is cheaper, easier to construct, and without the same legal

consequences. It is used as a tactic, not a strategy, an end in itself, not as a means to something else.

Both these aspects of temporary urbanism have their place in teaching and research at the Sheffield School of Architecture (SSoA). There is an undeniable rationale to teach specific knowledge and skills that will enable urban design or architecture students to better engage with the first form of temporary urbanism practice – after all it might be part of their portfolio in the future. Yet we believe that it is the latter tactical practice - the one which is indeed initiated and executed by affected communities, user groups and/or individuals, both emancipatory and transformative - that has more critical potential for research and education, and is therefore the more crucial aspect to engage with. In order to distinguish this second form of temporary urbanism, we can call this Radical Temporary Urbanism.

Structurally this work is supported through the SSoA research centre AGENCY and the research and teaching project *Radical Urbanism*. These are also providing the specific theoretical background and ideological contexts through which we can explore specific temporary urbanism projects in teaching programmes and/ or research. Educationally we explicitly conduct this work in the design studio in the one-year MA in Urban Design Programme of our Graduate School; the six-week live projects at each year's start of the Part II MARCH programme; and, the lecture and seminar course *Urban (Hi)Stories* that is delivered for third year undergraduate as well as urban design Master students.

AGENCY

AGENCY was formally established as a research centre at the Sheffield School of Architecture in 2007, after various staff had worked on similar issues for several years. AGENCY chose deliberately the slightly provocative strapline (at least for the academic context) of Transformative Research into Architectural Practice and Education. AGENCY aims to take 'a critical view of normative values and standard procedures in this area, in order to propose alternatives'. In relation to research we stress the word transformative - to suggest a research activity that both creates and responds to shifting conditions. Instead of remaining passively (and safely) contained within our academic environments, we see ourselves as agents acting both within and between the fields of research, practice, education, and civic life. AGENCY aims to act as a forum for testing, mediating and/ or publicizing research, teaching and other activities, which are of specific interest to pedagogues and

practitioners, and students within architecture, urban design and the built environment at large.

RADICAL URBANISM

Radical urbanism is a term and concept that has been used in fields such as planning, human geography, sociology, or critical theory to describe a politically engaged interpretation of the built environment, which seeks to achieve social and spatial justice. However, this debate is largely absent from the field of architecture and urban design; what is missing is an analytical and propositional position that would give answers to the question of how such a social and spatial justice is manifested through built space and architecture. At the SSoA we have consequently initiated the research and teaching project *Radical Urbanism* that engages with this topic in a diverse range of levels and formats.

Radical Urbanism has a historical component: the transformative experiments in architecture and urban design of the avant-garde in the 1920s as well as the politically, socially and ecologically motivated positions of the 1960s and 1970s. It is also investigating contemporary expressions and positions in architecture and urban design concerned with informal urbanism, bottom-up approaches, and the collaborative production of built environment to name a few. It is here where we work specifically on the notions of a Radical Temporary Urbanism. Of particular interest are lessons that can be learned from the tactical and opportunistic approaches in user-led developments in most large cities of the Global South.

RADICAL TEMPORARY URBANISM

Temporary Urbanism, in its radical political understanding, whether as an educational project or as a real project, can also be seen as 'laboratories in real-scale'. They give students, producers and users the opportunity to experiment on a spatial, technological, social or cultural level in a scale identical to that of more permanent built structures, or processes leading to more permanent buildings. The temporal nature of structures erected as 'laboratories in real-scale' allows for a simplification of the complexities in more permanent building processes. One can thus concentrate on several aspects that are tested through the temporary urban intervention. 'Laboratories in real-scale' thus allow for more pronounced questions and extreme propositions, and are able to reinforce radicalism in architecture and urban design. Furthermore, temporary urbanism and the 'laboratories in real-scale' afford the experimentation of new production forms and processes, whether collaborative or participatory. The aim is for the expansion of the design field both in relation to the actual artistic and cultural discipline, as well as in relation to its practice. This ultimately can also shift and extend the scope of the profession and the role that it plays within the production of the built environment.

Radical Temporary Urbanism thereby challenges the prevailing politics of architecture, urban design and the production of the built environment. Through research, interrogation and critique of the normative parameters that are commonly used to produce architecture and the urban realm, we can suggest alternative forms and processes

in the production and perception of the built environment. Radical Temporary Urbanism and 'laboratories in real-scale' are therefore dealing with political experiments, and the desire for new politics in architecture and urban design.

SPACES OF HOPE

The paramount aspects for a progressive transformation of architecture, urban design and urbanism are to be found within the actual production processes that shape our built environment, as well as within progressive social, political and economic concepts and programmes of usage. It is here where architecture, urban design and urbanism as artistic, cultural and social disciplines, as intellectual discourses, as well as professions, have the most potential for a radical future. It is here where our *Spaces of Hope*, as David Harvey's term says, can be made possible. This means a hope for a shift in the processes and questions how and by whom architecture is produced; a shift that will consequently lead to a necessary transformation and extension of the concept or understanding of architecture and our built environment. It is also the hope for new production processes that a progressive and experimental praxis will have to engage with. These are processes which include collective and collaborative production, questioning normative and hierarchical structures, and user participation and interaction, that will ultimately transform the role of the producer and include new actors into the production of architecture. It is the hope for a praxis that would positively transform our society and the built environment we are living and working in - for a truly emancipated architecture and liberated space.

As architects, urban designers, students and academics, it is our duty to initiate, design, and facilitate processes, tactics and tools that allow these *Spaces of Hope* to happen. Radical Temporary Urbanism is one approach that we have here at our disposal. ●

● Florian Kossak, Director of MA in Urban Design programme, Sheffield School of Architecture, University of Sheffield

URBAN DESIGN AWARDS 2012

John Billingham provides an overview of the awards made this year

The 2012 Urban Design Awards took place in the historic setting of 61 Whitehall, London on Wednesday 15th February. It was a celebration of the best urban design being carried out today. Awards were made for a Student Project, a Public Sector initiative, a Publisher, a Practice Project and for Lifetime Achievement. This event was generously sponsored by Routledge Publishers, Tibbalds Planning & Urban Design and Atkins, winners of the 2010/11 Project Award.

The Urban Design Group launched its awards in 2007 with the first Project Award being made in 2008. The prime aim of the awards is to give greater recognition to high quality urban design work and the shortlisted entries for practices, public sector and books are published in *Urban Design*. Since 2007, the awards have expanded with the introduction of new categories and there were over 80 entries this year.

The awards were presented by Janet Tibbalds, Chair of The Francis Tibbalds Trust, which has funded prizes for the Student and Practice categories. In the other cases – the Public Sector and Publisher – certificates were presented. In addition, a Lifetime Achievement Award was presented by Amanda Reynolds, Chair of the UDG, at the end of the proceedings.

The awards were originally devised by John Billingham and are administered by Louise Ingledow; the UDG's Director Robert Huxford coordinated the event and the compere was Rob Cowan.

The judges for three of the awards were

- Louise Thomas - joint editor of *Urban Design* and Chair of the judging panel
- Richard Hayward - academic and practitioner
- Paul Reynolds, Atkins – winner of the Practice Award in 2011
- Stefan Kruczkowski, North West Leicestershire District Council – winner of the Public Sector Award in 2011
- Lindsey Whitelaw - patron of the UDG.



PRACTICE AWARD

Introduced by Paul Reynolds

Joint Winners:

Studio REAL for Moat Lane, Towcester and URBED for Brentford Lock West, published in *UD* 120 pages 44-47
Shortlisted:

- Richards Partington Architects, for Howden Urban Extension Master Plan
- NJBA A+U for Rush 2020 Strategic Vision
- John Thompson & Partners for Suzhou EcoTown
- NEW Masterplanning for Greyfriars, Gloucester



PUBLIC SECTOR AWARD

Introduced by Lindsey Whitelaw

Winner:

Exeter City Council for Exeter Residential Design SPD, published in *UD* 121 page 38
Shortlisted:

- North East Derbyshire District Council for Urban Design Academy
- Gateshead Council for Freight Depot Visioning Document
- Planning Aid for London & Knott Architects for Tactile City Model
- Partnership for Urban South Hampshire for Quality Places Charter
- Carlisle City Council for Castle Street Improvements



STUDENT AWARD

Introduced by Richard Hayward

Winner:

Iain Brodie, student at University of Strathclyde for Gallowgate Renewal, Glasgow (shown overleaf)
Shortlisted:

- Dongni Yao student at University of Cardiff (shown on adjacent page)
- Ralf Furulund student at Edinburgh College of Art (shown on adjacent page)



PUBLISHER AWARD

Introduced by Alastair Donald

Winner:

Ashgate: Learning from Delhi, Dispersed Initiatives in Changing Urban Landscapes, Mitchell, Patwari and Bo Tang, reviewed in *UD* 120 page 49
Shortlisted:

- RIBA Publishing: NewcastleGateshead, Shaping the City, Peter Hetherington
- Routledge: Urban design, The Composition of complexity, Ron Kasprisin
- Wiley: Urban Design Since 1945, A Global Perspective, D G Shane

STUDENT AWARD



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Introduced by Duncan Ecob

Responsive Environments, A Manual for designers

Authors: Ian Bentley, Alan Alcock, Paul Murrain, Sue McGlynn and Graham Smith

This award was made to the authors of the book published by The Architectural Press in 1985. It examined what is meant by the concept of a responsive environment and provides a guide on how it can be achieved. It includes the concepts of permeability, variety, legibility, robustness, visual appropriateness, richness and personalisation and how these different aspects can be integrated in a project. It has been highly influential in the way that urban design has advanced as a contributor to environmental quality. The award was presented by Amanda Reynolds chair of the UDG.



ST PAULS NEIGHBOURHOOD BRISTOL

Dongni Yao, Student at University of Cardiff

St. Paul's project is a neighbourhood scale, brownfield project located in the north-east side of Bristol. The vision for the design framework was to create an accessible, prosperous and distinctive city neighbourhood. The design framework encourages an increased use of public transport through the heart of St. Paul's, forming connections to the city centre and the surrounding neighbourhoods. Cycle paths are provided through a series of public spaces across St. Paul's where car access is restricted.

The framework aims to increase the number of family homes to encourage life-time residency and promote small, independent businesses and facilities which are different from the mass retailers in Cabot Circus. These businesses and facilities are located along the main routes to retain and attract people into St. Paul's. The design framework sets up a series of public spaces with distinctive characteristics for different uses serving both family and business needs. To enhance vitality and safety in these spaces, the framework avoids buildings backing onto the space to provide a good level of natural surveillance. The master plan for the new neighbourhood centre consists of flats, town houses and terraced live-work units. The grid of the master plan traces the traditional grid from the historic map of St. Paul's. The development is divided into three phases to secure the successful delivery of the project. The internal pathway between the two blocks provides shortcuts and weather protected social spaces for residents. The ground floor units are flexible for change between office units or living units. The proposed blocks have ground-floor parking and a raised communal garden with a circulation corridor and balcony overlooking it.



RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION, LEA VALLEY

Ralf Furulund, Student at Edinburgh College of Art

The site in Lower Lea Valley consists of warehouses, landfill, scrap yards and industrial wasteland. The site is a threshold between the boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets. The river Lea is carved through the landscape and has left an industrial heritage in its wake; it now acts as an urban barrier. This Radical Reconstruction is an interpretation of the drawings, words and ideas of Lebbeus Woods. Transforming these ideas into a workable framework was a journey, trying to create a structure out of a system that encourages flux, informed complexity and change. It involved turning concepts like scarring, free spaces, urban prescriptions and augmentations into an urban framework. The urban code is built on robustness and embedded with elements of change in its very core so that the urban form is changed: old structures and roads are reconstructed to perform new functions where possible. The transformation from framework to masterplan was riddled with complex overlaying issues at the framework level. This involved creating a layered mesh of rules and guidelines that generates urban form but also, forces the dissection and removal of urban tissue, making a complex code that both encourages expansion as well as preserving the idea of the past. The ideas that make up this new urban code, in effect slow the urbanisation of an area, allowing it to grow at a more natural pace. This hopefully allows a slow movement towards cities that grow with the population and the needs of the people that inhabit it. As urban designers it is important to move beyond the built form and the material world, as Lebbeus Woods said 'We've got to imagine more broadly. We have to have a more comprehensive vision of what the future is.' ●

GALLOWGATE REDUX

Iain Brodie introduces a sustainable urban form to Glasgow’s East End

PRINCIPLES
The East End of Glasgow remains one of the most deprived areas in the United Kingdom, if not within the European Union as a whole. Seemingly intractable social and physical problems persist here despite decades of attempts at renewal. Although much of this quarter of the city comprises ex-industrial and housing renewal brownfield land, it is perhaps best characterised as being the location of the Barras, a once vibrant and renowned city market, now struggling to compete socially and economically with the adjacent city centre, from which it remains stubbornly dissociated.

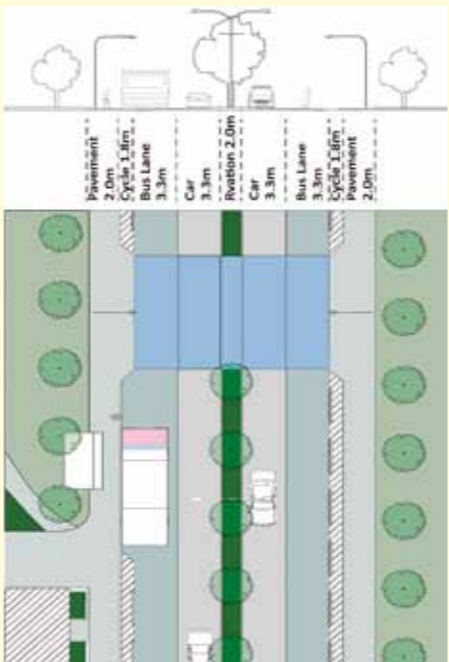
In recent years the city centre has benefited greatly from physical investment which has helped it to reinvent itself as a standout place of business, leisure and retail. In addition, in the area to the immediate east of the study area, the Clyde Gateway URC is driving regeneration efforts to improve infrastructure, housing and sports facilities in time for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Unfortunately the benefits of both renewal strategies have failed to manifest themselves outwith their tightly defined boundaries. As such, the area of study has fallen through the gap in-between: opportunities have arguably been missed to capitalise on the great affection Glaswegians have for this unique and characterful place.

For the 2010/2011 academic year, a partnership was formed between The University of Strathclyde, Glasgow City Council, and key local landowners. The

remit set out for students involved the utilisation of urban design principles as a means of developing an understanding of, and ultimately setting out interventions for the Barras, Calton and Gallowgate areas of the East End.

From the outset, community engagement was understood to be a critical means of achieving long-term, sustainable outcomes. To this end, the Urban Design studio was relocated outside of the academy: space was made available at the heart of the study area, within the Barras market hall. Here, local traders, residents and other stakeholders were able to maintain involvement in the learning and design process.

PROCESS
Initial analysis was conducted within multidisciplinary groups comprised of designers and planners. Some groups collected and interrogated data using various techniques, including streetfront, block and network analysis, while others placed the area within its policy and historical context. To facilitate my own group’s qualitative research into how people experienced the area, we engaged in interviews and facilitated the production of mental maps by local stakeholders. It became apparent that a strong relationship existed between built form and how crime, safety and cleanliness were perceived: in general, those traditional high-density neighbourhoods, such as Dennistoun, which are typified by tenemental



perimeter blocks, were regarded as safer, better maintained and more legible than those neighbourhoods that had undergone comprehensive redevelopment during the 1970s/1980s. The next stage involved developing existing and proposed concept plans alongside wider strategic objectives. Whereas the existing concept plan revealed some quite severe discrepancies between population density and local/regional nodes, as well as gaps in public transport provision, the proposed concept plan sought to provide a normative fix, indicating the ideal configuration for an armature upon which development might be based: north-south links, for instance, were found to be lacking. This stage informed the development of a foundation masterplan for a selected area upon which target-densities and new routes were plotted. In parallel to this, the studio developed a detailed ‘Glasgow Design Code’ of typical streetfront typologies.

25-YEAR MASTER PLAN
The final stage involved the finest grain of analysis; a master plan was developed for a discreet location. This accounted for density, access, active street frontage, street design and townscape. My own project focused on an area of partially demolished but highly accessible modernist housing on the Gallowgate, a key artery into the city. The master plan introduces green routes, allotments and

- ✓ Detailed street design for the Gallowgate
- ✓✓ Concept plan showing ideal configuration of nodes, ped sheds and the movement network
- ↓ Master Plan
- ↓↓ Aerial Perspective of Whitevale Gardens
- ↓↓↓ Shared Surface at St Mungos Secondary School/ Bellgrove Park/ Approaching Whitevale Gardens

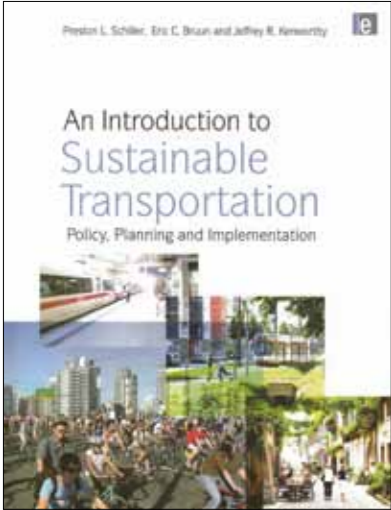


shared spaces, which are intended to augment established local horticultural activities, while addressing social isolation and diversifying transport options by providing positive spaces for interaction and movement. In terms of built form the master plan utilises the perimeter block extensively as a means of defining space. Streets have been designed to a detailed scale to define their role within the overall hierarchy and been aligned according to townscape considerations. Density has been increased to support transport-stops and services while promoting walkability. The Forge, a car dominated big-box retail park to the east of the area, has been re-envisioned as a mixed-use town centre node, with the integration of mixed-uses both vertically & horizontally. Whereas the importance of the ‘good ordinary’, or quotidian built form is acknowledged by the plan, specific places of note, such as the now derelict Whitevale Baths, have been identified as warranting special intervention. Following the example of Maryhill Borough Halls, this B-listed Edwardian bathhouse is to be redeveloped as a sports and community facility, bringing activity to the public square it fronts.



- KEY LESSONS**
- Detailed investigation into the broader geography of place is an essential starting point. The configuration of nodal and street hierarchies, and the mapping of density can only flow from this analysis.
 - Collaboration with local stakeholders brings energy, focus, and critical knowledge to the process. It is also helps to ensure ongoing support.
 - A rethinking of the car paradigm can facilitate great environmental, health and social benefits: walking, cycling and playing can and should be the essential components of any street.
 - The fostering of *genus loci* is as vital a determinant of successful placemaking as is physical regeneration; successful schemes are able to utilise existing townscape assets as a means of improving perceptions of place. ●





An Introduction to Sustainable Transport

Preston L. Schiller, Eric C. Bruun and Jeffrey R. Kenworthy, Earthscan, 2010, £70, ISBN 1844076642

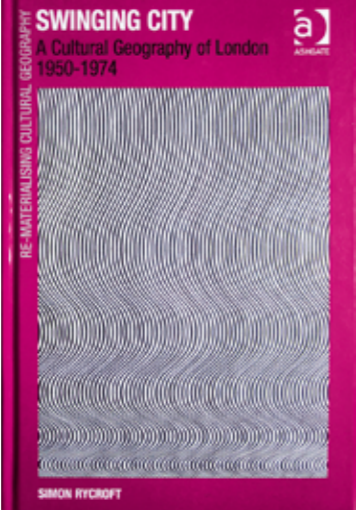
‘It is time for an anti-transport policy’ demanded *the Guardian* recently about HS2, a possible new airport, and the prospect of more roads. The missive was designed to question why society should provide the means to zip around the city, as people could make do with walking or cycling.

The mantra of reducing travel has been a central component of planning policy since 1994, and *An Introduction to Sustainable Transportation* is a succinct guide to transport thinking when mobility is viewed suspiciously. Combining an outline of successive transport systems and their relationship to settlement patterns; logistics and the investment, charging and regulatory mechanisms of infrastructure provision; and the evolution of public policy and the new planning paradigm; much will be familiar ground.

Nevertheless the book acts as a primer - from public participation processes to the opportunity costs of parking – although future modes receive but a page of dismissive text (a fraction of the space dedicated to velocipedes and their now much lauded successor, the bicycle). The case studies further illustrate the authors’ points, while the extensive references are useful for those wishing to explore further.

As is increasingly common in many areas of life, the alleged problem is medicalised through the motif of addiction. Hence the quest for fast convenient travel becomes the problem of ‘auto-dependence’ with all the regularly cited attendant social and environmental ills, which often don’t convince as causal outcomes, nor seem irresolvable through design thinking.

The text often proceeds through condemnation by association. Hence we learn that ‘Modern imperialism was fuelled by fossils’ while World War 1, the Great Depression,



Hitler’s Germany merit dishonourable mentions in the history of automobility. Even the Dubai debt crisis becomes a problem of transport - of rapid car growth and automotive gridlock. Applying that logic to the UK financial crash might lead one to blame the City of London’s continued public transport ‘dependency’.

In the places where a more neutral approach is adopted –in the chapters on logistics and economics – the book becomes more engaging as a result. Ultimately the message that the ‘culture of mobility can divert progress away from the path of sustainability’ serves to justify the lack of any quest for solutions to better mobility aided by new urban designs, and instead rationalises the imposition of evermore controls on people’s travel choices. How we could do with a dose of ambition and modernising zeal that would take us beyond the constraints of sustainable transport!

● Alastair Donald

Swinging City, a cultural geography of London 1950-1974

Simon Rycroft, Ashgate, 2010, £50, Hb, ISBN 9780754648307

This book may not be mainstream reading for urban designers, but it contains thought-provoking ideas. His early chapters on geography and culture from a phenomenological angle may challenge designers’ notions about space and place. One example is the denial of representation, substituting it for non-representational thought, even though a lot of his evidence consists of graphics invented during the swinging years for music events, the alternative press, art installations and even architecture, eg Archigram’s projects and publications.

Another example is Rycroft’s critique of words as opposed to deeds, although most of his sources consist of verbalised actions. Does this critique apply to (urban) design,

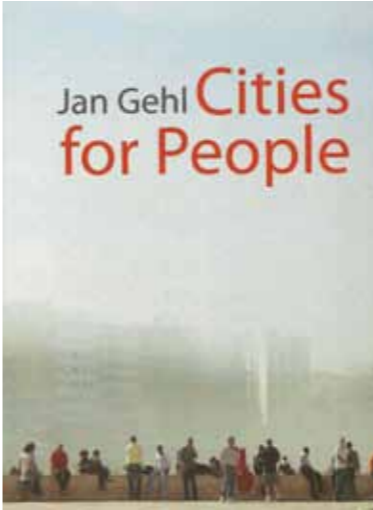
a lot of which is expressed in verbal mode, alongside its visual presentation to clients and users? Is there a way of incorporating performance, action and embodiment – as was done during the swinging sixties? Would such an approach enrich urban design and bring it closer to others?

The bulk of *Swinging City* casts a historic perspective on London whose roots the author sees both in the physical 1951 Festival of Britain, and the imported immaterial culture of American Beat and Angry. Drawing heavily on the 60s and 70s underground press such as the *International Times* and *Oz*, Rycroft distinguishes between the early lightweight frivolous swinging London, and marxist politicised counterculture later.

Of interest to designers is how Rycroft interprets the material and immaterial culture of architecture. He acknowledges sixties London as a liberating place where modern society encompassed the old establishment and creative newcomers. Relaxed planning restrictions enabled them to colonise run down areas while a modern vertical city emerged, alongside large scale urban renewal. This free-for-all atmosphere stimulated architectural experimentation According to Rycroft, this took place within an established geography of representation in the city upon which counterculture was building as well. In my view cross-fertilisation took place between marginal and design mainstream activities, which benefited from each other and were transformed through this process.

Creativity went also along with subversion and put London on the global map of desire. Influx and critical confrontation changed London into a populist world city which boosted its economy and reputation. What can we learn from that open and culturally rich period and can parallels be drawn with the current influx of newcomers from the world over? And can this neo-swinging period bring advantages to London in the context of neo-liberal planning, localism and the big society to improve the quality of design, the urban environment and everyday lifestyles?

● Judith Ryser



Cities for People

Jan Gehl, Island Press, Washington DC, 2010, £31, ISBN 1 59726 574 8

Jan Gehl’s book constitutes part of a world-view; it embodies a fundamental re-orientation in the way that we regard and adopt knowledge about the behaviour of individuals and communities in the development of our cities. From this perspective, it re-asserts the value of the human dimension in the city over the priority given to objects in the built environment. With the origins of this work dating back to the late 1960s, Gehl’s publications and projects provide a lifetime’s data collection by the author, his architectural practice and academic groups.

Gehl presents an urgent case for the pedestrian and the role of city space as a meeting place. It is an appeal to rescue city spaces under siege, one that even after the erudite pleas of Jane Jacobs and others has been willfully dismissed amidst the explosive growth of traffic, destructive welter of ‘shape-itecture’ and ‘iconitis’ prevalent in much recent world city development.

A common theme is that the cause of most of the city’s major problems since the 1950s derives from modernist theories and a myopic focus on cars; this dealt a blow to city life, and has since been promulgated within the myth of static culture. In a number of ways the text, graphs and diagrams refute this myth which is so ubiquitous that ‘this is the way we are, we don’t change’.

In this book, Gehl’s use of side comments within the layout allows the text to flow whilst highlighting a change in subject. A more technical approach of using formal headings and bullet points would have resulted in a hard-edged textbook, losing some of the delightful quality that makes it so enjoyable to read.

Useful graphic information regarding the movement and activity of people in cities is of a very high quality and linked to valid research examples, which in most cases come from the architectural practice’s work. It speaks volumes for effective theory



developed straight from first-hand experience. The benefits of striking commissions with international clients and the use of a common methodology are obvious. Rigorous academic research, long-term project implementation and publications are all seamlessly connected, and make this publication different from others in the field. It is a body of actual commissions and real projects where the ideas have been adopted and re-visited over a long period of time. We all are the beneficiaries. Yet as many groups around the world have adopted some of the concepts, the true effect of Gehl’s work will never be fully appreciated.

● Colin Munsie

Eco Architecture, The work of Ken Yeang

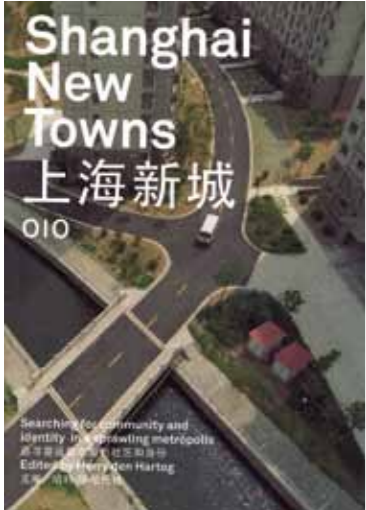
Sara Hart, John Wiley & Sons (UK), 2011, £40, ISBN 9780470721407

This is the latest and most complete publication on Ken Yeang’s work launched following his RIBA Annual Discourse in June 2011 and it described his distinctive approach to creating an ecological architecture. Ken Yeang has evolved his green design methodology throughout his 40-year career from forming Hamzah and Yeang in Malaysia in 1976 to becoming Chairman of Llewelyn Davies Yeang in London. The Menara Boustead tower in Kuala Lumpur built in 1986 was his first bioclimatic tall building. This is a typology that he has made his own through a succession of ever taller and more complex green skyscrapers that incorporate solar control, natural ventilation and greenery for both ecological, climatic and aesthetic reasons. His focused pursuit of how a green urban form should function and look has resulted in a distinctively recognisable Ken Yeang architecture. This A4 book copiously illustrates twenty two projects with photos, plans and multi layered diagrams of the systems and concepts driving his latest research work and evolving ideas. Projects explore novel technical solutions

to complex ecological issues, which are reflected in sophisticated external envelopes with balconies, sunscreens, green bridges and vegetated ramps puncturing and bisecting facades. The short essay by Yeang at the end of the book neatly summarises his concept of green design as the seamless bio-integration of the artificial with the natural environment while incorporating the concept of *ecomimesis*, the imitation of the attributes and properties of ecosystems.

Urban designers will focus on his larger scale projects as well as his attempts to create vertical urbanism - described in *Urban Design Futures* and *A Vertical Theory of Urban Design*. He proposes to turn ideas for a horizontal placemaking through 90 degrees to create towers with a multitude of spatial configurations, winter gardens and multi level voids as a form of public realm, albeit in private space. Bio-interconnectivity is the key to his approach to masterplanning, with numerous green bridges connecting green spaces that proceed to invade the buildings’ communal spaces - mimicking vines ascending from the jungle floor up rain forest trees into their canopies. Beguiling diagrams illustrate the *biointegration* of the green network at all levels through horizontal ‘eco corridors, skycourts and ecocells’. While I agree with Yeang that green design means going well beyond satisfying BREAM and LEED ratings, I also think that it is time to move on from green jargon. Peppering reports and proposals with a multitude of *green*, *bio* and *eco* prefixes may once have conferred an image of ecological rectitude to the fundamentally unsustainable process of building skyscrapers, but now it actually obfuscates the vital message. Architecture needs to progress to a more mature and critical examination of the persuasive cost-benefit evidence for green architecture.

● Malcolm Moor

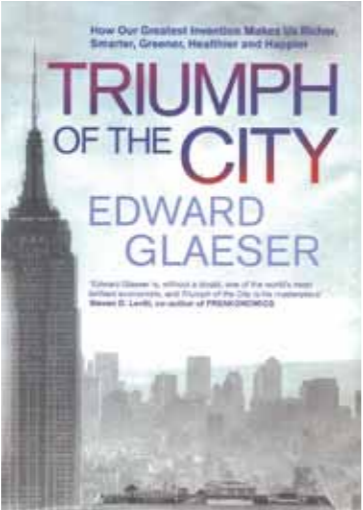


Shanghai New Towns, Searching for community and identity in a sprawling metropolis

Harry den Hartog (Ed), 010 Publishers, Rotterdam, 2010, £34, ISBN 9789064 507359

‘Shanghai is the head of the dragon of China’s modernisation’ stated Deng Xiaoping on visiting China’s commercial capital in 1990. Since the launch of China’s transition to a socialist market economy in 1978, Shanghai has been the engine of China’s economic growth and focus for its experiments with urbanisation as China moves from a rural to urban society. This lavishly illustrated bilingual collection of essays by ten Chinese and Western critics covers both China’s urbanisation and the attempts of the Shanghai Municipality to decentralise the city while safeguarding the fertile agricultural land of the Yangtse delta. Jiang Jun, editor of *Urban China* magazine, gives an historical overview explaining the *danwei* system - worker unit housing introduced in 1949 that divided the population into rural and urban *danweis*. Based on Clarence Stein’s neighbourhood unit of 10,000 people as at Radburn, *danwei* layouts were modified by Russian advisors to adopt a superblock system, and then by Chinese planners to become micro-districts. The paternalistic system of lives controlled by neighbourhood *xiaoqu* committees was loosened after *The Four Modernisations* but the Chinese city can still be read as a collection of autonomous villages or *danweis*.

Dutch urban designer Harry den Hartog gives a concise history of Shanghai’s urban planning that led to the 2001 strategic plan labelled the 1-9-6-6 Mode - one central city, nine key cities, sixty small towns and six hundred central villages. Western consultancies were invited to take part in design competitions for new towns, and their layouts were interpreted literally. Foreign Concessions created as trading centres outside Shanghai’s old city walls by Britain, France and the USA



were built in western architectural styles as are the themed new towns, to attract more affluent residents and foreign businesses. Intended to celebrate *the meeting of cultures* these architectural stage-sets seem so pastiche as to be almost ironic. Anting new town is an Automobile City based on a Volkswagen plant and Formula 1 circuit and planned by German consultants. But the Krier-inspired New Urbanist perimeter blocks ignored Chinese preferences for a southern orientation so the plan was changed by the Chinese design institutes at the implementation stage. The developer of Thames Town, part of Songjiang new city, designed by Atkins announced that ‘Foreign visitors will not be able to tell where Europe ends and China begins’. Dongtan Eco City planned by Arup on the island of Chonming appears to have lost momentum. Harry den Hartog concludes with an objective appraisal of the current planning situation describing the satellite towns as a good model of a Multi Centric Urban Field with extensive public transport extending out from Shanghai. Overall this is a well-produced current and thoroughly researched book with useful data and illustrations.

● Malcolm Moor

Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier

Edward Glaeser, Macmillan, Oxford, 2011, £25, ISBN 0230709389

An exciting, provocative, enthusiastic, disturbing and even amusing book - the *Triumph of the City* is full of a range of fascinating facts, or perhaps what Oliver Rackham might have called factoids. Despite including 16 pages of notes and a 30-page long bibliography, there nonetheless seem to be occasions when coincidence is mistaken for correlation.

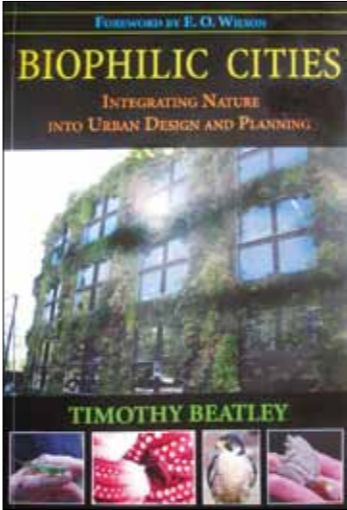
Glaeser writes with great gusto and takes a breathtakingly broad view of the phenomena that is the modern city. To structure his exploration, he asks a series of questions ranging from ‘What’s good about slums?’ to ‘Is London a Luxury Resort?’ He concludes with an examination of the statement *Flat World, Tall City*.

This is not a book about design. It is however a fascinating view of growth and decline, and Glaeser clearly loves cities but equally dislikes any limitations on the functioning of a free market. He paints a vibrant and exciting vision of city living but in that vision there is little compassion: the market is good and must be served.

The examples used by Glaeser to illustrate his thesis are drawn from throughout the world - from 5th-century Athens to 20th century New York, and the ethos is essentially North American. Given that, why would the book be relevant to urban design in the UK? The emphasis on the market clearly has resonance with current government policy-makers as does the notion that house prices remain stable when developers are free to respond to changing demand. The chapter on why sprawl has spread makes good reading. This follows the rise of Woodlands in Houston as the USA’s most popular location for suburban living. Glaeser is not however seduced by Woodlands’ investment in social capital, and acknowledges the unsustainability of suburbia.

Glaeser’s ideal is the high rise city; he has little time for Mumbai’s building height limitations and though he admires Jane Jacobs he dismisses her ‘love of restricted heights and old neighbourhoods’. He also has little time for edifice error - his words for the tendency to think that a city can build itself out of decline. Human capital provides the city’s real strength and he claims that ‘cities are made of flesh not concrete’. To be successful cities must remain flexible and maintain person-to-person contact. This is a book that is well worth reading but don’t expect to be comforted by it.

● Richard Cole



Biophilic Cities, integrating nature into urban design and planning

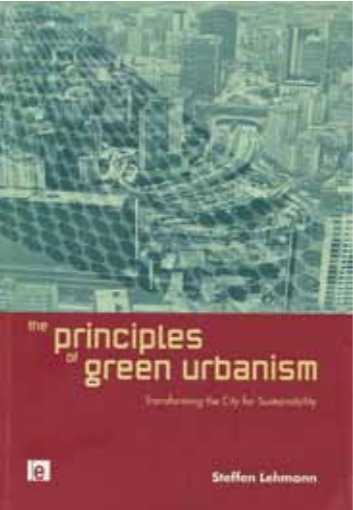
Timothy Beatley, Island Press, 2010, £21, Pb, ISBN 978 1 59726 715 1

This book expresses the credo of a very dedicated author who sees great merits in re-introducing nature into cities and urban culture. Based in America he draws the bulk of his examples from there. However he includes Australia and Europe, namely Freiburg, Hammerby Sjoestad, Gehl’s various initiatives in Copenhagen and, at the city scale, the Salburua wetlands installed on a disaffected airport of Vitoria-Gasteiz in Spain. He also includes more dubious examples like Masdar City in the desert, or Calatrava’s Chicago Spire.

What differentiates biophilic cities from eco-cities or other greening programmes is the importance attached to knowing and nurturing nature. Beatley advocates the need for all urbanites to observe and learn about nature from micro- to macro levels and he gives many examples of wildness in cities. He omits mice, rats or foxes and the damage that they create in cities, while mosquitoes are mentioned just as food for bats. His image of nature is benign, without referring to its rather brutal food chain.

His definition of biophilic cities is a bio-diverse city full of nature, small and large, and working hard to restore and repair lost nature. For him, nature has to be integrated into the design of every new structure. To that effect he has produced a set of indicators of biophilic cities, together with biophilic activities, attitudes and knowledge, and institutions and governance. These characteristics differ from green cities which emphasise energy efficiency and public transport. In practical terms he sets out biomimicry strategies for cities which could also apply to eco-cities.

The chapter on urban design lists biophilic elements at building, block, street neighbourhood, community and regional



levels. The best known techniques concern buildings, such as green walls and roofs, while interventions at other scales concentrate on landscaping spaces in-between. Most difficult to realise is biophilia at the urban scale, using green wedges and bringing rivers back to the surface, connecting cities to nature beyond with green networks and, of course, growing food and woods. Beatley is convinced that implementing biophilic principles in cities and encouraging people to live more outdoors will enhance what he calls natural social capital.

London could well take a leaf out of this book instead of pursuing a rather ‘biophobic’ approach to its public realm. Rather than covering pavements and squares with flags and asphalt and cluttering them with bollards, it could use bushes and shrubs to prevent cars from invading walkways, experiment with more permeable surfaces in streets and squares, and let people colonise edges along their houses and railings with plants, as well as growing food on London’s many neglected areas. The argument is that this would mean more maintenance, but solutions are at hand, especially in the UK where people love gardening.

● Judith Ryser

The Principles of Green Urbanism

Steffen Lehmann, Earthscan, Oxford, 2010, £49.99, ISBN 978 1 84407 817 2

Steffen Lehmann is Professor of Sustainable Design in Australia, and over many years he has reflected on how sustainable design should go beyond the individual building to encompass the whole city. He has used teaching studios to develop his thoughts and experiment, with the objective of ‘turning the existing city into a sustainable complex and powerstation’. In other words he is dealing with what is already there, not new neighbourhoods and he does not pretend that this is easy, particularly when so many cities

are in decline. His main laboratory is the Australian city of Newcastle where Lehmann has taught for a number of years and his students’ projects are the basis of the book’s case studies. Chapter 1 outlines the author’s view of green urbanism and gives background information on the city of Newcastle, accompanied by a generous number of annotated images.

Chapter 2 deals with theories of sustainability and its relationship to urban development; covering a wide spectrum and citing numerous examples from around the world though always returning to Newcastle. The next chapter starts with his 15 core principles of green urbanism which are interrelated and require an integrated approach. These principles are then developed into what the author calls a conceptual model of green urbanism and examples of good practice are described. Chapter 3 is taken by four case studies, three of which are based on studio work by Master of Architecture students at Newcastle; the fourth is a real project - the author’s masterplan work for the city of Taree in New South Wales. The final chapter of the book looks beyond the boundaries of Australia and considers the future of urbanisation in the Asia-Pacific Region, suggesting ways of achieving green urbanism.

Covering 900 pages, this is a big and heavy book. It is well researched and illustrated, provides a rich amount of useful information, and the author is undoubtedly passionate about the subject. But it does appear to be a cross between a compendium of lectures and conclusions from studio work, and a manual for green urbanism. It is unlikely that any one person will read the whole book and it might have more impact if published differently, perhaps as separate articles or booklets dealing with individual issues. This may go against the very justifiable holistic approach advocated by Lehmann, but in spite of the wealth of material, or perhaps because of it, this is a somewhat indigestible volume that may not reach the wide audience that the subject deserves.

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Landmark decisions

Following the Highbury Initiative of 1988 (the beginning of modern urban design in Birmingham), in which Francis Tibbalds was one of the participants, Francis's practice was commissioned by Birmingham City Council to write a design guide for the city centre. Published in 1990, the *Birmingham Urban Design Study* (BUDS) was the best urban design guidance produced by a British city. Twenty-two years later, it looks rather tired, but although Birmingham's recent and expensive Big City Plan has big ambitions, it has not superseded the detailed advice contained in BUDS.

One piece of long-term advice in BUDS, relating to legibility – or rather to the illegibility of the Middle Ring Road – was the recommendation for landmark developments to be located at five major traffic intersections, between the ring road and major radial roads, to give some identity to faceless, placeless highway engineering. There had already been an odd but rather limp attempt to do this at Dartmouth Circus, under which the A38M passes; a Boulton and Watt beam engine, product and symbol of the city's pioneering engineering history, stands forlornly and motionless on the island as traffic rotates around it. Since BUDS, there has at least been one successful realisation of the policy,

although it happened entirely fortuitously rather than by intent – the Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College by the architect Nicholas Hare, winner of the Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award in 2009, which stands overlooking Haden Circus on the A435. I played a part in its being there, an interesting moral tale which I might tell in a future Endpiece.

But generally, two decades on, Francis' landmark policy remains unrealised. There are several opportunities for significant architecture or public art which have never been the subject of proposals. However, it would be better to have an absence of landmarks than to have what was the subject of a series of crass planning applications at the end of 2011. The City Council's Deputy Leader (a member of the Lib Dem party, which is in a coalition with the Conservatives) had done a deal with an advertising company who became the Council's commercial advertising partner. The £1m+ per annum deal involved creating five iconic advertising sites and 25 landmark advertising sites. (It is bad enough when these adjectives are misguidedly applied to dumb architecture – that someone could think them justified by commercial advertisements is even harder to credit). Among other locations, the illuminated signs were proposed for the intersections along the Middle Ring Road, as well as Dartmouth Circus, that Francis identified in BUDS. The words *turning* and *grave* come to mind.

Birmingham, like other cities, is hard

up, and an extra £1m per year would no doubt come in useful. But what is particularly disturbing about this story is that the coalition has clearly forgotten the important lesson that the previous Labour administration learned following the Highbury Initiative and applied so well during the 1990s – that environmental quality adds economic value. If you make a city distinctive and beautiful, investors and visitors will want to be there. If you short-sightedly clutter it up with banal commercial advertising to earn a few quid, they won't, and you will be shooting yourself in the foot.

This story, at least in the short-term, ends more happily. The Planning Committee refused most of the applications, declaring the proposals a blot on the landscape, and those it deferred were withdrawn. The committee is chaired, incidentally, by one of my MA Urban Design graduates – nevertheless he doesn't always take the right decision, but on this occasion he and his colleagues were undoubtedly correct. Still, it is a reminder that despite the big advances that urban design knowledge has made into popular and municipal consciousness over the past two decades, decision-makers are still capable of acting in ignorance and making dumb decisions that in the long term could lose them far more money than they earn.

● Joe Holyoak

A night photograph of a park in San Francisco. The trees are covered in thousands of small, bright blue lights, creating a starry effect. In the background, the illuminated dome of the San Francisco City Hall is visible. The foreground shows a paved walkway with some benches and a few blurred figures of people walking. The overall atmosphere is magical and festive.

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