NEWS

PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 3 April
Barcelona
Octavio Mestre
Octavio Mestre is deeply involved in major regeneration efforts in one of Europe’s most exciting cities.

Wednesday, 1 May
Annual General Meeting
and Japanese Cities
John Worthington
The President is a long time Japanophile. Here he reviews possible lessons from the world’s most technologically advanced yet most conservative cities.

Thursday, 6 June
Embankment Place
Terry Farrell
Terry Farrell’s office has just completed this exciting addition to the Thames-side skyline. The event will begin at the Commonwealth Trust at 19, on Northumberland Avenue.

Wednesday, 12 June
Hong Kong
Derek Walker
Derek Walker’s practice has just completed a project for a public park in central Kowloon which brought out many aspects of Hong Kong culture and its impact on urban design.

Wednesday, 26 June
Annual Lecture
It is hoped that this year’s Kevin Lynch Memorial Lecture will be held on June 26th. For further details and confirmation please check the weekly technical press.

Except where otherwise mentioned the lectures will be held at: DEGW, 8 Crinan Street, York Way, London N1

Refreshments will be available
Events start at 6.00 p.m. for 6.30
Members £2; non-members £3.
Further details from Philip Cave on 071-240 2430

TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

PTRC COURSE AT READING

Wednesday, 8 May
Thursday, 9 May
PTRC are arranging a conference on this vital issue. For further details see back cover and contact PTRC.

DUBLIN FORUM

As the Architects Institute and the Planning Institute of Ireland are intending to arrange a conference in October or November this year it is proposed to support that even rather than organise a separate Forum.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

New Communities

Thursday June 21st
Friday June 22nd

This year’s conference will focus on the subject of Urban Design issues in designing new communities. It will cover the following items:

- Background of New Towns programme.
- Current demand for new communities.
- Consortium Developments proposals.
- Other current developments in Britain and abroad.
- Post modern ideas for new communities.
- Future approaches.
- Structuring new communities.
- Making things happen.

It is hoped that the speakers will include Sebastian Loew, Ivor Samuels, Walter Bor, David Crewe, Jon Rowland, John Phillips, Kelvin Campbell, Derek Walker and Richard MacCormac.

An optional tour of Milton Keynes will be arranged on the Thursday and overnight accommodation is available.

The conference organisation is being chaired by Jon Rowland and he can be contacted on 071-388 2421.

EDUCATION

Following the Urban Design Education Symposium in the Isle of Dogs (see UDQ 36) and the publication of the Source Book, the Group would like to find out in greater detail what kind of courses are being offered under the umbrella of Urban Design. Academic institutions are therefore asked to send in course documents and any other information available on undergraduate, post-graduate and CPD courses related to Urban Design. Information can cover whole courses as well as units, options or parts of courses. Please send the information to Sebastian Loew at 17/17 Broad Court, London WC22 5QU.

TCPA COMPETITION

John Burrell a member of the UDG and of the practice Burrell Foley Fischer was awarded overall winner in a competition for the design of new settlements organised by the TCPA and the Joseph Rowntree Trust.

John Burrell’s concept utilises former psychiatric hospital sites on the edge of the cities as a basis for establishing a new urban core or centre to outer suburban areas. Such sites were originally set up as residential settlements on a custodial model with chapels, recreation and employment facilities.

The new settlement is seen as one which has a rich and full range of facilities so that an authentic urban culture is created. Listed buildings, buildings of merit and those capable of being re-used and mature landscaping will be maintained and integrated into the design. In John Burrell’s proposal an integrated community care programme is central to the idea so that former residents

LIVERPOOL CONFERENCE

URBAN FUTURES

UDATS AND CITY VISIONS

September, 1991

It is proposed to hold an international conference in Liverpool which would share experiences of successful programmes in urban design and regeneration from Britain, Europe and the United States.

The programme will be offered through conference presentation and workshop studies as an educational and continuing professional development event containing two integrated parts:

(i) a series of presentations of successful urban design programmes and projects drawn from Britain, Europe and the United States, offered as ‘case studies’ to the conference and workshops; and

(ii) a series of workshops led by presenters of case studies and offered as ‘master class’ events based upon the Urban Design Action Team (UDAT) approach to team working in urban design policy and planning, and with reference to specific themes and locations within the City of Liverpool.

Further information can be obtained from:

Alan Simpson 051 794 3119 and
091 281 6981

Roger Tillotson 091 222 6015

Rob MacDonald 051 207 3581
EDITORIAL

A number of papers in this issue reflect different approaches to Urban Design. Ian Melville contributed a paper to a conference organised by South Bank Polytechnic last year on Urban Design. This is concerned principally with defining what creates successful spaces and investigating how order, opportunity and an evident structure can contribute to the making of meaningful space. Above all designers need to develop an awareness of how others react to their surroundings.

Andrea Lane’s paper describes the way in which urban morphology and building typology have been used particularly in Italy to understand the nature of a community and how future development can respond to its historic structuring. It may be more relevant to Italy where there is a longer continuous period of building development but there are still lessons in it for practice in Britain where such an approach has been applied infrequently and not to the same depth.

Brian Edwards reflects on the way in which an Urban Design approach to development in Glasgow has combined with a re-interpretation of the tenement tradition and a major interest in conserving the city’s fabric to revitalise parts of the city centre. This is particularly evident in the Merchant City where its morphology has become a ruling factor in the way in which future development can be accommodated.

Car Parks can very easily be a blot on the landscape or townscape but on the other hand can make a positive contribution to people’s surroundings. That has been recognised by the Urban Design Group in joining with Planning magazine and Birmingham Polytechnic in sponsoring the first award of its type for car parking schemes. Arnold Linden acted as one of the assessors and describes the awards that were made.

The National Garden Festival has been a major initiative to obtain national funding for major landscape works. There are varied views of the success of this programme partly to do with the limited amount of the work that has remained after the Festivals have ended. An idea related to this but applied to small towns is described by Alan Simpson and Gerry Kemp where a town would be selected for environmental improvement for a specific year and given financial support to enable this to occur. This idea would certainly create permanent benefits and help to generate new approaches to ways in which communities can be upgraded and above all create spaces which people can experience as part of their everyday lives.

John Billingham
THE CONVERSION OF TRADITIONAL FARM BUILDINGS
DESIGN GUIDE NO.2
Aylesbury Vale District Council

For some time the Modernist maxim that form follows function has been joyfully upturned. The proposition now is that form and function are each autonomous; Bernard Tschumi is reportedly delighted that the functions in his willful follies at La Villette in Paris have been changed. I suppose they are as manifestly unusable for one function as another.

Barns, however, are another issue. They look like very useful buildings. The question though is how different a function can their form take. To quote from this Design Guide:- 'the amount of alterations necessary to accommodate modern living and working conditions makes conversion difficult whilst retaining those features which give the building its distinctive agricultural identity'.

If through changes in farming methods, old farm buildings are indeed becoming unusable for agricultural purposes, why should they be expected to retain their agricultural identity? Architectural historians relish the archaeology of old buildings, the geology of layered history. The 18th Century sashes replacing the 17th Century mullions replacing the 15th Century tracery is a source of delight. But we balk at Everest double glazing.

The answer of course in this - as in so many other fields - is logarithmic change, change so great as to become change in kind rather than degree. And it is not until the evidence before our eyes is dramatically evident, and it is by definition almost too late, that we suffer pangs of regret.

As we associate food with the French, or art with the Italians, so we associate the countryside with the English. The 'English Countryside' conjures up iconic images of the inter-war railway poster, the calendar or jigsaw cottage, the Constable painting. Images which inspired young men to write poems and die for their country.

With horror we realise that those things we took for granted are not just going, but nearly gone. To discover a farm with its old buildings changed by no more than a thick patina of moulded and cobwebbed decay, and free from the overbearing presence of gross steel and concrete is now most probably the sign of either a penurious tenant farmer or a green exile from the city.

Change in deepest Somerset is no less than change in deepest Sheffield. The initial reasons for the existence of communities have gone. If we lived in tents the logic would be for us strike camp, to migrate to more propitious pastures, where location, communications or climate would better favour economic life. Our cumbersome, aged shells, weighty and deeply buried in the ground, make California with its thin cultural soil, its lightweight structures, seem deeply attractive. For a moment one may appreciate the logic of Future Systems pods, rubber gloved in high technology, so as not to corrupt (or be corrupted by?) the Earth. But it has taken the hard and mechanistic logic of the farmer and developer to make us realise that we are creatures of sentiment too. This does not mean that we should be creatures of sentimentality, set on the realisation of dreams as futile as Poundsbury Farm.

The fact of the matter is that history has left us with Sheffield, with Wells, with Bibury, and tabula rasa is neither sentimentally nor economically possible - in spite of our best efforts.

We have then to accept the illogicality of rural settlements, where 90% of the inhabitants have no working connection with their surroundings. The evidence of that lovely and symbiotic relationship between countryside, cottage, farm and village manifest as buildings and ground imperceptibly merge from man made into natural, has almost totally gone. The farmworker high above the ground, listening to Radio 1 in his glazed cab is nearly as divorced from the ground as the Tornado pilot in his cockpit; as far from the horse drawn plough as the latter from the cavalry. The average country dweller is a commuter to whom the countryside is little more than a charming green wallpaper, to be viewed through his patio doors, to be held at a safe distance by his hard boundaries of curb, fence and Leylandii.

We have been prodigal with our heritage. The casual, functional farmstead, evolved over centuries with its slowly changing needs, slowly changing vernacular, was in reality a work of art. It was not a work of art to which nothing could be added or taken away, as its history showed. But it was a work of art with which the alien structures of coarse modern technology have to date proved generally incompatible (we still have to believe that appropriate modern structures are possible).

The public valuation of works of art has developed exponentially, whether one thinks of the grotesque auction price for the bankable masterpiece, or the airport style crowds at a Burlington House exhibition. Yet the farm building, let alone the village or small country town, has proved easy meat at the hands of the DIY property owner, both sentimental and hard headed, confident and illiterate. The devastation of our old buildings and places in the name of democratic self expression or enterprise is an enormity. (And here I must criticise this guide in recommending the use of ‘designers’ where the skill of professionals commonly known as ‘architects’ is called for). It is arguable that a group of farm buildings as a visual expression of the human spirit is to be equated with that of a painting screwed to the walls of a national gallery. The rarity of the former may yet approach that of the latter, and may too ultimately lead to equally reverential viewing in an awe struck environment.

In the context of Aylesbury Vale District Council’s policy towards the conversion of traditional farm buildings, this Design Guide can scarcely be faulted. It is saying:- change the buildings and their surroundings as little as possible, and what you do, do it in sympathy with what’s already there. So ‘farm buildings cannot be converted for intensive use, and will usually provide fewer residential units or less floorspace than would be the case with a new build scheme... Too many doors and windows the insertion of dormers, rooflights and chimneys and the alteration and removal of roof trusses will devalue the character of traditional farm buildings and that of the environment’.

But Aylesbury Vale’s policy was itself...
formulated in the context of a belief that converting farm buildings was a way of saving them, and especially if listed. The evidence of course is, as was expressed in SAVCIE’s Heritage booklet by Gillian Darley ‘A Future for Farm Buildings’, that conversion to residential use is usually a course is, as was expressed in converting farm buildings was a way of converting the countryside might be staunched.

During a period when destruction has proved so easy, we must be grateful that the government policy of relative restraint in building in the countryside has been sustained to the degree it has. As PPG7 on Rural Enterprise and Development states: ‘land is a national resource for the longer term and should in general be protected from irreversible development’.

We must recognise that functions of the countryside and its communities now bear little relationship to their form. However, illogically as it is, we like this form (where it has not already been abused to the point of extinction); and there are ways of fitting new functions into it.

For farm buildings, perhaps the best presumption is that they should not be converted to residential use. A good use is for workplaces for which their quasi industrial space and structure can prove a good fit. Such functions can also help revitalise the fabric of the countryside and reduce a little the dreary growth of the commuter. One must also suspect that, were not the rewards for sale and conversion so tempting, with modest repairs many old farm buildings could remain, if not as optimal, still as serviceable buildings for agricultural functions.

But at least half the answer is to be found in the cities. If through commitment and investment our cities were to be made into places good to live in, the flight to the countryside might be staunched.

Martin Richardson

DESIGN CONTROL IN BRISTOL 1940-1990
By John V. Punter, 1990. £35.00

Do not be put off by the bulk of this book or by the thirty-five pound price tag. It is as it has to be, since Punter sets out to chart the post war physical history of Bristol to the present day - no mean feat!

This has been achieved through the use of extensive research material. This is then portrayed chronologically and done with such detail that it is like sitting in a time machine, the reader is able to move through periods of vast change in this fascinating and unique city. The anecdotes along the way and period drawings add to the sense of realism.

If you have ever lived or worked in Bristol then to read this book is to revisit the city. It reminds you of its intricacies, its contradictions, the sheer mind numbing badness of so many human actions upon the city’s fabric and yet its enduring charms and virtues.

The book also carries a great deal of critical analysis and theory, it uses office building schemes as its case study, but makes observations and conclusions pointing to the future and a much wider context. For this reason I feel it is a very worthwhile book for all people interested in studying and changing our cities.

Alan Wilkinson-Marten

BEAZLEY’S DESIGN AND DETAIL OF THE SPACE BETWEEN BUILDINGS By A and A Pinder
Publ E&F N Spon 1990. £27.50

The original version of this book, published in 1960, I still have it on my shelves, was the first of a very small group of texts to deal with what we have come to call ‘hard landscape’.

It was therefore contemporaneous with the pioneer period for ‘Townscape’ as it came to be called, popularised by the talents of Gordon Cullen & Kenneth Browne in the Architectural Review. Elizabeth Beazley, the original author, shared with them a concern with looking hard at what has always been there to see.

Her book though put the bits together and showed ‘how things are done and why, rather than what to do’.

What role does this recast version, by others, now fill and how effectively is it achieved?

I found Beazley’s to be a good book, though I never found it entirely satisfactory in its back up for details and specific construction information; but then it was never intended as merely a construction textbook. Also with the passage of time new information on products, research and techniques put ‘how to do it’ books on a short time scale.

A Pinder’s book lacks the concise clarity of its predecessor and unfortunately its style obtrudes in making this a work that is attractive and easy to use. What may be acceptable in a series of student lectures is not necessarily suited to the written word.

The photographs are poor, and the handwritten notes to the drawings combine with the typographic layout to make this book graphically much less attractive to look at and to use than the Beazley original.

There are three sections to the book dealing each with horizontal and with vertical elements, and with changes of level. The first deals with various paved surfaces, where and when they should be used, and with construction specification for both the surface and base materials. The second covers various types of walls in different materials and includes fencing and gates. The final section covers retaining structures, ramps and steps.

I noted a few oddities, with for example a casualness in the advice given for the design of steps. The authors are right to dismiss the rise and going appropriate for internal stairs, but quite wrong to say there is no satisfactory rule of thumb for steps in the outer landscape.

The fact is that a gradient of 1:3 looks right and is comfortable to walk up and down. It is simply not good enough to be ambiguous on this however interesting to quote the half dozen examples they have taken the trouble to measure.

There are two appendices, one with reference lists, mainly British Standards, and official publications, also a state of the relevant trade associations. However though this appendix is entitled ‘Reference and Further Reading’ no single book on design or construction appears with the exception only of one or two on concrete and road construction.

The second appendix consists of a short list of addresses, two or three official bodies, and the rest, trade associations; none of this information that is not covered more comprehensively elsewhere.

In summary the book does not live up to the standards of the Beazley original but people should not be deterred from reading it.

Michael Brown

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PLANNING BAR ASSOCIATION HANDBOOK
The Local Government and Planning Bar Association have recently published their 1991 Handbook. It contains the names, professional addresses and clerks of over 200 members of the Bar, in private practice, a significant part of whose work is in the fields of planning, local government and environmental law.

The handbook will be useful not only to solicitors but also to those professionals who are now permitted to give direct access instructions. There is also a list of useful telephone numbers including, for the first time, the individual numbers of the various departaments of the Planning Inspectorate at Tolgiate House, Bristol.

Additional text on local govt, and Planning Bar Association available from: John Pugh Smith, 2 Mitre Court Building, Temple, London EC4Y 7PX at a cost of £1.50.

BOOK REVIEWS

Tim Catchpole is the Book Review editor for the Quarterly and all approaches to publishers on behalf of the Group will be initiated by him.

Anyone who is interested in reviewing books on specific subjects or reviewing a particular book should contact him at 56 Gilpin Avenue, London SW14 8QY, home tel: 081 878 0594.
EUROPEAN URBAN DESIGN EXCHANGE

Ian Bentley and Georgia Butina

In many European countries the professions concerned with the built environment are divided into two camps: architecture, which deals with individual development projects and town planning whose concern is with large scale urban structure. Concern for the quality of local urban areas, crucial for the experience of everyday urban quality, falls all too often through the gaps between those established professions.

This problem is beginning to be addressed through the development of the discipline of Urban Design which focuses on relating together buildings and open spaces to create urban quality at a local scale. There is a growing interest in Urban Design throughout European countries.

There also appear to be many specific urban design issues ranging from the need to regenerate run down inner-city areas to the erosion of local and regional identity which are common to many countries. It seems likely that it would help the creation of urban quality at a local scale if urban designers could exchange ideas about what they are doing in some sort of international forum. The approach of 1992 and the other geo-political changes currently taking place in Europe reinforce this.

The purpose of this article is to outline one initiative for setting up such a forum - the European Urban Design Exchange (EUDEX) with the objective of identifying, promoting, exchanging and disseminating urban design practice and ideas between all European countries. The article will discuss the Exchange's location, its overall organisation and the practical progress which has so far been made.

A location for the Exchange, in Amsterdam, has been chosen primarily to give it the good communications potential in both physical and linguistic terms, which is essential if its objectives are to be achieved. No other European culture has the multi-lingual capacity found in the Netherlands.

Physical communication links - particularly by air - are also excellent. Travellers consistently vote Schiphol the best airport in Europe, and the other three cities with equivalently 'international' airports - London, Paris and Frankfurt - are far more expensive to stay in. In addition, Amsterdam is well-known as a city of outstanding culture and environmental quality which has many opportunities for practical urban design project work.

FEASIBILITY STUDY

Following an early feasibility study, funded by the British Council and carried out in November 1989 to investigate alternative organisational models, the Exchange has been set up as a conference/meeting/exhibition network, initially without its own fixed premises, but based around intermittent physical and lingual capacity found in the Netherlands. Physical communication links - particularly by air - are also excellent. Travellers consistently vote Schiphol the best airport in Europe, and the other three cities with equivalently 'international' airports - London, Paris and Frankfurt - are far more expensive to stay in. In addition, Amsterdam is well-known as a city of outstanding culture and environmental quality which has many opportunities for practical urban design project work.

In the light of information shared through the second day's papers, and the reactions to those which were developed in discussion. The workshops identified a series of practical tasks, and set up topic groups to carry these out.

FURTHER STUDIES

These 'topic study groups' are working towards preliminary reports on a series of urban design issues ranging from education to impact assessment, with a view to publishing these in a first newsletter during the summer of 1991. The various participants' seminar papers are also being prepared for publication and a feasibility study for setting up a first EUDEX conference is under way.

Anyone wanting further information about the Exchange is welcome to contact Dr. Georgia Butina at the Joint Centre for Urban Design, Oxford Polytechnic, Gipsy Lane, Headington, Oxford, OX3 0BP.
I'm more concerned with effects than causes, with what if...rather than just what is or was. We need wise action not just intelligent analysis. And furthermore we need to be able to act largely on our own. Of course there may well be methods or procedures one can adopt and sometimes we can get together and brainstorm ourselves out of our problem...if circumstances allow. But so often we're alone, time's short, something has to be resolved and we have to find an answer from within ourselves. We have to get wise quickly.

But where, for me, did all this begin? Years ago I started to study order in architecture, something about a building that makes it more than merely a structure for some purpose, where somehow there is a coherence and refinement, a fitting of parts into an evident whole that not just makes sense but has some deeper significance and appeal as well. I realised that what we sought was really what we sought from all our environment, natural or manmade, if maybe unconsciously and often imperfectly resolved. Starting at the most basic level of environmental perception, we need clarity enough in our position to be able to react appropriately: be it to stay, adapt, escape, or otherwise survive and hopefully thrive. As I see it, each of us needs an answer all the time to 2 questions: where am I and what do I do about it, which in turn implies where can I go from here, and what are the seeming consequences of this move or that. Another way of putting this is everywhere has to have both definition of some intelligible order because it surprising strong men would piteously cry 'where am I' if they got lost at night when no lights were ever shown, or pathetically name places to make a somewhere out of nowhere?

At least defining locations did help us gain some rudimentary mental map but behind it was more than mere convenience; instinctively we were seeking for more to respond to, provoking images with recognisable meanings, reassuring ourselves that somewhere were places that meant something, albeit different for each one of us; an attempt to identify our place, my place, even if they make some place for me, where often enough there was little definition of 'here' as distinct from 'there', of where we were or might reach that would be patently different and hopefully better, an emptiness that was weeks, months away from whence we came, round Africa and more. If I am with others, spread out (as we always were), even if they make some place for me, where are we in this seemingly endless nowhere? Is it surprising strong men would piteously cry 'where am I' if they got lost at night when no lights were ever shown, or pathetically name places to make a somewhere out of nowhere?

As the years go by, I find myself more and more concerned about competence to cope, understandably most of all in environmental terms. How do we get folk to create places that work well and feel good to be in? And here I'm not primarily talking about experts; I mean the folk who in ordinary planning and design jobs, and likely enough maybe newcomers to their professions, have to do what needs doing with scant experience of the particular thing in hand. If education were well-shaped surely it would help develop relevant attitudes, approaches and skills (and here I don't mean simply as some bland interface for compromise), but I'm sceptical about much that goes on today. It's not enough to pursue academically respectable causes behind causes, questions behind questions, when we need answers, or merely seek out facts and theories when we need hints, prompts, guidelines, or anything else that would offer insights, provide clues, increase foresight and give us what it takes to tackle things.
Above and below:
Piazza Ducale at Vigevano
Middle Piazza del Popolo at Ascoli.
Right shows Sassola
physical and spiritual, to suggest association, affirm depths and continuities beyond the untidiness of the everyday. Here we come to something bridging our two themes; the successive attracting of interest and attention and the convincing at one level after another. Order giving opportunity to go further.

Now let us turn to the ample elegant main piazza in Vigevano has at one end the great sweep of the church facade, designed so each complements and reinforces the importance, permanence and centrality of the other. This is a 'here'; we have arrived when we reach the piazza, no longer just on the way to somewhere. Different strands are brought together; the church axis carries on to the tower across to one side of the piazza, the street leads to the far corner, the curve of the front masks the angle of the church to the rectangular space. There was even a coalyard in the corner space when I was there but it could be something else. It doesn't matter. Surprise is OK, dismay is not!

There is a very thin line between one and the other, in part depending on our expectations and their origins. For example in the Piazza San Marco, where the campanile at the junction of the two piazze seems to be keypoint, marker and hinge; but it fell down about 1900'. Order turned to disorder, dismay, a mess to be cleared up and the place was almost a ghost of itself till rebuilt.

Intelligibility of our environment depends in part on familiarity and compatibility (not mere conformity) of whatever are the reference points available. It is natural to rely on familiar clues (eg size of doors, windows, heights of ceilings in scale with human beings, even if geographical and cultural differences do occur). Sometimes this isn't so simple; what size of person lives in Ascoli?

Nowadays we are often liable to culture shock, environment can seem to be inscrut-

ble, arbitrary, even inhuman, sending our contradictory signals as to scale and significance. Traditional foci may be dwarfed by anonymous blocks, dominant in impact but not in meaning.

Look at Hong Kong's skyline, interesting from a ferry across the harbour but not much to identify with, impersonal shapes and sizes, result of money talking rather than man. We see the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and are maybe bemused by its form, but at least when it was built, it did stand on its own; not so now, there's another, higher, odder object a few feet away.

What kind of a world is this, is it for monsters or mankind? Where is our place, my place, my 'here', your 'there'. Yet we could find a squatter dwelling just across the island that certainly is somewhere. Out of a few fishboxes a family make their own place we can identify and they can identify with.

It's not just resources, it's also priorities that add to the indifference of the built, the isolation of the mobile. And anyway, how do we see our world? Many places we see from vehicles and movement is organised first for them, so folk on foot get what's left over in between equally unsympathetic routes from junction to junction, a wilderness with no place for mere people.

OPPORTUNITY

Now let's look at the other theme; opportunity. Tiananmen Square is so vast that it dwarfs us, at intervals government buildings around it give some explanation for its existence but little invitation to any visitor to go anywhere, so what do we do? Take each others' photographs to say we'd been...to a name rather than a place, something we knew of but could feel nothing for. But in this little Italian village with its steep approach from the countryside around. The chapel, its
welcoming door a resting place marking the turning of the path into the centre where, further along, we see the tower and where commonsense tells us there will be more here than dwellings and workplaces, not just a street but some small special place to arrive in. Places can promise as well as reward. Promise within reach matters.

HE RE AND THERE

Take Florence, a wonderful city, where important places, built and open, fit well together, where we can readily move around from one ‘here’ to another, where we can easily spot and get up to higher ground around the centre and look down over where we’ve been and seen, and where else and where next we might go, and come by an overall picture we can trust. One of the most rewarding high places is Fiesole, with its hilltop monastery and church inviting us to climb still higher. Again, we rely on clues: a path goes up, a monk comes down, beyond walls and trees we sense we’ll find a viewpoint overlooking the entire city, beyond still higher we reach the cross and the modest church, we enter into its dark and ancient incense fragrance - and if we know how and when - we can go on beyond again out into cloisters progressively more private and miniature, and so go through a whole succession of sensory experiences from lively piazza below to private prayers and bees among flowers. True, once on our way, no other alternatives are offered but at each stage we can, after all, come back down feeling we’ve been somewhere, seen something memorable, and found en route there was something else ahead.

Now let’s go to Lucca, where so few visit though so much is worth while, with its Roman town plan still showing through in its layout. A readily intelligible attractive place with its great city walls around it that, again, allow anyone who wants to go up and look over the town, to see ‘heres’ and ‘theres’, some already known, others yet to reach and as we walk through the town we find piazzes and other public places alternately left and right, and always with other places to arrive in never far away.

EVIDENT STRUCTURE

This brings me to my next main point; places need to have evident structure, perceptual as well as practical, bringing together an order that is comprehensible and comfortable, and itself meaningful, and opportunity for our own interpretations and actions thereafter, somehow orchestrating major and minor themes and textures into some harmonious whole. I don’t mean tidy uniformity such as in a nineteenth century bylaw street obvious

Top shows route taken up to Fiesole and Monastery of San Francesco. Bottom shows Lucca where the rectilinear Roman plan is modified by staggers and diagonal relationships.
enough but offering nothing more at the next street corner. Structure in environment means an overall clarity within which parts are distinctive, have their own identity, subtlety, even surprises yet still seem to fit within the whole.

It is interesting to see how in Rome over the years attempts were made to give an evident structure within which are localities with their own patterns and distributions of landmarks, nodes and paths with resulting clarities and complexities for perception, so allowing us to build up by ‘instinctive triangulation’ a sound mental map. Some elements are intervisible, others only visible more locally or in other more limited ways. Just as order is not a limiting rigidity so opportunity is not limitless variety. We need manageable relevant choices and that means being able to see what it would be like to arrive at the next experience within reach, be it up here, down there or wherever, were we to go.

So here we cannot think only in three dimensions; time is part of the fabric of human experience too, and so it’s not just places, spaces, surfaces, shapes, textures, colours, not just local activities and atmospheres that environmental designers have to handle, it’s also connections, separations, distributions, concentrations, successions, contrasts, compatibilities, climaxes, certainties, possibilities and so on, and it’s not just seeing but moving. How and where we go will depend on what we foresee or feel we’ll find here/there/somewhere else/ and, how near/easy/long it might be, and our choosing first this, then that, then maybe something else later. Designers have to think of how environment unfolds, opens up, as we’re likely to explore it, use it, live it in. In a field course in which I was involved in York I got students on their first morning there, each to walk around on their own and make notes and sketches just as they felt drawn to do so. Of course some to some extent land use and movement along streets as well as the physical qualities of the place would affect choices of where to go next but it showed how folk, if free, will tend to follow some routes, miss out others, even keep to certain sides of the road, comment on some things and ignore others.

FAMILIAR PLACES

Firstly what I’m trying to say is it’s natural to look for familiar places. Maybe consciousness has made us a nostalgic species, seeking to make monuments in our rush from a private statement, the other is wanting a place that is their place. One is making their buildings as what they create and any others respond to an environment so they can put themselves into the minds of ‘designees’!

CHOICE

Thirdly, we all accept life isn’t wholly foreseeable, our expectations won’t all work out, but we do expect to come upon a ‘reasonable range’ of accessible potentially rewarding alternatives on the ground and to have freedom to choose between them in terms of attention and action, be it to opt for or ignore, pass by or come back to.

COHERENCE

Fourthly, from wherever we start and however we go we seek some sort of unfolding of larger and lesser experiences with some perceptible coherence yet changes in rhythm and focus. We accept there will be some parts where less happens, where progress is less clear, less certain, even where we never get, maybe because we lose the way, but wherever we get, we expect a fair chance of feeling being there’s worthwhile. Order, opportunity and structure are not one directional.

HUMAN NEEDS

Designers need to think of these things; how for instance to ensure a spatial grain that keeps pace with likely perceptions and progress of ordinary human beings so folk are neither too long without interesting experiences or faced with so many things at once they get confused. Designers need to put themselves into the minds of ‘designees’! They should develop awareness of how others respond to an environment so they can act on it. Designers, however, can themselves be part of the problem! Architects tend to see their buildings as what they create and any context as merely a setting, whereas for the public, buildings are rather parts that shape the space which is their place. One is making a private statement, the other is wanting a public place. In the old days, things were easier because what was put up would be likely to be more familiar, more tended in form and scale, whereas nowadays functional and technological pressures and design fashions may lead to inscrutable outcomes all too readily. Elements of exceptional bulk, height and form can dominate and edges especially alongside main routeways can remain quite unresolved as each development turns its back on them. Even if many developments are still small, scattered, almost random in incidence and impact, and thus hard to handle, gross change has become common and it’s all the more urgent that those responsible for design recognise and have the sense and sensibility to respond to basic human needs and preferences.

All this calls for preparation rather than formal education, to help mobilise sensory perception, to be alert and channel instincts, cultivate competence - so at least designers have as good an eye for what to do about places as any normal peasant would (I’m talking about being competent, not being clever, here).

TECHNIQUES

What I want to end with can only touch on some of the ways we might find could help us here. Skills, of course, are inseparable from ‘know how’, knowing how places are, what possibilities and problems they have, what preferences and consequences might obtain. Maybe a couple of mnemonics devised years ago might help now and then.

3 P’s: problems, priorities for action, possibilities for solution, SDO; suitability, desirability, opportunity regarding action.

Obviously seeing is crucial here. Of course vision may often be dominant but we need all our senses to get fully in touch and empathise with environment, to be open to whatever gives a place its genius loci, its stability, vulnerability, relevance, significance, its relation with its context, its particular structure. Folk like us need to get out on the ground and on our feet, from reconnaissance, sensory survey, seeking out clues and their meanings, not just to identify what exists but realise what it implies, the effects of, and scope for change, what is essential, dispensable, preserving, renewable and so on. I’m sure professional preparation can and should attempt to predispose folk to tackle such things through suitable projects and so gain a sort of ‘hands-on experience’. I’ve tried small special sensitising programmes (eg sensory clues to genius level) with very detailed studies of places so small they can be comprehended as a working, living whole, a microcosm with lessons for a wider world, and more usually just doing what I could within more extensive projects where roles were changed with successive stages. Thus everyone came to the final stage of individual planning with a considerable awareness of the whole situation through collective sharing of accumulated understanding.

Here, as so often in spatial decision-making much depends on gaining relevant insights through a common language. Spatial communication is possible even in quite complex circumstances if one uses relevant devices. One basic approach I have seen being urged folk to adopt is ‘stop-caution-go’
notation', assembling, even over-lapping, pros and cons, and often, using red, yellow and green hatching and other symbols, to show strengths, directions that have to be reckoned with. This way one can give intelligible structure to inevitable complexity and such presentation helps to show oneself as well as others what matters and what direction to take.

Exploring spatial problems is helped by the very act of trying to sketch out possible solutions, drawing over drawing, shifting, reshaping, muddling along maybe but nevertheless getting to grips with the problem and very likely redefining it too, trying to envisage what it would be like if things were to be thus. Maybe not very intellectually disciplined, not totally reliable, but a key part of the search for a real answer. However old-fashioned, there's a lot to be said for the soft pencil and tracing paper approach! And, even if you may seldom be able to try it at work, there's something to be said for predisposing folk to get to answers by methods architectural students in my day saw as trivial and escapist, the one-day sketch design, where in rapid succession we'd have to cast around for inspiration, seize on a credible idea, work it up into as coherent a solution as we could, and often enough see it come to life in our hands. Now I look back I realise how it helped us to commit ourselves to problem-solving, to take chances and do one's best with what they led to and not content ourselves with claiming further research was needed! Today's planners are even less likely to have been exposed to such a discipline, I guess.

Problem-solving isn't reading from top left to bottom right; there isn't only one way round. Let me urge you always to look at things other ways round - not simply stare at a map or plan the same way up, with north normally up at the top, and never just stay in the same place but move around it, see it from a distance and close to through a magnifying glass, lift it up and see it in a mirror so the image gets reversed, do anything else that helps break an unproductive mindset. Look for spaces and openings rather than solids and limits - and above all try to envisage reality from the perspective of those you're designing for, the poor old public.

Ian Melville made available at the conference some ideas about prompts and mnemonics to assist in decision making; copies can be obtained by sending a SAE to the Editor.

Top shows Nolli's plan of Rome of 1748 with Brocchi's plan below showing the basic design concept of Sixtus V. relating key buildings together.
URBAN MORPHOLOGY

Andrea Lane

It is now widely accepted that the exaggeratedly simple, sweeping solutions employed to tackle urban problems in the recent past were unacceptable environmentally, economically and socially (Gosling and Maitland 1984). They undermined the pattern of established urban form, being based on a mistaken appreciation of the structural relationships of the cities elements: the policy of 'zoning' areas for particular uses common to planning authorities in the 1950's and 1960's came under particular fire, resulting as it did in many large-scale single use increments of development of radically different form to surrounding the fabric (Alexander 'A City Is Not A Tree' 1965). It is ironic that at a time when planning policies were focused on social priorities, and social consequences of land use planning, with seemingly minimal concern for environmental design, these very policies were in fact compounding social inequalities with developments which destroyed social continuity.

TOWNSCAPE

By the late 1960's a number of complementary forces resulted in a groundswell of public and professional opinion against massive redevelopment and environmental destruction and in favour of retention and renewal of traditional urban form. A major influence on the work of architects, planners and sociologists since this time has been the 'townscape' approach, derived from the seminal writing of Cullen, and most thoroughly demonstrated in its application to urban design by Worskett (1969). By examining the wealth of variety and subtlety of the overlapping qualities which make up the 'visual image' of urban environments, Cullen suggested an approach to design which would reinforce these visual qualities.

Though the townscape movement was undoubtedly of great importance in providing a means of expressing the aims of a much gentler approach to design in existing urban environments, and many of its concepts such as 'sense of place' and 'serial vision' are of continuous relevance, there have been problems with its interpretation as a planning policy (Maxwell 1976). There has been a tendency to view areas as two-dimensional stage sets, with a consequent neglect of the plot patterns and building layouts which represent the historic process of urban growth. The conservation of general form and particularly facades was seen as being of primary importance over the distribution and intensity of uses, and the pattern of public and private spaces. The problem of succumbing to commercial pressures for larger units behind retained facades at the expense of traditionally intimate plot patterns was recently acknowledged in the City of Chester Conservation Review Study (1988). Thus it has become clear that the visual detachment promoted by this concept cannot function as an all embracing approach to planning and urban design policy, though it does still continue to be applied and lauded (Goody 1985).

The need for a widely accepted approach to design within our existing urban environment is pressing. The value of the 'contextual' approach to design has gained increasing recognition amongst designers (Maitland 1983), the intention being to weave together the old and the new in a manner which retains or reinstates the continuity of urban fabric, and establishes a reciprocal relationship between the building and its setting by mimicking, clarifying or elaborating aspects of it (for example as outlined in 'Collage City' by Rowe & Koetter). But again, such approaches can be superficial concentrating largely on existing visual relationships and neglecting evidence of underlying form.

More recently, it has been suggested that we could usefully examine approaches to urban design and conservation in European countries (Slater 1984, Samuels 1990) where, particularly in Italy and Germany there has been a much stronger tradition of studying urban form and understanding the importance of urban environments as an integral part of the evolution of the society living and working in them. This 'morphological' approach goes further than an examination of urban form and activity patterns, which is the main concern of the contextual concept, to an analysis of the underlying processes that produce these patterns. It could therefore hold considerable potential as a comprehensive method of both analysing and suggesting appropriate urban design solutions in this country.

As a concept and a method of analysis, urban morphology spans a number of disciplines; indeed, part of its attraction to such a wide arena must lie in the present openness of its concepts to a wide range of interpretations (see Chany and Merlin 1986). A general and widely applicable definition is that through an evolutionary analysis of urban tissue it seeks to analyse and understand the sequence of overlays and additions of different cultures and ages, for this provides three dimensional evidence of the social, political and economic processes of the past and thus an appreciation of the dynamic qualities of the city. In its particular application to urban design and conservation a specific range of concepts has developed, though even within this field a variety of views are apparent, particularly in relation to its prescriptive role: these range from the strict adoption of past forms of the historicist, to those who see the deep underlying structure as a starting point for design to promote responsiveness to changing social and economic circumstances. The main issue here is the extent to which the future can be regarded as an extension of the past.

MURATORI AND CANIGGIA

It is during the past 15-20 years that morphological analysis has assumed major significance in Italian practice, influenced particularly by the late Saverio Muratori (1910-76), who held the chair at the University Institute of Architecture at Venice. Fuelled particularly by what he saw as a neglect of the evolutionary base and historic context of
existing towns and cities in contemporary developments, he sought to instil in his students an appreciation of the values of connections with the past, and of gradual evolutionary change. The implication for design work was that it should be concerned with altering inherited urban fabric in accordance with societies changing needs, as has occurred in previous centuries: in this way Muratori's students were trained to be 'technicians of the organisation of human space' (Caniggia 1979). Indeed it is the work of these students, a number of whom have applied Muratori's ideas in practice, which is particularly interesting.

The best developed and most readily accessible work of the 'Scuola Muratoria' is that of Paulo Caniggia, for not only did he develop the concepts of a generally applicable methodology (Caniggia 1976, 1979), but working along with Gianfranco Maffei, he also applied these to a number of specific studies. Developing from his initial work as a student in Venice until his final years teaching in Genova and Florence, Caniggia's work draws upon his experiences in these cities.

**TYPOLOGY**

His concepts are based on the notion that in the initial development of urban areas (at a given time and place), a 'first building' can be identified. This is a dwelling which reflects the social, economic and cultural requirements of that moment; subsequent expansions of the urban area have their own 'first buildings' which represent the specific needs of that time. Caniggia is largely concerned with dwellings seeing these are the 'basic type' of urban tissue (all other buildings are 'special types') which show the strongest response to changing circumstances. Due to the general inert and unresponsive nature of urban tissue, modification of the basic type has the greatest influence on any changes in the fabric of an area. Changes may occur in times of both economic expansion and contraction, with the basic type becoming generally larger and more specialised or smaller and simpler. The concept of leading types attempts to explain this process whereby existing types are adapted to form synchronous variations as shown in the illustration. The result is that a city can be interpreted as a series of modifications, each one reflecting the needs and aspirations of a particular moment in history.

These concepts are reflected in a number of other studies and accounts of practice in Italy which have been completed recently (Samuels 1990). Given this theoretical framework, it is important to consider its use in practice. It is applicable to three general situations: urban conservation and restoration, renewal projects on vacant land, and greenfield sites. The first two areas of work are of particular interest: they are based on extremely detailed morphological and typological analyses of the development of urban tissue. A wide range of data is available, the 200 year old system of maps being of great importance. The results of such processes are shown in fig 2. Parallel studies of current and projected future social and economic circumstances are undertaken, and proposals can be generated from this comprehensive view.

In relation to conservation and restoration work, the ease of effecting transformations of urban fabric in recent times means that it is very rare to come across a recognisable 'first building' in any area. The intention in practice is that these transformations should be identified and assessed in their context, with the general aim that they should be retained only to the extent that they are compatible with the particular building and its setting, and also current social and economic circumstances. Thus in Florence, it is suggested that priority be given to the amalgamation of small flats in the centre to help overcome the problem of large numbers of single people.
BOLOGNA

In Bologna, where morphological and typological analysis has been used extensively in relation to renewal projects, a clear idea of the areas of both proposed repair and improvement, and proposed demolition and reconstruction is given (Comune di Bologna 1979). In the areas of reconstruction, the general aim being to restore these fractures with the past. Design is based on the establishment of a 'dialectic between the rules of the tissue and the contemporary leading type' (Samuels 1990) continuity being restored by incorporating appropriate elements of the 'first building' tissue.

In assessing the potential contribution of this approach to British practice, any parallels which may be drawn cannot be direct given the strikingly different working environments of the two countries. As there is no equivalent of the town planning profession in Italy, urban morphology and building typology studies are pursued by architects trained in the field. The detailed studies require large teams of trained workers: great use is made of the relatively large numbers of architecture graduates (around 60,000 yearly compared to 7,000 in this country) all eager to gain practical experience. It is relevant that conservation and continuity within the inherited urban fabric can be recognised as a continuous part of Italian cultural attitudes, and also that the modern movement in architecture was absorbed to a much lesser degree in Italy than in other European countries. Further, the weakness of the Italian planning controls has facilitated this continuity: because of the lack of powers to effect large scale redevelopment schemes, modern movement architects were largely confined to peripheral locations with much less cultural significance.

It should also be noted at this stage that the application of morphological theory has not been entirely trouble free. In particular, the difficulty of establishing the extent to which it is appropriate to return to the supposed period of first building is noted, as is the lack of visual analysis of the townscape in general (Regione del Veneto 1980). It is clear that the Italian use of morphological and typological studies cannot be regarded as an all embracing approach: whilst it may proceed from an extremely solid analytical basis, the prescriptive stand is weak as it fails to accommodate elements essential to any comprehensive strategy for urban design. In particular, the necessity for a thorough understanding and integration of the social consequences of proposals and the need for social interaction is somewhat neglected, though it does form a key element in the work of other urban morphologists (Hillier and Hanson 1984; Jacobs 1961).

APPLICATION TO BRITAIN

Accepting that the Italian use of morphological analysis cannot be directly related to British practice, and does not represent a complete and ideal approach to urban design, can we still usefully draw lessons from this experience? Given the state of British urban...
This relationship is the essence of urban context, what is sought is an understanding of country. More than an appreciation of context required in Italy as a starting point design practice identified earlier, it is awareness of likely future conditions is context. In order to contribute effectively, an morphology which goes beyond the abstract be retained and extended in new projects. which has developed through time and may the underlying layering of form and function for design could be usefully examined in this. Suggested that the depth of understanding of economic and cultural continuum, rather than a snapshot of one particular moment, and accepts that any design solution m. 'form part of this continuity. Developing from this generalisation, the issue which is inadequately addressed by Italian and other urban morphologists is that of the extent to which the future can be regarded as an extension of the past. It is impossible to give any definitive answer, other than that the establishment of terms of reference must depend very much on the particular locality.

The characteristics of cities like Chester on the one hand, and Manchester on the other demand very different approaches: in historic cities such as Chester or York, the compact nature and overall quality of urban fabric demand for the most part an absolute sensitivity to the pattern of previous and inherited urban form, which must as far as possible be retained or respected in any alterations. In the larger commercial cities such as Manchester and Liverpool, where in recent times a great deal of the inherited urban fabric has been destroyed and the evolved continuity broken, a less restrictive approach is required. Here the appropriate urban matrix and form derived from evolutionary analysis is utilized not as a straightjacket, but to provide 'morphological rules of thumb' (Lowndes and Murray 1988): the general purpose would be to recapture the integrity of the urban tissue by making use of existing elements and also creating as many additional elements as are needed for reconstructing unity and continuity.

Morphological approaches to design also give further weight to the already widely recognised potential of traditional forms. By examining past ways of living and working, we discover form-function relationships that worked well in the past: in particular the perimeter block with its latent potential to cope with changing patterns of activity has been identified (Saxon 1983: Bentley et al. 1986). This knowledge can be related to both promoting the reuse of inherited forms and developing new areas in a manner sympathetic to the existing morphology.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The Vivat Ware study carried out by Rock Townsend provided an analysis of the fabric of the town and to enable more development to be carried out 'while retaining the scale, grain and genius loci of the town'. Proposals for new housing at Wickhams Wharf are shown on the lower right of the drawing. The grain and pattern of new development responds to the morphology of the existing town.

The 'Vivat Ware' study carried out by Rock Townsend provided an analysis of the fabric of the town and to enable more development to be carried out while retaining the scale, grain and genius loci of the town. Proposals for new housing at Wickhams Wharf are shown on the lower right of the drawing. The grain and pattern of new development responds to the morphology of the existing town.

The final issue to be raised is that, having identified those aspects of the Italian approach to morphological analysis that could provide a valuable contribution to British practice, how can we go about accommodating them? It is encouraging to note that in promoting such an approach, it appears that we would be developing and extending a growing trend towards the recognition of the importance of historical context as a basis for design. In renewal and redevelopment projects, it is an increasingly common aim that design should be 'tied out of the existing grain as if it were already there' (Gosling and Maitland 1984).

Proposals for Glasgow and Walsall illustrate this point: in Glasgow the aim is to plan the city's 'continuing renaissance' 'above all with the context and from a strong historical and cultural basis' (Mulvagh and Evans 1990) For Walsall, in a regeneration project aimed at stitching together part of the fabric of the city which has 'simply fallen apart', a thorough study of the inherent potential of the historical and contemporary fabric is intended as 'a new model for urban regeneration, in stark contrast to the whole-sale utopian approach' (Melhuish 1990). An earlier study for Ware (Vivat Ware: Rock Townsend 1978) emphasised similar principles in bringing in more development and trade while retaining the scale, grain and genius loci of the town.

Accepting that these moves towards more comprehensive, morphological bases for design are perhaps exceptional, it is important to consider how the actors involved in the design process can be encouraged to adopt such an approach. It would appear that local planning authorities are in the key position, given their responsibility for establishing the context for conservation and urban design, and for controlling new development. However, it is widely acknowledged that local authorities are not always in a position to 'manage' environmental change, this commonly being the result of a complex sequence of actions outside their control (Larkham 1988). Further, recent calls for central government to allow local authorities a more interventionist role in design have been rejected and the
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inference is that developers and designers should have greater regard for the impact of their schemes on the environment.

As local authorities look increasingly to external agencies (such as private sector design consultancies) to carry out urban design studies and projects, particularly in sensitive areas where a comprehensive view of how the urban fabric should be managed is required, so the key determinant of the bases for design has shifted. Local authorities must continue to play a vital role in establishing the essential context for design, not only by providing the brief and gathering together historical information, but also by establishing the crucial economic, demographic and social information. Thus in raising levels of awareness of the potential of this approach, we should be seeking to influence not only planners, conservationists and urban designers working for local authorities, but also urban designers acting on behalf of developers.

CONCLUSIONS

In this discussion, only one element of the very wide area of morphological research and application has been examined. Given the breadth of this field (see Slater 1990), it may well be that other applications could usefully inform British urban design practice. The work of the geographer Conzen has been reviewed and extended considerably by the University of Birmingham 'Urban Morphology Research Group', and provides a strong basis of research methodology. Other potential design techniques also warrant closer examination, for example the use of 'codes of conduct' to guide 'market forces towards the creation of an idealised community that reflects the building and design tradition' of the area (Cruickshank 1990). Whilst the research and analysis of these morphological techniques continues practitioners should be aware of ideas and approaches which could assist them in the generation of appropriate design solutions whether conserving or renewing or extending the urban fabric.

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In many regards Glasgow has followed a similar path to certain European cities over the past ten years - the search for a new identity has focused attention upon the inner city and the role of heritage and community-based enterprises to fill the vacuum left by the retreat of orthodox town planning.

Thougt initiatives in Glasgow have rarely been as spatially structured as in some European examples, especially in such exercises as the GEAR Project, there has been a marked return to urban design as a discipline quite distinct from either architecture or town planning. Many of the younger generation of town planners working within the city planning department and their architectural counterparts in private practice share the new regard for the traditional qualities of urban design. What has been most remarkable is that in an age when Thatcherite values elsewhere have led to an increasingly 'laissez-faire' approach to development (for example in London Docklands), in Glasgow the trend has been in the opposite direction. Masterplans and design codes are now commonplace in the city, and generally accepted by the development community.

Most now recognise that the city's future depends upon respecting not only Glasgow's outstanding heritage of old buildings, but where reconstruction is to be undertaken, abiding by the principles which led to the building of what is widely considered to be Britain's finest nineteenth century city.

Hence there is now a fascination with grids and the role of the street and square to help structure future rebuilding. First in exhibitions and more recently in terms of masterplans for area renewal, the younger generation of architects trained mostly in the early 1970s have enjoyed growing influence upon the shape of Glasgow. Many started their careers employed upon the rehabilitation of the Victorian tenement, but are now mostly engaged upon new buildings as limited government funding is directed increasingly towards the inner city. Working often with community-based housing associations or enlightened developers such as KAnTel (responsible for Ingram Square) the new generation of architects and urban designers have brought a European rationalist, as against English picturesque, approach to these areas. In parallel the city planning department has increasingly introduced policies within the local plans which emphasise the place of the tenement and the co-ordinating function of the street (both aesthetically and socially) in a fashion which has encouraged these architects actions by ensuring that development frameworks are well directed.

A good example of the new approach to urban design is the Woodlands area just west of the city centre and immediately alongside the M8 motorway. The masterplan here was won in competition in 1984 by McGurn, Logan, Duncan and Opfer for the Woodlands Development Trust. Its spatial and hierarchical qualities are immediately reminiscent of Robert Krier's work for the IBA in Berlin, yet the plan follows certain Glasgow practices such as providing a balance between villas and tenements, and regulating the height of buildings to the width of streets. The masterplan was prepared for a development trust though it has since been adopted as a basis for development by the planning authority. The plan seeks to create a new community centre alongside the splendid nineteenth century Arlington Baths, and encompasses both property restoration and new construction. The variety of activity is typical of inner city Glasgow: tree planting, traffic management, building construction and rehabilitation all contribute to a decided early area approach to renewal. What is perhaps most remarkable is the consensus which has grown up in an area of mixed social, cultural and ethnic identity for the proposals.
Similar spatial qualities are to be found in the plan prepared for the Scottish Development Agency (the government’s primary source of development funding in Scotland) by the Holmes Partnership for the Broomielaw area of Glasgow. This area lies between the Scottish Exhibition Centre and the central business district and is bounded by the river Clyde to the south. It is a prime location much sought after by commercial developers, and enjoys expansive south facing views over the river to the site of the Glasgow Garden Festival of 1988. The urban blocks here are more linear than elsewhere in central Glasgow and several of the old warehouses (including Queen Victoria’s tea store) are listed as architectural or industrial monuments. The adopted plan consists of cutting through certain of the linear blocks to form locations for squares and much pedestrianising of existing streets. Under the plan buildings are to be restricted in height and given an element of architectural celebration where they face the Clyde or at important street intersections. The approach would be unthinkable in say London Docklands, yet here in Glasgow highly structured urban design is being employed perhaps as a reaction to the spatial and height freedoms of the 1960s.

The proposed height limit at Broomielaw has, however, posed problems for developers anxious to utilise city centre sites to the full and exploit the riverside views. By restricting new buildings roughly to the height of the retained warehouses, the city planners have attempted to follow the successful example of the Merchant City area, though the rich matrix of city life shown so evocatively on the drawings has failed to materialise to date. Major investors in the area, such as Glasgow and Oriental Developments, have recently employed American architects who initially sought permission to build a skyscraper, though the amended proposal is closer to the Holmes masterplan. Without the urban design masterplan and the spirit of nineteenth century Glasgow which it seeks to revive, one suspects that office towers would have been harder to oppose.

If current developers are focusing their attention upon Broomielaw, previous ones concentrated their efforts within the Merchant City. This area, once occupied by the houses of eighteenth century tobacco merchants and the supporting buildings of commerce such as the Trades house (1791) by Robert Adam and the Royal Exchange (1827) by David Hamilton, became a warehousing area in the nineteenth century. By the mid twentieth century the Merchant City was in decline, yet it’s locational advantages due east and south of the City Chambers meant that wholesale clearance was never entertained. Instead a large part was placed within a conservation area in 1974, and though no masterplan was prepared, area-based renewal which retained
the best old buildings and most importantly its street pattern, was encouraged by both the Scottish Development Agency and the District Council. As a result private developers were attracted to the area by the prospect of converting the nineteenth century warehouses to flats for Glasgow’s new urban middle class. Kantel took an early lead in the restoration and partial redevelopment of Ingram Square (1985-89) using local architects Elder and Cannon. A mixture of land uses (offices, studios, flats, student accommodation) and building styles have been incorporated into an entertaining scheme which through property retention and new build has created Ingram Square, a large city block with three internal courts.

Not far away the Burrell Company, formed by local architects interested in property development, have converted near derelict property into flats. Grant aid provided by the SDA and Glasgow District Council has ensured that projects of marginal financial viability have reached fruition and these have paved the way for a surge of investment in the area. Large bonded warehouses in Bell Street which once stored whisky have been adapted into Piranesi-styled apartment blocks and, right on the doorstep of the City Chambers, the Italian Centre has been completed.

THE ITALIAN CENTRE

The Italian Centre by local architects Page and Park follows the example of a mixed use urban block of mostly retained warehouse buildings established by Ingram Square. But the specification is higher here, and the Italian developers have sought to give the development a rather Florentine opulence.

Much figure sculpture has been added to the building or sits as statuary in the street alongside, and marble, brass and stained glass provide a link with the decorative tradition found in many of the city’s Victorian buildings. flats here cost nearly £100,000 (comparable ones are only half the price in Ingram Street) and are a measure of the desirability of both the location and buildings. Only ten years ago these buildings faced demolition and replacement by lettable offices, giving a measure of how far attitudes have changed.

TRADITIONAL TENEMENTS

Where new apartment blocks have been constructed in the area they have usually employed the traditional tenemental form. Over the past forty years Glasgow has experimented with various forms of housing - from balcony access flats, to tower blocks and suburban new towns. After finding that most have failed socially (the peripheral estates such as Easterhouse) or technically and managerially (the tower blocks), there has been a marked return to tradition. The revival of the tenement has been a feature of Glasgow’s urban renaissance as important as the rediscovery of urban design. In fact many in the city see the tenement as the vernacular housing type of urban Scotland just as those in England employ similar terms for the terraced house. The new tenements are basically similar to their nineteenth century predecessors - both employ masonry or brick construction, bay windows and shared common access stairs, and are built hard against the street enclosing a semi-private area to the rear. It is a form of housing familiar in Europe, but quite alien to many English eyes. The revival of the tenement in Glasgow has occurred for sound financial, climatic and social reasons, but there is a cultural dimension to the argument. Many in Scotland currently equate the tenement with the resurgence of Scottish nationalism - an attempt if you like to strengthen the distinctiveness between Scotland and England.

MATERIALS

Brick is normally employed for the new tenements of Glasgow since sandstone is out of the question financially. But the tenement designers have employed brick with skill and it is often detailed and coloured to simulate stone. As brick is load-bearing the window openings are necessarily small and vertical which again evokes the spirit of older examples. But one problem remains - how to match in height modern tenements which stand alongside older neighbours.

As so much of Victorian Glasgow lies within conservation areas modern designers are often required to build tenements which share the same cornice lines as nineteenth century neighbours. Unfortunately, storey heights in modern flats are usually much lower than in the traditional tenement with the result that modern apartment blocks have to be five storeys high to match four storey Victorian neighbours. And as building regulations require lifts in housing blocks over four storeys and pressurised stairwells (for fire protection), the economics of modern construction often run counter to townscape objectives.

Italian Centre mixed use development by Page and Park showing external form, statuary detail and courtyard.
RECENT SCHEMES

One recent housing scheme has sought to explore this problem within an area of some surviving Victorian tenements and many gap sites. Built within the Maryhill Corridor, an inter-government initiative in area renewal, for the Queen’s Cross Housing Association, the site available was triangular and formed on one side by the gables of surviving tenements. The answer was to employ a stepped section made up of buildings four lofty storeys high on the front (to match in with the neighbours) and six storeys to the rear, and to wrap the whole scheme into a curved and rather classical block which turned elegantly through the triangle.

The completed building shares both a common ridge line and cornice with the Victorian tenements in Shakespeare Street, and employs coloured concrete blockwork in an attempt to look like sandstone. Designed by McGurn, Logan, Duncan and Opfer (in collaboration with architect Ken McRae), the scheme was won in competition whilst McRae was a student at the Mackintosh School of Architecture and was intended to produce a prototype for the tenement of the 21st century. The complex plan, section and elevations, though harmonising well, proved costly to build and may not provide the answers sought. However, the scheme is much admired and lessons from it are being learnt in countless recreations of the tenement across the city.

Another tenement-like apartment block is attracting attention closer to the centre. Known as Carrick Quay it is a joint enterprise designed by the Davis Duncan Partnership for the Burrell Company and Balfour Beatty Homes. This block is six storeys high and faces directly across the Clyde right in the historic centre of Glasgow. Not unlike Thames-side housing in parts of regenerated London Docklands, the Glasgow scheme consists of four storeys of flats with two storey penthouses at roof level. Built in crisp red and pale yellow brickwork with much mast-like steelwork and angled balconies to the front, the scheme is essentially a modern tenement in form. Stairs give access to pairs of flats at each floor level and the building forms a city block with a rear courtyard given over to parking, service areas and some greenery. Unlike Shakespeare Street which was quasi-public housing, this scheme is for a middle class market, yet it shows how adaptable and popular the tenement is for housing in the inner city.

CONSERVATION

If the tenement is currently enjoying a popular revival then it is only as part of a bigger interest in conservation. First in the 1970s, then more noticeably in the eighties, Glasgow began to take its heritage seriously. Charles Rennie Mackintosh had long been appreciated, but Alexander (Greek) Thomson, who shared Schinkel’s love of monumental classicism, and a host of Victorian architects began to have their
buildings revalued. Soon plans were afoot to extend the city’s conservation areas, to host international conferences on nineteenth century architecture, and to improve the presentation of the surviving buildings. Money spent on stonecleaning and flood-lighting, much of it in the form of grant aid, improved both the appearance and the appreciation of the city’s historic architecture. Buildings which had survived but in an altered state, such as Thomson’s Grecian Halls in Sauchiehall Street or John Honeyman’s Ca d’Oro alongside Central Station, were restored back to their original condition. In the latter case the building was extended by two bays by replicating the cast iron frame so that the need for a modern infill in historic Union Street was avoided. Purists may question such an approach but it typified the spirit of a heritage-led revival which has been the single most important aspect of Glasgow’s recent renaissance.

One area which has particularly benefited from this approach is the Cathedral Square, just east of the campus of the University of Strathclyde. Increasingly isolated from the commercial centre by roads and blighted by motorway building proposals, the area around the thirteenth century cathedral has recently seen much change. An urban design competition in 1986 attracted much attention and raised the level of debate beyond that of simple traffic engineering. Several competitors sought to reconstruct the Bishop’s Castle erected near the west front of the Cathedral in 1436 and demolished in 1789 to make way for Robert Adam’s Infirmary. Its reconstruction, it was argued, would re-establish the medieval character of the area and help screen the Cathedral from an increasingly congested Castle Street. After some deliberation a visitor centre has been built on the castle site and is not unlike its predecessor in form and materials. Other buildings in similar style have been built, again in stone and respectful of the dominating presence of the Cathedral.

To help focus attention upon the Cathedral and away from unsympathetic buildings on its doorstep, such as James Miller’s hospital built after much controversy in 1913, a new public space has been created on the axis of the Cathedral nave. This draws the eye to the west front of the Cathedral and with the help of tree planting, low walls and changes in level, screens the effect of over-large neighbours. All is carefully detailed by architects Page and Park whose work elsewhere in the city is noted for its respect for context. The work has a lasting quality: the materials employed - sandstone, granite and marble - sit well alongside the ancient Cathedral, and the simple classical layout recalls Glasgow’s urban traditions.

THE CONTRAST

Not everywhere in Glasgow has been so well treated as these examples suggest. The St Enoch Centre, a shopping complex beneath a huge greenhouse like roof, forms a percep-tual barrier between the established shopping street of Argyle Street and the Clyde. Around its edges the Centre makes only sketchy links with much of the city fabric especially in St Enoch Square. Built on the site of a former railway terminus, its structure of latticed steelwork is undeniably impressive, and the winter shelter provided by its glass roof increasingly popular, but the connections between new and old have yet to be made. And much of the east and south sides of the city centre are blighted by ambitious motorway building proposals which threaten to isolate the central areas totally from the inner suburbs.

CONCLUSIONS

However, much has been achieved in Glasgow over the past ten years, some of it unthinkable only a decade ago. Though mistakes have been made, the rediscovery of urban design, the revival of the tenement, and the emergence of an influential conserva-tion movement, should entail that Glasgow will recapture its pride, urban traditions and perhaps its economic standing during the 1990s.
REWARDING REGENERATION

Alan Simpson and Gerry Kemp

This article describes a new initiative which could be introduced to promote the regeneration of Britain's smaller towns and cities. It proposes that an initiative similar to the National Garden Festival could be used to direct funds to Britain's Fair Towns as a National Initiative.

The Britain's Fair Towns initiative is a proposal to respond to the increasing economic and environmental problems being experienced by smaller towns and cities across Britain.

In recent years attention has been properly focused on the larger urban areas and inner cities of the country through a range of programmes directed toward the economic and environmental regeneration of such locations. Initiatives have occurred through Urban Development Corporations, Inner City and Urban Aid Programmes and Garden Festivals, and always with the common thrust linking economic regeneration with environmental improvement to a high degree of interdependence in both policy making and in development projects.

Britain's smaller towns and cities are experiencing the consequences of economic change, particularly manifest in the run-down character of the urban environments which make up the town centres.

The lack of investment in continuous maintenance and upgrading projects creates an atmosphere of neglect and unsightly appearance in land and buildings both publicly and privately owned. Many of our historically and architecturally valuable towns contain the scars of semi-derelict and unsightly car parks; under-used and often derelict buildings; an inadequately maintained 'street' environment; and public pathways made up from poorly conceived design concepts, and constructed in often unsuitable and the cheapest of materials and fixtures in lighting, seating and planting.

Such conditions prevail upon a town's sense of well-being and have an adverse effect upon the quality of life enjoyed by the citizenship, a negative effect upon the visitor and tourist to the town, and an overall limiting influence upon the marketability of the centre, its attractiveness and economic prosperity.

The primary objective behind the proposed Fair Towns Initiative is toward creating the conditions through which the long-term economic and environmental regeneration of some of Britain's smaller towns and cities might be brought about. For example, Britain's Fair Towns has been conceived as a competition occurring annually, focusing attention each year upon one particular town with the promotional and marketing support of the English Tourist Board. Each year a different town would become Britain's Fair Town. Public funding from Central Government and its agencies (Department of the Environment; Trade and Industry; Tourist Board; Development Commission; for example) would form the primary enabling influence to the programme with monies to be matched through local public and private investment.

In order for a Community to achieve the status of Britain's Fair Town, Local Business Groups, Local Authorities and Amenity Societies would be encouraged to submit proposals for a Britain's Fair Towns Programme. The programme or proposal would need to detail the character and nature of the environmental works envisaged; a programme of events for the season in which the town intends to hold its festival or celebration of 'Britain's Fair Towns'; an indication of the cultural and social events which might take place during the festival, and their applicability historically, culturally and socially to the particular town; an assessment of the economic and social benefits the event and its status might bring to the town within the designated year; and finally an indication of the thought of long-term benefits the occasion should generate, the economic viability of the project.

Local organisations would be required to submit a three-point plan indicating: the nature and capital costs of environmental improvement works to occur within a two-year lead-in programme, the range and character of social, cultural and commercial events to take place within the designated year, and an assessment of the social and commercial benefits emerging from the programme, and the long-term economic viability of the exercise.

Clearly a town's ability to identify and raise public and private resources from within the community, provides a further competitive edge of the process of selecting a particular town for the status of Britain's Fair Town in a particular year from the 1990s.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The Britain's Fair Towns Programme will require partnership between Central Government and Local Community Groups, between the Department of the Environment, the English Tourist Board, Amenity and Civic Societies, the Local Authorities and, most importantly, Local Private Businesses, Commercial Groups and Entrepreneurs.

Partnership will be significant in establishing and maintaining a common purpose, and in doing so with the support and enthusiasm of the whole community, its political, commercial and social interests. Initiatives already established or about to begin, such as highway improvements, conservation programmes, public and private housing developments and commercial investment and construction plans will need to be identified and, if possible, their programming encouraged to fall within the Fair Towns Programme: as such the Fair Towns Programme acts as a focus for activity, organizing it in a coherent and co-ordinated manner so as to effect a significant impact upon the fabric of the town in the year of its Fair Town Status.

Public and private investment in the Partnership Programme will be required from the time of submission of proposals through to the implementation of capital works in environmental improvement, the organising and staging of 'events' through the Fair Towns Programme and in the revenue costs attached to the marketing and promotion of the occasion within its designated year.

Investment will come to the project in many differing forms as resources, skills, energy and finance. The role of central government should be in providing the larger part of monies to enable the project's revenue and capital requirements to be met and in making available the skills and resources of the English Tourist Board and UK 2000. Similarly the Local Authorities (District and County) will be looked toward to provide finance and the resources of their offices and officers.

The local community, local authorities, business interest groups and amenity societies will, together with their advisors, carry the load of 'making things happen' though enabling investment will need to be sought from these quarters too if Britain's Fair Towns is to come to town.

It may be that certain planned programmes in capital investment, new major developments, a conservation programme or a highway improvement scheme might be the inspiration behind a proposal for the Britain's Fair Towns event.

APPLICATION TO RIPON

Numerous 'Development' and 'Improvement' plans are taking place or are about to take place in Ripon which the writers consider could form the basis of a bid for funding under the Britain's Fair Towns Programme. The 'plans' include proposals for housing development and refurbishment; the development of housing for the elderly; non-subsidised industrial development for which further land is required; proposals for...
the development of further shopping facilities through the conversion of existing premises and a proposal for the development of a new supermarket together with a new access road and through route serving the western side of the town centre, and a new leisure facility it is proposed to be constructed adjacent to a local prominent hotel. The single most significant proposal soon to affect the city of Ripon will be the construction and completion of the Ripon bypass in 1991.

The opening of the new bypass will substantially alter the quality of the environment to the central market place, surrounding streets and open spaces.

The new bypass will lead to changes in the environment and the consequent opportunity for Ripon and its citizenship to create a ‘better town’ environmentally and economically will have become possible. The character and quality of the city of Ripon will once again be available to its citizens and visitors. The medieval town and commercial streets as streets for people; the Cathedral and the potential for civic space adjacent to the west door; the occasional and intimate urban gardens and their availability for social, cultural and commercial events; and the potential for attractive town routes and footpathways which will connect tourist attractions with the commercial areas; and these together with attractive, landscaped areas of car parking and improved public transport facilities.

The pulling together of development proposals outlined previously into a programme of environmental works which upgrade the street scene; create new civic spaces; initiate pedestrianisation schemes and fund a summer of celebratory events marking the completion of the town’s transformation is the type of proposal which would form the basis for a Fair Towns Initiative.

Alan Simpson practices as Urban Design Associates and teaches at the Dept. of Civic Design at Liverpool University. Gerry Kemp is a partner in Glen Kemp Hankinson of Newcastle upon Tyne. The sketches show ideas which illustrate how the centre of Ripon could benefit from a programme of environmental works.
The aim of the parking design competition has been to stimulate thinking on this important aspect of planning and urban design activity. Urban designers must subscribe to the idea that activities within the environment can be brought together to create a ‘good city’ or town or village for that matter. In the ‘good city’ there needs to be a clarity of perception and a stimulation from the uses that take place in the city. The city therefore needs in its form to respond to the distribution of its activities and patterns of movement that occur within it. In this context cars, car parking and the motorist are now major elements. This is especially true when they occur in large numbers in our towns and cities. The significance of the contribution that these elements make to the setting in which they occur is directly related to the quality of the design, both of the buildings, and the soft and hard landscape that surround them. The schemes that gained awards and commendations amply illustrate that car parking areas, in their various forms, can make a positive contribution to the environment and can enhance the spatial experience of their particular location.

How many Urban Design Group members know that there are several magazines devoted to parking and car park design? With captions such as 'Design Trends', 'Tackling a new design challenge' and 'superior interiors'? Are members of the Group aware that many professionals identify themselves with car parks they have designed and built?

My first reaction to the announcement two years ago of the City of Chichester multi storey car park competition was it should not happen under any circumstances, and as it was just south of the city walls in full view of the Cathedral, it was philistine, an appalling thing to encounter on entering such an urban gem.

Working out a competition entry revealed how simple and limited in number are parking layouts, even multi storey ones. The design of the building form is difficult enough and how much more difficult it is to establish the urban design role that the form should take.

Why was it not clear that in principle the Chichester car park was not different to the railway station it stood alongside, a part of a transport technology, albeit one I find disquieting.

It took my experience as one of the assessors of the British Parking Design Awards to realise that the car park is now a major building element in urban and rural environment design, with forms and purposes often equal to those of the railway station and other Victorian structures.

There are further interesting parallels with the older transport interchange: located in fringe positions in older towns due to the pattern of historical growth and where land is now available or not too expensive. The occasional mid-town site often occurs due to quirk of land use or land ownership or is seen as an essential element in the regeneration of a part of a city or town.

There is evidence that some of today’s parking designers have not hesitated to see their buildings as successors to the St Pancras romantic tradition of the earlier railway era.

Which brings me back to the Award Scheme itself.

**CATEGORIES**

There were entries for each of the following categories:
Multi-storey sole-use parking (17)
Multi-storey mixed development parking (9)
Surface parking in urban areas (15)
Surface parks in rural areas (11)

Each entry paid a fee to the Urban Design Group to defray expenses, although these have been largely met by Birmingham Polytechnic and Planning Magazine.

**ASSESSMENT PANEL**

The assessment panel consisted of the following people:-

Derek Cassidy
Landscape architect and planner, head of landscape at Birmingham Polytechnic

David Chapman
Architect, landscape architect and principal lecturer in urban design at Birmingham Polytechnic, and the organiser of the Award Scheme

Bryan Johnston
Editor of Planning Magazine since 1983

Arnold Linden

Francis Tibbalds
Chairman of Tibbalds, Colbourne Karski Williams Ltd., past president of the RTPI and founding chair of the Urban Design Group.

The assessment panel under Derek Cassidy met on two occasions, initially to produce a shortlist of eleven entries and secondly to consider the site visits carried out on each of the schemes by pairs of the assessors.

**CRITERIA**

The four main factors that each scheme was matched against were:-

- context - how well the parking scheme relates to its surroundings
- design - the quality of the concept, as well as the quality of the detail design
- operation - how well will the scheme serve its functional purpose
- implementation - how well was the scheme executed

On 25 January, 1991, the presentation of the awards took place at the Royal Town Planning Institute at which the President, Peter Fidler, took the opportunity on his first official occasion to emphasize the need to improve the urban and rural environment by design, and his wish to bring together all those participating in the development of towns and countryside, the professionals and lay people.

**THE SCHEMES**

**MULTI STOREY SOLE-USE PARKING**

**AWARD:**

Heathside, Woking
Owner/Operator: Woking Borough Council
Designed by George McKinnia Architects, Woking

Woking Borough Council at its Heathside development has provided an object lesson in urban theatrical architecture. From an elevated position the three storey building could be a seaside town, from the driving seat a street wall. It has an urban and partially monumental appearance in amongst suburban Surrey, but by adding to fine and mature planting where the building is closest to two storey housing, a residential scale has been maintained.

COMMENDATION:
Abbey Gates, Evesham
Design by Farrell & Clark, Leeds
Owner/Operator: Tameside Estates

An old market town, a steeply sloping site overlooking the River Avon and the Abbey Park, has now a 320 space shoppers car park looking for all the world like a medieval monastery which has recently been re-roofed in the most extensive mannered style with timber props to deeply overhanging eaves, look out towers, Norman windows, even castellations and dormer windows. More Abbey Theatre and Errol Flynn than Abbey Gates and Saturday shopping.

MULTI STOREY MIXED DEVELOPMENT PARKING

AWARD:
Leetham's Mill, York
Designed by a team, lead by Hill Cannon Partnership, Harrogate.
Owner/Operator: Joseph Rowntree Memor- rial Trust

An original solution to multi storey car parking in the back streets of York, a purpose-built facility serving the flats converted from an adjacent mill, next to the River Foss. It is designed to relate to the retained and converted Victorian mill, and is well integrated into the open spaces alongside and behind the river and included the construction of a new section of river wall. The window rhythm and the roof line details pick up references from the mill. The most striking element of the composition is the fenestration. It steps down with the internal ramp, a dynamic element expressing the function of the building. It is formed by 'real' masonry, i.e. the piers and arches appear to work and carry the structure and looks as if they are the size to do a proper job. The whole building provides a positive townscape value.

COMMENDATION:
Stoney Street, Nottingham
Designed by James McAnney Architect
Owner/Operator: National Car Parks

A part of the Lace Market regeneration programme. The designers have been unable to resist a pastiche design for this car park, office and roof garden building. They have copied from the functional lace warehouses and factories the ground floor colonnade and repeated the attic clerestorey windows to light the fourth storey offices. Polychrome brickwork with corbelled detail have also been employed, as if to prove the building's contextual credentials.

Top Heathside, Woking
Bottom Leetham’s Mill, York.
SURFACE PARKING

URBAN AREAS

AWARD: Woolgate Centre, Witney
Owner/Operator: USS Pension Fund

This scheme provides surface parking for 750 cars access to which is obtained from a link road that forms a major part of the town centre circulation system. It occupies backland sites at the rear of Witney High Street and the area has been extensively landscaped. Existing mature trees in place on site at the onset of the construction have been augmented by later planting. The substantial areas of parking have been broken down by lines of planting, as well as landscaped strands of differing shapes and sizes enclosing a series of six spaces of differing character. The scale of the circulation spaces and the associated planting, although particular for each space, are intended to emphasize the pedestrian routes and in those areas open to trampling or shortcuts, mesh fencing interplanted with climbers, roses and thick bushes has been introduced as a deterrent. As the landscape gets nearer the ornamental architecture of the new Woolgate Centre it becomes equally ornamental. Is there a post modern form of landscape architecture? If there is, the weeping birch is one of its over-used details.

RURAL AREAS

AWARD: Downham, Lancashire
Designed by Borough Planning and Technical Services Officer
Owner/Operator: Ribble Valley Borough Council

The village of Downham has a small car park sited a respectful distance out of the centre of a somewhat loose knit village to which it is linked by a track and set back off the local road system. It has a subsidiary function which is to form the edges of the rural development - just as the railway and the canal used to do. The first choice area of parking is around an old stone barn, its yard originally laid in setts which have been extended and where necessary relaid. Further parking, behind raised planters formed from dry stone walling, takes place on newly laid stone surfacing.

Not an obvious provision and amenity for the village, but discreet and in keeping with the countryside it services. Although the developers acknowledge the advice received from the Countryside Commission, the ornamental trees and shrubs in the raised planters smack more of Gardeners Question Time than Farming Today.

COMMENDATION: Ebley Mill, Stroud
Designed by Niall Phillips Associates, Bristol
Owner/Operator: Stroud District Council

A staff car park which makes use of the shape of the site, which reflects the line of the River Frome to provide interest in the form of what is otherwise a flat area of 200 car parking spaces. The mature trees on the site have been retained and the additional central planting combined to provide and enhance the rural setting of the Mill which has been restored as new council offices.
IN PARENTHESES
Bob Jarvis

Sometimes I dream of a sea change in planning. Sometimes that seems nearer than at others. A few years ago an RTPI President chose as his theme ‘Actions speak louder than words’. Now a professor and a distinguished practitioner debate the kind of storytelling that planning involves in the pages of its journal. (1).

Maybe this is another manifestation of the tension that exists in all creative fiction. For planning is that: its futures, however, familiar, exist only in imagination and image. We wish, they make them true. There have been other forays into this territory. Cautious admiration for the imagineers of EPCOT and Disneyland; design methods seen as helping dreams come true; geographers turning the landscapes of (usually mainstream) literature, reversing Raymond Williams’ footsteps; a few futures told as SF novellas in academic wrappings; Nigel Coates’ arguments for ‘narrative architecture’ where situation succeeds building; regular citations and quotations of Invisible Cities (2); a thin line of theory that begins:

“The problem is rhetoric, the problem is symbolism, the problem is allegory, the problem is myth, the problem is poetry. The problem is all those things we do not include in a professional’s curriculum. If town planning is an art, where, now is its muse?”

Jean Luc Godard’s film Alphaville (9) stands as a prophetic allegory. In Alphaville (SILENCE: LOGIC: SAFETY: PRUDENCE) rapid, planned development and expansion has been achieved by a relentless, complete and policed elimination of all ambiguity, of all that eludes logic, of every word that might make poetry. At the heart of the film is a long and tender scene where Lemmy Caution, revolver/reporter, teaches Natasha von Braun, daughter of Alphaville’s architect, forgotten, forbidden words. By speaking what cannot be encoded into Alphavilles controlling computer, by the rediscovery of conscience, by the rediscovery of love they escape and destroy the capital of pain.

Today Alphaville seems simplistic, a lyrical mix of Godard’s paranoias and his love affair with Anna Karina (Natasha), set in a future Paris, disguised only by its darkness. Our present condition feels closer to the underplanned overdevelopment, mindless plundering of styles, and advanced technological and bio-technic interference of Ridley Scott’s Bladerunner (10) with torrential rains, ceaseless advertising and replicated humanity in its full gamut SF FX.

In Bladerunner the clear (black and white) distinctions of Alphaville are replaced with deception, falsehood and uncertainty. Replicants (androids) can be implanted with memories, can learn or feign feelings. Alphaville’s evil empire is centralized and planned: Bladerunner’s evil genius controls giant commercial enterprise - the Tyrell Corporation (motto ‘more human than human’).

Lemmy Caution can free Natasha from the prescribed language of machines, can accelerate the destruction of the city by poetry. In Bladerunner Deckard and Rachel, both uncertain of their humanity, trade fragmented and borrowed images, escape to a fictional arcadia (‘we have the feeling we are going to see unicorns’, notes the screenplay (11)).

The differences between our two allegories are summed up on the closing dialogues. Alphaville:

“Lemmy: ... You’ve got to manage by yourself. If you can’t ... then you’re as lost as the dead of Alphaville.

Natasha: ... I ...love ...you, I love you” (12)

Bladerunner:

“Deckard (voice over): Tyrell told me Rachel was special. Not only had he given her memories ... but he’s set no termination date. I didn’t know how long we’d have together ... but who does?” (13)

To tell true stories professionals must shed their masks of sentimentalism, must speak from the heart as well as the head, must learn to speak again of love. Even in parentheses.

4. Berman, M. All That is Solid Melts into Air Verso, 1983
5. Jukes, P. A Shout in the Street, Faber, 1990
11. Fancher, H. & Peoples D. Op Cit, p95
12. Goddard, JL Op Cit, p79
13. Fancher, H. & Peoples D. Op Cit, p95

Natasha (Anna Karina) discovers poetics in the capital of pain, Alphaville.
There is an increasing acceptance of the concept that city and town centres should be managed and there are good examples from different areas where town centre managers have been appointed.

This important conference will bring together the latest developments in Town Centre Management and will seek to form an Association to foster the development of this expanding activity.

The conference will examine a variety of roles for town centre managers - janitorial, promotional, strategic - and will take in the views of landlords, developers, retailers and consumers as well as looking at environmental, transport and security issues.

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