

144 **URBAN DESIGN**

Autumn 2017
Urban Design Group Journal
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**CONSERVATION &
URBAN DESIGN**



**URBAN
DESIGN
GROUP**

WHAT MAKES A LIVEABLE CITY?

This August the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) published its annual ranking of 'liveable cities'. The 30 criteria against which some 140 cities are ranked includes infrastructure, housing, sporting and cultural availability, and congestion, as well as more mundane factors such as terrorism, war, crime, corruption and plague (yes, I made that last one up). There are other 'liveable city' surveys, but the EIU and the *Mercer Quality of Living Survey* – which applies 39 factors to 231 cities – are widely reported and therefore, influential in terms of future investment and the public's general perception good places.

Melbourne has been declared by the EIU as the most liveable city in the world for the

seventh year running, beating Vienna into second place. Vienna scored equally with Melbourne in all measures except culture and environment, while Vancouver (a previous multiple winner) came third and for the third time in a row. Sadly, there is no road to Damascus, a city which was ranked the least liveable city (because of civil war). For the record (and cultural relief I am sure) Vienna came first in the Mercer survey for the 8th year in a row (Melbourne came 2nd and Vancouver 5th). Vienna also happened to come second in Monocle's 'Quality of Life' survey 2017, but this time to Tokyo. Monocle praised Tokyo's tight-knit communities, the food scene and excellent infrastructure (Tokyo ranked only 15th in the EIU survey).

As it happens, the EIU cities that scored best tend to be mid-sized cities in wealthier countries with a relatively low population density, and which 'foster a range of recreational activities without leading to high crime levels or overburdened infrastructure.' Larger mega-cities prone to crime,

civil strife (and perhaps plague), such as London and New York score much lower (53 and 55 respectively). To find these at the top of a comparison survey, one needs to look at 'opportunity' not 'liveability' (i.e. the PWC *Cities of Opportunity Survey 2017* and Ipsos's *Top Cities 2017* ranking).

Which leaves an interesting conundrum for designers. For the conservative economist in you, sway towards more risk averse, low density cities as your model of choice. For those more adventurous (and fans of Sinatra) look towards the risky, chaotic, mega-cities. And for the artist in you, look to any city that offers a sense of culture, food and neighbourliness. Jane Jacobs would be proud. ●

Colin Pullan, Chair of Urban Design Group and Director of NLP Planning



1

UDG NEWS

Following a successful two and a half day conference in Manchester in September, we are already thinking about topics for next year's events and conference. Inspired by the scale of developments and the city's renewal, based not just on residential development, but on Manchester's historical base of science and technology (once cotton, now graphene), a potential topic for

next year's conference could well be Urban Design: the Economy of Cities.

In many sessions delegates raised concerns over the proliferation of car-dependent development that leads to inactive lifestyles and long-term public health problems. We will need to look at the location of greenfield development, street layouts, and connectedness with adjoining town(s) and cities. This is very much an issue that affects smaller cities and towns.

This year is the 10th anniversary of the publication of *Manual for Streets* and we will be running an event to review its uptake and impact, and the future need for guidance on streets, neighbourhoods and urban engineering.

A series of monthly members' meetings, from January 2018, are likely to be themed to feed into the conference in September/October 2018. If you have ideas for topics, please get in touch; we are keen to develop a core group of enthusiastic practitioners to discuss topical issues in urban design and its future, and who will also take the monthly event programme forward.

The Urban Design Group is a membership organisation with the equivalent of only

one full-time member of staff, so we need more members to get involved in its core activities: the Executive committee, planning the annual conference, the awards process, and the monthly events.

Next year is also the 10th anniversary of the Urban Design Awards and a working group is looking at refreshing and developing the award categories for the coming years. If you are interested in helping to organise the event for 2018, please get in touch. The venue and date are yet to be determined, but it will be London based.

Finally, and pertinently, an Urban Design Skills Survey of local authorities, funded from the Urban Design Group's annual study tour income, and carried out by the team at the Bartlett School of Planning at UCL, will be launched in November at the Big Meet 8. We hope to see you there and at other events soon. ●

Robert Huxford and Alexandra Rook

1 A Manchester warehouse renovated and regenerated

DIARY OF EVENTS

Unless otherwise indicated, all LONDON events are held at The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ at 6.15 pm. Note that there are many other events run by UDG volunteers throughout the UK. For the latest details and pricing, please check on the UDG website www.udg.org.uk

WEDNESDAY 18 OCT 2017

6:15pm – 8:30pm

Lessons from Vienna & other Austrian Cities

WEDNESDAY 22 NOV 2017

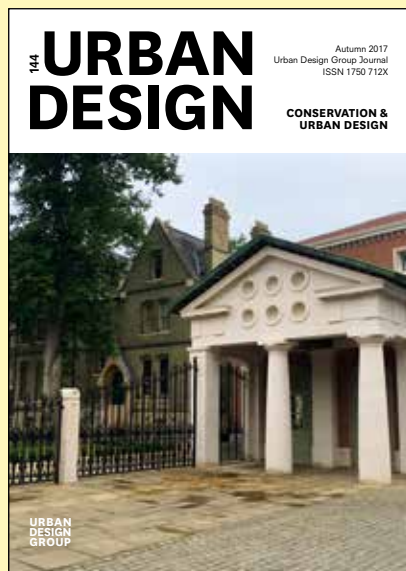
6:15pm – 8:30pm

Conservation & Urban Design

TUESDAY 12 DEC 2017

6:15pm – 8:30pm

Kevin Lynch Memorial Lecture 2017 & Christmas Party



Urban Design Group

CHAIR Colin Pullan

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Dickon Robinson, Lindsey Whitelaw and
John Worthington

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Contents

COVER

Donald Fothergill Building,
Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, designed
by John Simpson Architects, 2017.
Photograph by Louise Thomas

FUTURE ISSUES

UD145 North America & Canada

UD146 Post Conflict Urban Design

UPDATE

3 — Health and Urban Design

3 — Urban Design Review of the NPPF

4 — STREET Sketching Event

5 — UDG Annual General Meeting

6 — UD Library #23

7 — My Favourite Plan: Patricia Gomez

RESEARCH

8 — Formalising the Temporary, Pablo
Newberry

VIEWPOINT

10 — What Future for India's Urban Areas?
Nicholas Falk

TOPIC: CONSERVATION

12 — Introduction, Noël James

14 — Radical Conservation? Helen Ensor

17 — Divergent Heritages, Cédric Avenier

19 — Urban Design as Tool to Reconnect
People with their Urban Heritage,
Judith Ryser and Farnaz Arefian

22 — Design Codes for St Albans
Conservation Area, Vanessa Gregory

24 — Conservation in Milton Keynes,
Chris Hooper

27 — Counting our Heritage, Richard Tuffrey

30 — Volunteering and the Heritage Skills
Gap? Helen Campbell-Pickford

32 — Interdisciplinary Place Care in the 21st
Century, Seán O'Reilly

34 — Conservation Professional Practice
Principles, Dave Chetwyn

36 — Managing Contemporary and Historic
Development and Design, Louise
Thomas

38 — Regeneration and Embedding
Traditional Building Skills, Oluwaseun
Soyemi

BOOK REVIEWS

40 — Metroburbia: The Anatomy of Greater
London, Paul L Knox

40 — Shanghai Street Design Guidelines,
Shanghai Planning and Land Resource
Administration Bureau et al

41 — The Design Companion for Planning
and Placemaking, Urban Design
London

41 — Landscape Architecture and
Environmental Sustainability, Joshua
Zeunert

42 — PRACTICE INDEX

47 — EDUCATION INDEX

ENDPIECE

49 — Ordinary housing for ordinary working
families, Joe Holyoak

Once it's gone, it's gone....

It is 50 years since the designation of the first Conservation Area (Stamford in Lincolnshire), through the *1967 Civic Amenities Act*, which sought to go beyond listing individual buildings. This act was a reaction to widespread demolition for comprehensive development proposals and to make space for the car.

This issue of *Urban Design* looks at heritage and conservation practice: unlike its sometimes fusty image today, the conservation movement in fact began in the early 20th century as a radical, anti-establishment response to the crass attitude of landowners and their architects towards older buildings. The protection now sought for older buildings can be interpreted as NIMBYism, yet it is about how to manage change itself. This process is far harder than erroneously assuming that no context exists to new proposals, as balancing economic, historic and community concerns (not to mention environmental issues) is what good conservation aims to do, so that the best outcomes for today and future generations can be identified.

Recent events in the US, and in any conflict zone with a new leadership approach, have meant that historical artefacts are suddenly viewed in a different light. Using an objective and well-reasoned evidence base to support decision-making and interpretation is a key part of conservation practice, so that historical assets can give people valuable lessons for the future. This issue also looks at the skills gap in conservation practice and whether volunteers can make a useful contribution to help in the management of the historic environment. Determining how to respond to the historic

environment underpins virtually all urban design practice, whether for a city centre site needing regeneration or the apparently blank canvas of a greenfield site. It is our job to include heritage as a key influence in the design process – understanding how an area works today and why – and to use it to make more meaningful places for people, either through specific buildings, spaces or landmarks, or by proposing a contrasting approach to shed new light for the future.

We are delighted to start in this issue a new feature entitled Research, which will be a platform for recent dissertation research to be aired, or perhaps a good reason to dust off a dissertation that has been sitting on the shelf for a while. This section has been proposed and will be managed by Pablo Newberry and Chris Howells. Readers are encouraged to submit abstracts to research@udg.org.uk, and potential authors will be invited to write about their work for subsequent issues of *Urban Design*. ●

Louise Thomas, independent urban designer

HOW TO JOIN

To join the Urban Design Group, visit www.udg.org.uk and see the benefits of taking out an annual membership.

Individual (UK and international) £50
UK student / concession £30
Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design £80
Small practice (<5 professional staff) £250
Large practice (>5 professional staff) £450
Education £250
Local Authority £100
UK Library £80
International Library £100



Health and Urban Design

The Gallery, London 23 May 2017

This event at the gallery revisited some of the ideas from UD issue 142 on Health and Urban Design. As a couple of the contributors could not attend in person their presentations were given by video, which in view of the technical issues involved, was a somewhat risky and not entirely successful approach.

Rachel Toms (shown above), who was the issue's topic editor, introduced the subject referring to her work with Design Council Cabi and emphasised the inequalities in life expectancy and quality of life between the rich and poor. Healthy neighbourhoods

could reduce these inequalities, and good urban design principles are needed to create healthy neighbourhoods.

By video, Layla McCay related urban design to the promotion of mental health, suggesting that people in cities needed more help because of the environment in which they lived. Therefore more green areas, places that were safe, encouraged activity and social interaction should be promoted.

Also by video conference, Graham Marshall then outlined the barriers and solutions to creating healthy cities, basing his presentation on the work he did in the Chinese city of Yangzhou. China still has basic needs, such as food and water provision. Its health system lacks a primary care system and therefore the population needs and has developed self-care. Health promotion involves all possible organisations, schools, employers, hospitals, families, communities and

also planning, infrastructure and transport. What places need to develop a healthy city programme is a leader and Yangzhou is lucky to have one in its new Mayor. He promoted what is called a living environment 'flow', improving natural assets, planting trees, opening cycling facilities, and ensuring that everyone has a park 10 minutes' walk from home. Graham did not gloss over the huge challenges faced by places such as Yangzhou (with its growth of motor vehicles on the roads), but he suggested that there was much we could learn from such a place.

Eime Tobari then presented modelling undertaken by Space Syntax to understand the health outcomes of urban design. The issues were the same as those mentioned by previous speakers, and she suggested that modelling was a tool that could improve practice. Finally Daniel McDonnell from NHS England outlined progress on their healthy new towns programme, based on prevention, care delivery, reducing inefficiencies and incorporating these in both regeneration schemes and new developments. At the moment there are policies in ten demonstrator sites, and one of these is Bicester where a central transport corridor has very poor air quality. Daniel expanded on this example agreeing with Graham Marshall on the importance of governance and leadership. ●

Sebastian Loew, architect and planner, writer and consultant

Urban Design Review of the National Planning Policy Framework

The Gallery, London, 6 July 2017

This afternoon event started with four presentations that considered the *National Planning and Policy Framework* (NPPF) from four different perspectives. Matthew Carmona began by outlining the history of the document and stating that it was not substantially different from its precedent, the *Planning Policy Statement* (PPS): planning is still discretionary and plan-led, and its objective is to deliver sustainable development. The difference is mostly in a transfer of responsibilities from central to local government, demanding that the latter take planning more seriously and have up-to-date plans. The NPPF emphasises the importance of design 'beyond aesthetic consideration' but unfortunately lacks clarity about what good design means. Matthew covered a number of other issues mentioned in the NPPF: the value of codes, the importance of skills, the role of communities in design, and the need

for systematic reviews. He concluded that local authorities that take urban design seriously would not be constrained by the NPPF, but that the document needs reviewing to iron out contradictions and improve clarity. In addition the government needs to show greater leadership.

Laura Alvarez (shown right) followed with a Midlands view of the NPPF, outlining its positive and more negative aspects. She lamented that many people in the professions (developers in particular) have never read the document. She also found the text ambiguous and contradictory, and not helping to resolve some of her region's problems: i.e. the lack of mixed use developments, empty buildings not being re-used, and places being poorly connected. She also saw possibilities for improving the NPPF.

Jenny Ragget of Transport for Homes, has looked at a variety of schemes that had been built in the last few years and checked whether they deliver sustainability (something many more authorities and developers should do). Her main focus is transport, how well connected the place is and what facilities are available. Her overall conclusion was that there are too many roads, and her recommendation is that strategic housing targets should not be independent of transport and geography, and in this the NPPF does not help.



Rob Cowan also spoke about the NPPF as being vague and contradictory, and with the help of a draft document found in the Ministry's bin, showed how it had evolved. But by contrast he then used a case study in Colne, Lancashire to show that the NPPF had helped to reject a badly designed development

Four discussion groups then had a short time to debate the issues raised and feed back their recommendations. These were that more local guidance documents were needed, planning should be part of urban design, infrastructure (particularly transport) should come first and houses after, local authorities need more resources, and that design review is very useful. The overall opinion was the NPPF was helpful to an extent, but should and could be much better. ●

Sebastian Loew

Sketching in the City Series

STREET Northwest and the Landscape Institute Northwest teamed up over the summer to host a series of sketching workshops led by architect and sketcher Lisa McFarlane. Over the course of six weeks, Lisa has provided tutorials to help hone free-hand sketching skills, including lessons in perspective, proportion and scale. During the six sessions, the group visited several Manchester city centre locations and practiced their sketching skills with Lisa on hand to provide expert advice. The results are great, and everyone was delighted with their work.

Look out for future STREET events near you!



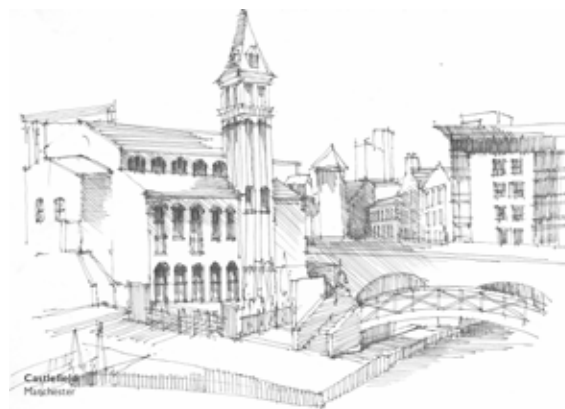
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1 The sketching group
Photograph by
Sophie Parker-Loftus
2-5 Sketches by Lisa
McFarlane

Urban Design Group's Annual General Meeting

University of Manchester, Humanities Building, Bridgeford Street, Manchester, 7 September 2017

MEMBERSHIP

Across the range of UDG memberships there have been overall increased member numbers. This year has seen more individual (UK and overseas), Recognised Practitioner and concession memberships, with a decrease in the practice and local authorities categories. Overall memberships have increased since 2016, and the take-up of the Urban Update e-bulletin remains high.

URBAN DESIGN JOURNAL

Urban Design has seen a number of very high quality contributions this year on topics such as: Tall Buildings, Food and Urban Design, Africa, and, Health and Urban Design. Members are encouraged to contact the editors with issues that they would like to cover in future issues.

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2016-7

	Totals
INCOMING RESOURCES	
Subscriptions	£113,410
Publications and Awards	£10,291
Conference Fees & Sponsorship	£17,163
London events	£1,040
Donation from Urban Design Services Ltd	0
Activities to Generate Funds	
Interest Received	£315
Inland Revenue: Gift Aid	0
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	£187,818
RESOURCES EXPENDED	
Charitable Expenditure	
Publications & Awards	£38,193
General	£78,886
Conference Expenditure	£18,273
Governance costs (accountancy)	£2,100
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	£162,748
NET (EXPENDITURE)	
INCOME FOR THE YEAR	£25,070
FUND BALANCES	
BROUGHT FORWARD	£177,350
FUND BALANCES	
CARRIED FORWARD	£202,420
CURRENT ASSETS	£220,890
CURRENT LIABILITIES	£18,471
TOTAL NET ASSETS	£ 202,420

NATIONAL URBAN DESIGN AWARDS 2017

Led by Awards Chair Noha Nasser, this year's awards event at the Victory Services Club (VSC) in March was highly successful. The event was generously sponsored by Marshalls and the Francis Tibbalds Trust continued to give its generous support through the provision of financial prizes in the Practice and Student categories. The finalists and winners for 2017 were as follows:

- PRACTICE AWARD – Node for Knowledge Hub Masterplan
- PUBLIC SECTOR AWARD – Croydon Council for Connecting Croydon
- STUDENT AWARD – Brian Yuen, Douglas Lee, Cassie Tang, Wilson Wong, UCL, Bartlett School of Planning for Charlton Riverside Masterplan
- BOOK AWARD – Housing Cairo: The Informal Response, Ed. Aggelil & Malterne-Barthes, Ruby Press, Berlin

The Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Tim Pharoah, and the Outstanding Contribution to Urban Design Award went to Sir Alan Baxter.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON URBAN DESIGN 2017

The 2016 conference was held at the VSC in London over two days, with representatives from many different professional Institutions including the President of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The after-dinner speech was given by Rowan Moore, architectural critic of *The Observer*.

EVENTS – LONDON

The UDG has continued to develop and expand its ambitious programme which now includes around 20 events per year at Cowcross Street alone. Led by Paul Reynolds the 2016-17 programme included presentations, a film night, and walks.

URBANOUS – VIDEO ON DEMAND

Thanks are due to Fergus Carnegie who continues his largely voluntary work to record the UDG's monthly events at Cowcross Street, making them available to a global audience through the Urbannous website. This is a great resource and a tremendously valuable archive of the huge number of presentations given at the UDG over recent years.

UDG REGIONS

Colin Munsie continued as UDG Vice-Chair for the regions, working to strengthen the Group's links throughout the UK and beyond, and the following are leading events in their areas:

- Solent, Peter Frankum
- East Midlands, Laura Alvarez
- North East, Georgia Giannopoulou
- North West, STREET NW Mark Foster & Rebecca Newiss
- Scotland, Francis Newton & Jo White
- Yorkshire, Rob Thompson
- Wales, Noel Isherwood
- West Midlands, Michael Vout

URBAN DESIGN STUDY TOURS

This year's study tours have been to Vienna led by Sebastian Loew, and other Austrian Cities, led by Alan Stones.

URBAN UPDATE

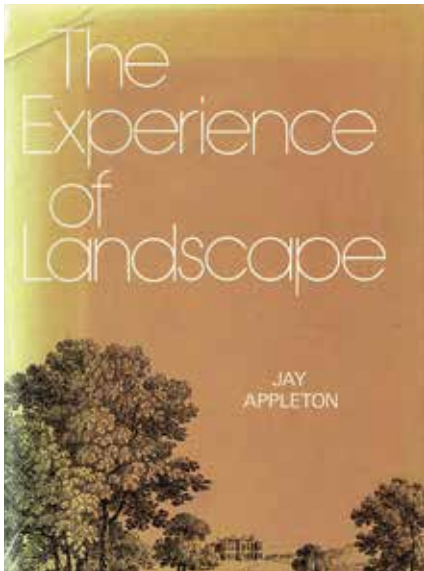
The UDG's email newsletter continues to be a valuable resource for urban designers, and is received by around 2,000 individuals.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The operation of the Urban Design Group is the responsibility of the Executive Committee:

Colin Pullan (Chair)
 Daniela Lucchese
 Leo Hammond (Hon Treasurer)
 Katy Neaves (Past Chair)
 Paul Reynolds (Hon Secretary)
 Laura Alvarez*
 Ben van Bruggen*
 Philip Cave
 Michael Cowdy*
 Andrew Dakin* (corresp)
 Stefan Kruczkowski
 Sebastian Loew
 Colin Munsie
 Mat Procter*
 Monica Qing*
 Brian Quinn*
 Amanda Reynolds
 Raj Rooprai*
 Barry Sellers
 Katja Stille*
 Graham Smith*
 Alan Stones
 Mattias Wunderlich

* Denotes that this member was co-opted to the Executive Committee for 2016-17.



Urban Design Library #23

The Experience of Landscape, Jay Appleton, John Wiley & Sons, 1975

The Experience of Landscape argues that our evolutionary history as a species has hardwired us to identify and react emotionally to different landscapes. Jay Appleton's theories are supported with research exploring the representation of landscapes in the fields of both art and science. This book pre-empted the 1980s New Cultural Geography movement, a sub-field of human geography that looked at the interaction of human culture, both material and non-material, with both the natural environment and the man-made landscape.

Jay Appleton was not a landscape architect but a geographical academic. He wrote in his autobiography (*How I made the World: Shaping a view of Landscape*, 1994) that had he been aware of the profession he would have become one, stating that 'the idea of manipulating the real environment to create a real world out of one's own imagination has an immense appeal', although reflecting that the profession was very small at the time. His studies at Christ Church College, Oxford were cut short with the advent of the Second World War, during which he was in the Non-Combatant Corps.

He resumed his studies at Durham University's King's College (now Newcastle University) and in 1950, during his final year, he was offered a job as an Assistant Lecturer in Geography at the University College of Hull (now Hull University). He remained there as a highly popular lecturer specialising in historical and transport geography until his retirement in 1985. During this period he took occasional secondments to other institutions around the world.

The Experience of Landscape opens with the question 'what do we like about the

landscape and why do we like it?' The initial two chapters provide a review of work within the subject area through a catalogue of quotes from both fiction and non-fiction, and paintings. Appleton reflects on the various disciplines in the areas of art and science that have an interest in it, and recognises the lack of any generally accepted theoretical basis for the aesthetic of landscape.

Chapter three ventures into the field of animal behaviour to consider how observations can be made between animals and their perceived environment, and introduces two hypothesis. The first, in summary, seeks to relate pleasurable sensations in the experience of a place to environmental conditions favourable for biological survival. This is identified as 'habitat theory' and is an awareness of symbolism within the landscape that is passed on from one generation to the next. This theory had been recognised and discussed previously by other people interested in the subject area, but it is essential to the second hypothesis which he calls 'prospect-refuge theory'. This assists the ability to analyse the landscape for an opportunity to have a view (prospect) whilst being located in a safe position (refuge) and how humans would favour such positions.

The book then takes a step back in chapter four and sets up the imagery and different levels of symbolism, which can be used for the analysis of the landscape in prospect-refuge terms. He splits the subject area into: direct and indirect prospects; incident, impediment and deficiency hazards; and various types of natural or artificial refuges. He also considers the type of surfaces present, implications of light and dark, changing scale, varying movement and the different levels of symbolism. Chapter five discusses the effect of the strength and frequency of these symbols within the landscape and the varying environment they can provide. This is explored through quotes, again both from fiction, non-fiction and paintings.

Appleton then reflects on the fact that whilst man-made landscapes can be enjoyed and admired, there is a tipping point where the artificial can extinguish the aesthetic experience. To avoid this the primitive relationship between a human and its environment must be recreated. This is discussed in the next chapter where he explores the implications of the human becoming involved in the landscape.

The later chapters consider the 'prospect-refuge theory' in practice within landscape design, architecture, urban design, painting and literature, along with the implications of individual and collective taste in aesthetics. In regard to the latter he concludes that 'taste is an acquired preference for particular methods of satisfying inborn desires'. He then helpfully discusses the implications of the 'prospect-refuge theory' within different site specific case studies to test whether such symbolism is present in places that humans consider to be beautiful.

Appleton concludes in chapter ten with how the 'prospect-refuge theory' fits into the mainstream of landscape aesthetics. He borrows a musical analogy and describes himself in the writing of this book as playing a bridge passage on a solo instrument 'leading the imagination onwards into the next movement in which the full orchestra must be involved'.

Since its publication, Appleton's ideas have been reviewed and applied by built environment professionals to analyse crime in the city, develop better masterplans, determine preferred planting layouts in parks and improve lighting column distribution along a street. Through this broad application of his 'prospect-refuge theory' over the last forty years, his stated intention of engaging different specialists, bringing together the fields of art and science through our shared appreciation of landscape, has been met.

A further edition of *The Experience of Landscape* was published in 1996. Here the proposals and arguments set out in the original book are updated with an additional chapter that provides a review of the development of environmental aesthetics since the first edition was published, and how Appleton's thinking has developed within the subject area. It also considers the use and application of the theories, along with their soundness, and concludes with future directions for potential research.

This book provides a useful starting point for analysing and interpreting people's reactions to the landscape. It sets out helpful pointers for considering the design of places that people will feel safe in and respond positively too. ●

Katy Neaves, Director of Townscape and Urban Design, arc Landscape Design and Planning Ltd, and former UDG Chair

READ ON

Schama, Simon (1995) *Landscape and Memory*, Harper

Cosgrove, Denis (1984) *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (New edition 1998), University of Wisconsin

Kaplan R, Kaplan S and R Ryan (1989) *With People in Mind: Design and Management of Everyday Nature* (4th Edition 1998), Island Press



© TfL from the London Transport Museum collection, www.ltmuseum.co.uk

My Favourite Plan: Patricia Gomez

London Underground Map, 1992

WHY I LIKE IT...

Could a map given to me for free in the London Underground many years ago be my favourite plan? The first time I came to London I formed part of a herd of tourists from South America travelling around Europe. When I returned to the city in 1997 to improve my English, I was to live there for a year. To my younger self, coming from a medium-sized city in Colombia to a chaotic, fast, noisy, congested and aggressive metropolis of seven million people, this map was my protective shield and compass.

Architecture professionals have an advantage over many: we read plans. We are used to creating representations of places in the visible city. They are or will be on the surface. Less evident, of course, is the Underground. That is another realm of the invisible city, less manageable, less legible. Although I had the essential and beautiful abstract diagram of Harry Beck's iconic Tube map, that wasn't enough for me to understand where I was standing and how to move confidently in the foreign capital.

That confidence came with this geographic style Underground map, 1992, covering the central London area. This map shows all the Underground lines printed onto a street map, with main line stations marked in pink and places of interest in orange. Various symbols are used to show the location of Tourist and Travel Information

Centres, street markets, theatres or cinemas and monuments. It was with this map that I learned to understand and accept the city with a more self-reliant attitude. I treasured the glossy folded paper for months (no Google Maps apps on smart phones then...) until it succumbed to an autumn rainstorm as I came out of the Victoria and Albert Museum. When I returned for the third time to London to do my master's degree a few years later, I felt fully in charge. I have lived in this country since then.

WHAT TO LEARN FROM IT...

In looking for my old lost map in the London Transport Museum, I found that Transport for London has produced a new version. A Tube Map of 2014 combines a level of geographical utility with the familiar abstract language of Tube line colours. My old map is thus a precursor of the synthesis that combines the qualities of an abstract diagram and a geographic map with recognizable details, such as major parks, roads and neighbourhoods. This is a necessary lesson for situations when one must explain different levels of reality at the same time. Interestingly, as urban design practitioners in our different roles of influence over the built environment, we deal with plans where the geographical accuracy and the abstract conceptual representation run concurrently. Together, they are powerful tools to communicate the transformational visions we create, aiming to improve the lives of people in cities. From the most ambitious masterplans to the most austere spatial frameworks; from simple urban design diagrams to sophisticated data visualizations; even the most utilitarian legible city maps, all of them play a role as precious tools to introduce, discover, understand, compromise,

accept, and, I hope, to fall deeply in love with our built environment. It happened to me many years ago and it is still happening today. ●



Current Position

Principal Urban Designer, City Design Group, Bristol City Council

Education

MSc City Design and Social Science, London School of Economics and Political Science
BA Architecture, Universidad del Valle, Cali, Colombia

Specialisms

urban design, urban extensions, housing layouts, masterplanning

Ambitions

To influence city design by using my British experience and expertise in Britain and in Colombia, if and when I return there

Formalising the Temporary

Pablo Newberry explores how places are retaining culture and community amid urban gentrification pressures



1



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Urban fringe areas are becoming increasingly well-known for attracting clusters of creative people because of the availability of affordable studio space. The underused and vacant properties, which are characteristic of such areas, offer gaps in the urban fabric to locate temporary uses. These create endless possibilities for the urban environment and contribute to revitalising the area at little or no cost to the state. Temporary uses such as pop-up cafés, exhibitions and guerrilla gardening, can provide the cultural edge to attract investment and unlock potential for development on otherwise abandoned land or property. The informal expressions of local culture and creativity associated with temporary uses inadvertently promote urban areas and stimulate a form of culture-led regeneration. If unmanaged this can lead to gentrification, causing the displacement of existing communities and the original initiators of change, and thus paradoxically eradicating the cultural scene that once made the urban area attractive.

Gentrification of this nature is not new to the UK, especially in city fringe areas. For instance, the rise of creative industries in Clerkenwell throughout the 1970-80s led to the renovation of the distinguished craft workshops by private developers in the early 2000s; Deptford experienced the expansion and development of studio space for crafts in the Cockpit Yard that began in the 1980s; and Hoxton and Shoreditch have undergone gentrification since the early 1990s, where the artists who originally made the area attractive have all but moved on. Once such a location is primed for investment, gentrification appears inevitable.

FORMALISING THE TEMPORARY

This research argues that to manage urban regeneration and retain existing community and culture in an area, temporary uses can be formalised: this is a strategy proposed by Urban Catalyst, guiding the transition of urban development from the temporary to being permanent. Urban Catalyst developed from a European research project of the same name, which explored strategies for temporary use in residual urban areas (2001-2003) and was founded in 2003 by Philipp Misselwitz, Philipp Oswalt and Klaus Overmeyer.

Regardless of policy context, examples of temporary use formalisation in different European cities reveal similar patterns during this transition. The patterns evident from studying the RAW-site (a disused railway site in Berlin's Friedrichshain/Kreuzberg district) and Holzmarkt in Berlin, Christiania in Copenhagen and The Cable Factory in Helsinki indicated ways that community-led organisations are

able to cultivate the ideas and activities engendered by temporary uses in permanent plans, and continue to challenge commercially driven development in the process. The overriding conditions were:

- Acquisition of long-term or outright ownership of property or land
- A clear philosophy in the interests of the local community
- Financial sustainability of creative practices.

So, how are such organisations formalising temporary uses in the UK? For this study, these conditions were examined in relation to Stour Space in Hackney Wick, London and 17-25 Jamaica Street in Stokes Croft, Bristol. Stour Space, as an organisation, and the People's Republic of Stokes Croft (PRSC) host temporary exhibitions, workshops and performances in their respective properties. Both offer creative studio space, Stour Space contains a café and PRSC have other supporting properties on Jamaica Street including a china decorating business and shop.

RIGHTS TO LAND

The long-term guarantee of space is crucial for temporary uses to formalise. However, a community-led organisation's ability to buy or lease property over the long-term depends on who owns the land and what the landowner's motives are. The best opportunity tends to be provided when the local authority owns the land and can support a cohesive vision for the site. For example, Holzmarkt Co-operative Association was able to buy land from the City of Berlin despite not being the highest bidder, but because it had a substantive concept and economic approach towards developing the site. Private landowners, however, often seek to maximise their financial gain and are reluctant to sell to temporary user associations, as was the case with the private owner of RAW-site in Berlin.

In the case of Stour Space, although a private company owns the land, the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) oversees the development of Hackney Wick and Fish Island. Therefore, any development must align with their overall vision and policies for the area. Initially able to obtain a five-year leasehold in 2009, Stour Space gained further planning security after becoming registered as an Asset of Community Value in 2013. This has protected it from proposals that would result in the demolition of creative studio space, a key driver of temporary installations and exhibitions. Instead, Stour Space will be able to coexist within a new development planned for the area, regardless of what the actual interests of the landowner might be.

1-2 Stour Space entrance and Counter Cafe, Hackney Wick, London
 3 The People's Republic of Stokes Croft Space, 17-25 Jamaica Street, Bristol

At 17-25 Jamaica Street, the People's Republic of Stokes Croft had secured leases on commercial properties from various private owners, relying mainly on having sufficient capital to invest. However, these leases have not ensured the long-term future of PRSC's activities on the premises. This uncertainty suggests that purchasing freehold of the properties is required. PRSC are pursuing a Community Land Trust (CLT) and re-financing of the site through a community share issue. It provides the opportunity for outright ownership of the land by the community for the community. A CLT with community share issues fits PRSC's ideological framework and challenges gentrification in terms of property transactions and increasing speculative land values.

IDEOLOGY AND PUBLIC INTEREST

A clear agenda that reflects the interests of the local community is important in the formalisation of temporary uses and the ideas they engender. Central to both Stour Space and PRSC is their commitment to challenging gentrification in their respective localities. The emergence of such organisations appears symptomatic of urban areas concerned with the impacts of gentrification on the existing community. Guaranteed access to a space ensures that ideas can develop and spread through public consciousness. Stour Space hosts community-oriented activities that focus on the local neighbourhood, economy and sustainable regeneration, with the intention of promoting creativity and innovation in the public sphere. The activities could be talks, debates, consultations, or pop-up events that carry specific messages. For example, The Wick Sessions brings together both locals and experts to debate and exchange knowledge on bottom-up strategies for urban development and resilience. Similar community-oriented discourse takes place at events in PRSC's Jamaica Street space, and also in PRSC driven street art and installations in Bristol.

Developing an explicit discourse and vision associated with temporary uses gives community-led organisations greater legitimacy in their actions and use of the land. This is important for gaining support and credibility from the public and, more importantly, the local authority. As mentioned, the local authority granted Stour Space legal protection from upcoming development in Hackney Wick. However PRSC have not found it as easy to gain support from Bristol City Council, despite recent freedoms to install lighting and alternative street signs in Stokes Croft. Instead, the organisation's attempt to formalise by setting up a CLT relies on a vision that resonates with the local community.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Generating income in a self-reliant, conventional way proved to be essential for both Stour Space and PRSC to sustain their activities. In Stour Space, the Counter Café generates a large proportion of its revenue and, given its popularity, brings attention to other uses in the venue. By offering studio space, artists in residence contribute through rental payments and the gallery shop sells artists' work, as well as merchandise engendering anti-gentrification messages. Stour Space, as an organisation, runs independently of government funding, and any profit from its activities is used to improve its services and maintain the venue. Similarly, PRSC obtains finance through its china decorating business, Stokes Croft China. This art and craft work promotes PRSC's ideals whilst also being profitable. The products sold in the shop are created in the workshop, which in turn



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maintained through profit on sales. The organisations need sufficient income to put back into maintaining the premises and supporting the services they provide.

Shops and gallery space allow artists in residence to promote and sell their work. This is essential for them to function as artists. Hence, community-led organisations must provide such spaces in order to retain their services and generate income from renting studios. In this way the activities can be financially and functionally self-supporting. For Stour Space and PRSC, being self-supporting ensures that the organisations can pursue anti-gentrification agendas without state subsidies or private investment – which would contradict their philosophies.

STOUR SPACE AND PRSC: PAVING THE WAY FOR FORMALISATION

There are few tried and tested methods of formalisation in the UK. Associations such as PRSC are trying to show how things could be done through a journey of discovery. There is no standard approach to this process, and it is a relatively open concept. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the temporary users to explore the possibilities of securing ownership and the permanence of community ideals in urban areas that are ever-changing amid gentrification. Similar organisations can use the stories of success and conflict as precedents to formalise themselves. Likewise, local authorities could learn from them in order to foresee the potential of these practices and provide greater support to temporary users in their locale. Further research in this field could produce guidelines and recommendations for temporary user associations to promote, develop and formalise their activities in a self-sustaining way; and for local authorities to recognise the social, cultural and economic value of temporary use activities, and support the creative industries that drive them. ●

Pablo Newberry, urban designer/ planner

Note: The research that underpins this article was conducted in the first half of 2016 for a dissertation as part of a Master's degree in Planning (MPlan) in City and Regional Planning at Oxford Brookes University. The case studies may have developed since, but the issues raised remain relevant to urban planning and design.

DO YOU HAVE IDEAS FROM YOUR DISSERTATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO PUBLISH?

Please send an abstract from your postgraduate research thesis (or other studies) for consideration to: research@udg.org.uk and we will be in touch.

What Future for India's Urban Areas?

UDG/ URBED Symposium, Marshalls Design Space, London EC1, 11 May 2017



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This event was initiated by Nicholas Falk, who is working on a joint project with SCAD (Social Change and Development) in Tamil Nadu in Southern India. The aim was to generate interest in creating new forms of affordable housing in medium sized cities facing rapid growth in the Indian subcontinent, and draw out ideas for future work to connect Indian and British cities.

Some 40 people attended, including many urban designers with Indian backgrounds or connections, for a series of short presentations, workshop discussions and feedback. The presentations covered the topics of housing and urban growth, water, transport and the public realm. They set the scene for workshops on themes of where growth should be concentrated, how to check urban sprawl, what can be done to improve public health, and how community engagement should be handled.

There was a positive spirit in the discussions and encounters with real ongoing interest among urban practitioners and academics in smarter urbanisation and rapid growth. Comments included 'We should be more optimistic about India' and 'African cities are looking to India as a source of creativity and technological innovation'. Most agreed the need for a 'two-way street' of information on what works, and so further discussions could be fruitful. There is value in small and inspirational initiatives that take a holistic view working to achieve a wide range of outcomes: good design, better public health, environmental protection, socio-economic improvement etc.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

1. Retaining the best of Indian urban lifestyles

Introducing the event, architect Sunand Prasad drew on his own PhD research into urban form. The traditional Indian *haveli* was built around a courtyard both open and private, set in greenery, and was also quite high density. The villas that are replacing this model waste space, and are less suited to the climate.

Understanding what works in different contexts is important; for example, rooftop living always has formed an important part of Indian urban life, and it will be essential to avoid repeating the mistakes of Chinese style tower blocks in future housing designs. Sunand later drew conclusions on how urban design and public health could work together.

2. Smarter growth for medium-sized cities

Nicholas Falk introduced the URBED Trust's work with SCAD (Social Change and Development) in Tamil Nadu, Southern India. Rising populations with higher aspirations and limited natural resources, especially water, make it essential to grow medium-sized cities carefully, and avoid adding pressure to India's mega-cities.

He showed how 'smarter urbanisation' can be achieved where development is concentrated around transport nodes, and where new housing enables people to maintain the best of rural life, such as growing food and socialising with their neighbours, as well as having access to jobs in the cities. He praised creative work by SCAD students on how water might be saved, and new eco-homes built.

3. Learning from the past

Jas Bhalla, independent architect and urban designer, argued for a new urban typology that learns from the past and from the way that different cities have evolved. This should relate to the needs of medium-sized towns and cities as these, not mega-cities, will see most future growth.

Towns grew up around transport communications, and India has a wealth of railways, some of which are underused. Railway junctions, like Tirunelveli, could provide the hubs for sustainable growth. But plans also needed to allow for cars, and people's rising aspirations.

4. Sharing good practice with smaller cities

Sowmya Parthasarathy, senior planner with Arup Global, presented research on water from the Indian Government's Smart Cities programme. The average Indian home only has water for two hours per day, and only 30 per cent of urban households are connected to waste water systems. Bangalore, which once was a city of lakes and gardens, has become so built up that even lakes have caught fire. Similarly Chennai, the Tamil Nadu capital, which in 1980 was comprised largely of wetlands, is now down to just 15 per cent, making flooding almost inevitable. Solutions need to be found upstream in the waterways that flow into the lakes or sea.

It is clear from success stories, for example in Isher Judge Ahluwalia's book *Transforming Our Cities: Postcards of Change* (2014), that good practice could be shared with smaller cities, through replicable inspirational projects. 35 per cent of the expenditure on the first 20 of the 100 Smart Cities programme, is on the built environment, whereas technology only accounts for 7 per cent. As only 40 per cent of the funding comes from the national government, Indian companies have to devote 2 per cent of their profits to corporate social responsibility, and so they could provide local leadership in saving resources.

5. The challenges for the public realm of increasing private car use

Nidhi Bhargava, urban designer working for Tower Hamlets Council, spoke about the realities of street life in her hometown of Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. Streets and pathways are cluttered with uncontrolled parking and unlicensed kiosks, and the road space is not managed. The public realm also looks uncared for (in contrast to the care that people take in their own homes) in part because of negligence, but also because only about 25 per cent of dedicated expenditure is spent where it is intended.

1 The innovative aims of the Smarter Urbanisation and Rapid Growth (SURGe) eco-house
 2 The Social Change and Development students present their project for the URBED Trust competition

While this may seem a low priority to some, there is evidence that well-looked after areas are safer, and clean-up initiatives can provide a mechanism for community engagement. A major challenge for the future is going to be how to handle increasing numbers of private cars looking for space to park.

6. Building sustainable and affordable homes

Rajat Gupta, director of the Institute for Sustainable Development at Oxford Brookes University, spoke about ongoing research into the provision of social housing. He pointed out that social housing accounts for 24 per cent of the total, and there is a shortage of 19 million homes that urgently need to be built. The greatest demand is from the Economically Weak Sectors (EWS) and Lower Income Groups (LIG), but the government tends to emphasise quantity and what can be measured, rather than factors like neighbourhood quality.

At present there is no code for the sustainable construction of residential buildings. Nor is there proper data, and yet house building accounts for a significant amount of carbon emissions. The big issue will be mainstreaming sustainable solutions, and models for good neighbourhoods. This is especially important if prefabrication is used to cut costs. Finally, as Sunand pointed out 80 per cent of social housing on the edge of Delhi is not occupied, basically because it is too remote from sources of paid work.

WORKSHOP FINDINGS

Transport – Convened by Brian Love, architect and author of www.connectedcities.org, this group felt that high levels of migration within India's states are causing major problems, as cars clog up city centres and they in turn start to decline. There is also not enough space for buses, no attempt to control congestion and parking.

Smart technologies could help to improve the use of limited road space, and reduce air pollution. City-wide transport authorities are needed which can use both sticks and carrots to influence behaviour; Indian vitality and ingenuity need to be harnessed, and electric *tuc tucs* could be one such contribution.

Housing – Convened by Jas Bhalla, there was a contentious discussion on the drawing that had been circulated to participants. Housing design needed to relate to the urban contexts, follow a rigorous analysis of local typologies (i.e. the way people are used to living), be designed for specific market segments, and make the most of local resources, whether organic (as with Hempcrete) or inert (such as flyash from power stations). Slums or informal settlements have a certain logic in how they are created, but new developments must meet much higher standards. The best places evolve incrementally, and are shaped by how the streets connect, as well as by the space for housing.

Community engagement – Interesting ideas emerged from the workshop led by Nidhi Bhargava. Some of the chaos produced by street vendors is actually a great asset, and they need to be legitimised and not swept away. Western methods of consultation are not appropriate, but greater use could be made of self-help groups, especially empowering those in the middle income sector. Established villages seem to work well (particularly SCAD's work in empowering women, and leading education and health in Tamil Nadu), so some of their practices could be replicated in urban areas. For example



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groups might take over dilapidated buildings and turn them to community uses. Others might promote food growing in yards with allotments.

The Indian government needs to work with representatives of each caste, possibly using faith groups and the media, to provide role models for initiatives to improve wellbeing. Film and TV stars are very popular and influential among Tamils, and many become politicians.

Public health – The group included Dr Mala Rao, a leading expert on community health, and was led by Sunand Prasad. Progress can seem impossible as urban communities wrestle with problems of air quality, water, waste management and poor workmanship. Lifestyle diseases are the big killers now; a fifth of Indians suffer from diabetes brought on by inactivity and poor nutrition. The middle class now value flush toilets, air conditioning and private cars.

While culture may be an obstacle, and reducing chaos may not be a priority for most people, health is a stronger motivator for collective action. People are influenced by visible change, and, for example, Delhi has banned plastic bags and diesel cars. Urbanists and health professionals need to work together, and not just depend on catastrophes (like flooding) to provide the stimulus for action. However large-scale projects may not be the solution. Instead long-established views may need to be overcome. Support from Western professionals could help to validate the opinions of younger people, especially making the most of IT to spread good practice (which may include healthier forms of construction using organic materials).

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

Responses to the ideas raised in the presentations and workshops are very welcome, and the event concluded with actions to follow up:

1. The web site www.smarterurbanisation.org should be used to share views, access good practice or research findings.
2. Information-sharing should include what India is doing to create new models for urban transformation, for example the electric *tuc tucs* proposal.
3. New neighbourhoods should be designed to appeal to the young and opinion-formers, so that good practice is publicised.
4. Charging for resources such as water or parking will help promote more sustainable behaviour and provide funding for ongoing maintenance.
5. Urban planners and health professionals need to work together on neighbourhood plans to encourage healthier lifestyles.
6. A brief should be drawn up for a local design competition that helps SCAD turn its vision into reality in specific locations. ●

Dr Nicholas Falk, Executive Director of the URBED Trust



Image: St Mary's Chapel, Bradwell Abbey, Milton Keynes - ready for restoration. Photograph by Chris Hooper

The Conservation Gap: Skills deficit or urban opportunity?

Noël James introduces the relationships between conservation principles, resources and the management of historic built environments

When I was invited to guest edit this issue of *Urban Design*, I was involved in research on the increasing skills gap in conservation and what this might mean for historic urban centres. This was not long after the Big Society, *Localism Act* and final iteration of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), as a result of which planning was in flux again.

These significant changes were happening alongside worrying statistics in the *Annual Reports on Local Authority Staff Resources* (2016 and earlier), which have shown continued decline in the number of conservation officers employed over the last decade: 35.8 per cent to date since 2006.

In tandem, parallel service data collected by the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers showed an alarming drop in local authority archaeology specialists of 13.5 per cent during 2015-16 alone, and while the same data period for conservation specialists showed only a 0.5 per cent drop, planning application and Listed Building Consent decisions increased by 3.6 per cent and 0.62 per cent respectively in the same period.

One might think that an increasing workload coupled with a shrinking, specialist workforce could only lead to ruin. Recently, Cedric Avenier from *Le Laboratoire Cultures constructives*, at the Grenoble School of Architecture (ENSAG) in France has explored philosophical notions of how ruins make heritage, and why a lack of knowledge in how to conserve them should not be a barrier to their preservation. In short, we should acknowledge our lack of skills and instead of panic-interfering with ruins to 'make them better', we should wait until the requisite skills become apparent in other sectors or generations. We should embrace the holes.

This begs the question: what are the holes and how do we fill them? Do we fill them? And do they present opportunities as well as threats?

Helen Ensor reminds us that conservation and seeking to preserve historic places began as an anti-establishment radical movement, which sought to challenge land owners' assumed right to redevelop land and buildings unhindered. Judith Ryser and Farnaz Arefian report on the Silk Road Cities conference about approaches to conservation that vary widely in different cultures and political contexts.

Here in the UK, Vanessa Gregory gives us an inspiring look into what she describes affectionately as 'muscular localism': how the devolution of planning has enabled an involved and engaged community to develop design codes. She shows how a community can be fully and professionally involved within the design process and that this is not just to mitigate a skills gap, but as an integral part of any design process.

Chris Hooper reports on the activities of a newly-qualified conservation officer in Milton Keynes – a consciously designed urban environment where 20th century architecture is already listed – which has hidden gems of old and new heritage. As a principal regeneration officer, Richard Tuffrey reviews a

volunteer conservation pilot project funded by English Heritage (as it was then). He recounts the decline in local conservation services and how volunteers took part in a largely successful programme to undertake condition surveys of local grade II listed buildings.

Helen Campbell-Pickford explains her recent research on volunteering as a possible solution for the conservation skills deficit, and explores the demography, skills set and end-aims of volunteers and those who use their services by analysing motivation, perception, and apparent free labour.

Dr Seán O'Reilly, Director of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) focuses on the skills needed in conservation and placemaking, and how to maintain, adapt and develop them through rigorous training and consistent standards. This is linked to the recent guide published jointly by the Historic Towns & Villages Forum (HTVF), IHBC and Civic Voice, *Conservation Professional Practice Principles*, which Dave Chetwyn describes as balancing an understanding of historical significance and technical skills to find practical solutions in the context of a wide range of social, economic and environmental pressures.

Louise Thomas reviews the common principles shared between architecture, urban design and conservation, looking at a variety of historic and contemporary examples from Oxford, explored at a recent HTVF seminar. Lastly Oluwaseun Soyemi, with his considerable experience as a policy advisor at Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), explains grant-funded skills development using two case studies, in which practical building and craft skills are developed among a range of people, from volunteers, to home owners, local schools, businesses and community groups.

This brings us back to where we started with the question of what to do about gaps in conservation skills? Do we accept that there might be no solution in our lifetimes, and have faith in the robust nature of good design, that beautiful ruins are our heritage, and therefore perhaps a solution in themselves, or do we actively seek to find solutions with focused research, funded training and concentrated effort? Is the deficit a threat to our urban centres or rather a threat to our perceptions? Or is it an opportunity for communities to develop useful, real-world skills and beautiful townscapes? The answer may well be as varied as these papers, but as they demonstrate, we will do the very best we can with whatever resources we have. ●

Dr Noël James, guest topic editor and Director & CEO, Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre

Radical Conservation?

Helen Ensor reminds us that protecting old buildings began as an anti-establishment activity



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Masked feminists break into the National Trust's HQ to leave an anonymous cash donation; socialists buy up land to bring health and pleasure to the working classes; hippies and ne'er-do-wells take to the streets of London to confront the power of the council. This doesn't sound much like the cosy, establishment image of historic building conservation, does it? But the birth of the conservation movement in England was politically motivated and viewed with great suspicion by the established Victorian social order. Indeed, in its early days, conserving buildings of the past was an act of social and political rebellion.

EARLY MOVES TO PROTECT

2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the *Civic Amenities Act* of 1967, a catchy-titled piece of statute which ushered in the first conservation areas. Before this, legislation allowed buildings of special architectural or historic interest to be listed, and (due to the separate disciplines of archaeology and architectural history) archaeological monuments to be added to a Schedule of Ancient Monuments. There was not, however, a mechanism for recognising and protecting historic towns and villages overall, or groups of buildings where the ensemble was greater than the sum of its parts. Today, the heritage lobby is routinely derided for its middle class and conservative character and beliefs, but it is worth reflecting on the radical, often subversive and highly political act of protecting old buildings, attractive views and picture-postcard villages.

In the late 19th century, campaigns to protect England's finest historic sites were seen by many as an assault on property rights. Land ownership in England was fundamental to the power base of the ruling classes; indeed the right to vote was dependent on the ownership of property. Forcing landowners to repair ancient buildings or to abstain from demolishing them was perceived as undermining the absolute right of each Englishman to his castle, his alone to do with whatever he wanted. Making a list of places which the government thought would be better off forcibly taken into public ownership, as required by the first modern legislation protecting historic sites, the *Ancient Monuments Protection Act* of 1882, was so unpopular in certain quarters that it took almost half a century to bring it to the statute books.

The National Trust is now firmly enmeshed in our collective conscience as the epitome of middle class leisure: a country walk, tea and scones, nosying around a stately home. However, its early aim of making the glorious countryside

1 Avebury Stone Circle. Copyright of Historic England

of the Lake District accessible to the working classes of Greater Manchester was a radical act. The Trust was founded by social reformers Octavia Hill, Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley and Sir Robert Hunter, who had become horrified by the living conditions of the poor in big cities. They were united in their belief in the healing power of nature and allowing everyone to benefit from it, regardless of wealth or status. This was later summed up in the Trust's motto 'For ever, for everyone'. With the purchase of land on the west shore of Derwentwater in 1902 and a bequest by Beatrix Potter in 1943 (she had used the royalties from her Peter Rabbit books to buy fourteen farms and 400 acres), the Trust declared huge swathes of the Lakes inalienable, meaning they can never be developed. The importance of this idea is hard to overstate: buying land from the wealthy in order to allow it to be enjoyed by the poor? This is radical indeed.

The Trust's early fundraising efforts were supported by the extraordinary and improbable Ferguson's Gang, a group of masked women who operated under aliases (Bill Stickers and The Red Biddy for example), raised money and donated it anonymously to the National Trust in a series of attention-grabbing stunts (money inside a fake pineapple; a one-hundred pound note stuffed inside a cigar; five hundred pounds with a bottle of homemade sloe gin). This, and other more conventional donations, allowed the Trust to buy buildings which were threatened with destruction, such as Shalford Mill in Surrey and Newtown Old Town Hall on the Isle of Wight. Ferguson's Gang was formed in 1927 and their anarchic fundraising activities spanned the period 1930-1947 with the aim of saving relatively modest historic buildings, as opposed to country houses, which would speak to ordinary people. They were influenced by Clough Williams Ellis's book *England and the Octopus* (1928). In an extraordinary feat for a book about town planning, this was one of the most widely read and discussed books of the era. In it, 'the Octopus' is rampant and unchecked urbanisation and development, which threatens to completely strangle the defenceless English countryside. The book was highly influential until the 1960s when, to some extent and within certain sections of society, its ideas became so orthodox as to be unremarkable.

SOCIAL REFORM AND CONSERVATION

Which came first for these early radicals in building conservation: the passion for old buildings or the passion for social reform? The common factor for many was the work of the hugely influential John Ruskin who introduced Hardwicke Rawnsley to Octavia Hill and inspired the young William Morris (who then went on to found the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings). Ruskin's zeal for social justice was a dawning realisation which came later in life, but was generated from his long-held ideas about aesthetics. Ruskin prized the work of the artisan craftsman and believed that great art or architecture could not be created if a worker was exploited or unhappy. For Ruskin and for Morris, who ended his life a committed socialist, the Victorian industrial economy was the enemy of beauty.

The story of the conservation of different styles of historical architecture tends to follow a typical pattern: intellectuals attempting (and failing) to persuade the government to limit the agency of individuals or companies to alter or destroy, followed by the catastrophic loss of a treasured thing or place; followed by a public outcry, followed by government taking up the argument of the intellectuals, and making it into law. Take for example the fate of Georgian buildings in the early 20th century. The high rate of attrition was a cause for great concern expressed throughout the 1920s, but this was largely ignored until the Adelphi Terrace, an Adam brothers' development of houses next to Charing Cross, was demolished in 1935. Widespread public condemnation of this wanton destruction led to the formation of the Georgian Group and the traction their cause gained delivered not only changes to the legislative framework but also the saving of Robert Adam's other masterpieces: Home House on Portland Square and 20 St James's Square. Plans for the demolition of



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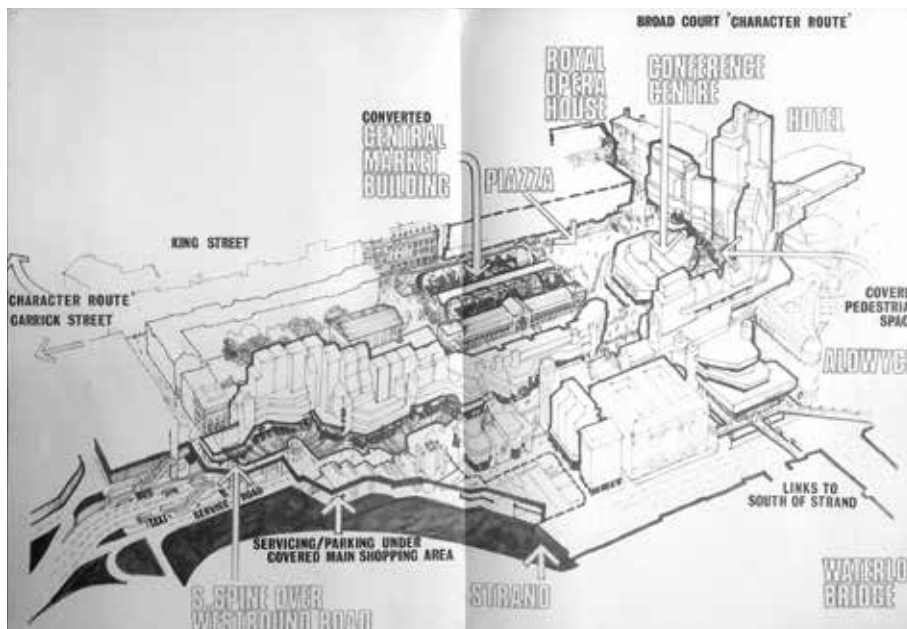
the latter had been drawn up as early as the late 1920s, but lack of funds had prevented them being seen through; Matthew Brettingham and John Soane's building for the Duke and Duchess of Leeds on the adjacent plot of 21 St James's Square was not so lucky.

By 1936-7, in the immediate aftermath of the Adelphi outcry, the London County Council were too squeamish to approve the demolition of No. 20, despite the 'exciting' proposals drawn up for its replacement by stellar architects Mewes and Davies. The building was saved after a fashion, by Mewes and Davies copying Adam's façade and creating a bizarre seven-bay composition with a continuous attic storey and mansard run across the whole lot. Conservation here was definitely radical.

A BATTLE FOR STREET AND SPACES

Fast-forward to the 1960s and the cause of conservation was taken up by a new, radical underclass of hippies and beatniks. One of their key battlegrounds was the unlikely setting of Covent Garden. The market here had originally sprawled out of control in the 18th century and been contained and gentrified by Charles Fowler's market buildings of the 1820s. By the 1950s it had once again become unmanageable as the streets were choked with traffic and clogged with debris from the vegetable market. It was decided that for the good of both the market and the Covent Garden area (now being eyed as prime real estate), the fruit and vegetable traders would be relocated to

2 Covent Garden with the market buildings today. Photography by Sebastian Loew



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The grass-roots activists had created a new mood, where it was no longer considered acceptable to force development onto an unwilling and resentful population

purpose-built facilities at Nine Elms. In 1968 plans were brought forward by the Greater London Council for the comprehensive redevelopment of a much larger 96 acre site, which would have seen approximately two-thirds of the buildings torn down altogether. Supported by the local authorities of both Westminster and Camden, the proposals included the demolition of great swathes of the 18th and 19th century buildings which are now considered so characteristic of the area. The plans also envisaged the provision of three new schools, open recreational spaces and new shopping facilities, new hotels, and – *pièce de résistance* – an international conference centre. It would also have included that feature so beloved of the post-war planners, a new covered road in the style of an urban motorway, running roughly along the line of Maiden Lane, parallel with the Strand, carrying eastbound traffic, while the Strand would have been re-designated as one-way westwards. The international conference centre was located on and entirely enclosing Inigo Jones's unique 16th century piazza. A proponent of the scheme, George Gardiner (Tory MP and journalist) said at the time:

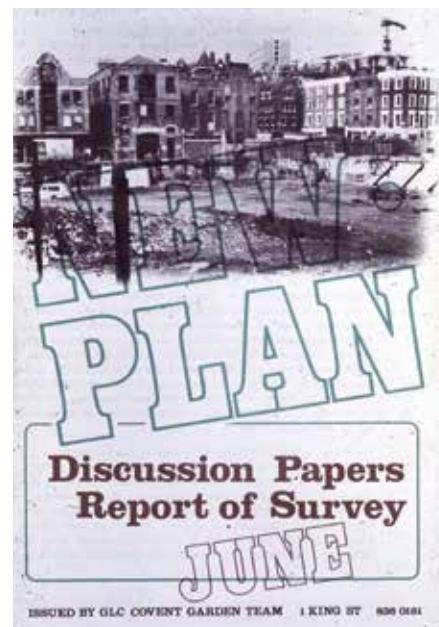
'Any loss of nerve on this by the GLC in face of protest from a small section of London's populace... will go down as a black day in London's history... it is the next generation of Londoners who will be the losers and who will look back on our timid age with scorn.'

In 1971 the Covent Garden Community Association was formed to coalesce around objections to the scheme and to give a coherent voice to the objectors. The battle raged backwards and forwards between the three authorities whose vision was at stake and the local people who lived and worked in the market and its environs. A public inquiry was held later in the same year which upheld the principles of the scheme and seemed to signal the beginning of the end for Covent Garden. However, the grass-roots activists had created a new mood, where it was no longer considered acceptable to force development onto an unwilling and resentful population; riot and rebellion were threatened, and the threat was taken seriously. In 1973, even whilst the plans for redevelopment were still on the table and approved, the

3 The GLC's New Plan for Covent Garden which involved significant redevelopment

4 A consultation document for the revised version of the Covent Garden Plan, 1974

5 The people leading the Covent Garden Community Association, 1972



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death knell was signalled when over 250 buildings in the development area were added to the statutory list, effectively making the comprehensive redevelopment of the area impossible.

TODAY'S VIEW

There are no doubt other examples of the cause of conservation being taken up by the radicals, the socialists and those seeking to challenge society's conventions. Whilst the individual stories of Ferguson's Gang and the outcry over Covent Garden's fate are well-known, these events have not necessarily been joined up to reveal their relationship to the wider radical and subversive nature of conserving old buildings. There is clearly a link, and one which suggests that the act of protecting old buildings and historic places is far from the cosy, establishment activity it is often perceived to be. ●

Helen Ensor, Associate Director, Historic Building Consultancy, Donald Insall Architects



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Divergent Heritages: Holes in the Ruins

Cédric Avenier asks whether we are brave enough to leave our heritage alone

Patrimony, from the Latin *patrimonium*, relates to what is inherited from one's father or ancestors, and is better conveyed through its synonym, heritage, a term more commonly used in English. But the concept of heritage is probably one of the most difficult to define, as heritage reflects the image of the society from which it stems.

THE RISE OF HERITAGE

Heritage was first considered in the 18th century. The Enlightenment foresaw a change of civilisation, but it was the French Revolution that brought about the protection of cultural properties as castles were burned down, even though churches and castles were not immediately protected for they symbolised a society that was being rejected. After the devastating First World War, the philosopher Henri Bergson introduced the concept of 'cultural heritage' at the International Commission for Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC), an advisory organisation to the League of Nations, itself a precursor to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). During the Second World War 'tangible heritage' was defined, and later in 1972 in the midst of the Cold War and social protests, 'cultural and material heritages' were also defined as important categories. In 1992, the UNESCO's *Memory of the World Register* was set up and, with the emergence of the Internet, together with the increase in the global appeal for all things industrial, uniform and easy, the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity distinction was proclaimed in 2001.

When Marcel Duchamp's 20th century view took painting out of its golden frame, removed sculpture from its pedestal and released artwork from its museum case to place it in the eye of the viewer, everything became art or everything could be claimed as such. Similarly everything can be seen as heritage.

But heritage does not boil down to just well-known built structures or artefacts; it encompasses almost the totality of what has been passed down to us, which results in great dilemmas: should we restore, protect or even destroy it? Because choices do need to be made. Ever since heritage started to be inventoried, choice-related issues have been raised, and even more so in the context of the definition of broad heritage themes. Unfortunately, restoration and even conservation projects are generally derived from utilitarian agendas, as nobody fully knows how to do projects which lack a specific practical purpose. The weight and priority of public subsidies and political will is becoming more and more enmeshed in such projects.

1 Palace of Versailles, France. Photograph by Ninara, via Flickr



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USE IT OR MISS A TURN

The 20th century saw the invention of functionalism in architecture, and we have looked for a profitable, pecuniary and, above all, immediate use for everything that we have produced ever since. Such is the identity of our time.

How can a remarkable building be demolished? Why does a building fall apart? When those responsible for it no longer know its meaning and are unable to find a use for it other than practical, they do not know how to wait and miss their turn. Why is it so difficult to say that we do not know what to do and even if we did, we do not have the means to do it, but we can keep and protect it, and we will pass this asset onto the next generation, who may know what to make of it?

The world is a great nebula in constant evolution. Today, buildings undergo quick transformations and when they reach their limit, Man, this revered hermit crab, quickly gives up. It is tragic that we do not know how to wait anymore.

HOLES AND RUINS

Ruins, perfect allegories of an expiring world in the midst of a social crisis as creative and as sanguine as other eras, teach us a lesson, which is probably why we get attached to them. Ruins are the vanity of civilisation.

But why is the Palace of Versailles so compelling? Everything is perfect, in an admirable, mint-condition, and over-subsidised, over-publicised state: luxurious details, quantifiable in their full glory, and full of Cartesian pleasure for the left side of the brain. And for the right side of the brain, the free mind that sees what others do not see, what is there to be found? Emptiness! Versailles has taken everything, holes appear in the old walls through which one can peek.

When you look through a hole, a gap in a ruined building, you just look into the void. Gaps appeal to memory, to the imagination, and the act of thinking is infinitely more sensitive, deeper, more penetrating and more poetic than mere matter or physical action. Ornaments can make an impression, but absences can stir the heart.

And so holes, in their emptiness, make the ruin. Holes show the greatness of a building and the history it contains, communicating the reflection of man on man, when it would take volumes for a historian or a philosopher to describe the same building

with equal precision, through the study of its decors and archives. Holes give evocative power to the ruin.

To contemplate a ruin – not to study, analyse or read it, but to contemplate it, to live it perhaps – allows us to detach ourselves from the materiality in which we are currently held. The ruin is not merely a ‘setting for elegiac poetics’ but instead, as explained in 1940 by Walter Benjamin in his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, it represents ‘the visibility of societies in times of distress’. The ruin is an architectural vanity, especially since architecture, sometimes intended for eternal glory, is probably one of the most ephemeral arts. Architecture is a tool, an inhabited machine art, used, modified, rearranged, transformed and even violated, then abandoned and ruined. As structural as it may be, the colossus of stone, concrete or metal ends up collapsing, and from its death a feeling emerges.

Modern man is enough of a historian to hold memories of the present and of times past. The ruin, even as it collapses, locates a civilisation. Before disappearing completely, the ruined body of the building says:

‘You have forsaken me, though I have protected you from the storm of winter, the sun of summer, and the rains of dead seasons. You leave me to die alone, devoured precisely by the hostile nature that I have protected you from. So take a look at me and remember: *sic transit gloria mundi*’.

The building takes its revenge and its skeleton remains to haunt our cowardly defeat. It leads us into an experience of loss, reminding us of our own frailty.

ARTIFICE AND CYBORGS

Yes, it is hard to keep our responses simple, and even harder to not do much. And yet, as buildings are abandoned, rather than letting them die a peaceful death, our era invariably ends up recovering them and keeping them alive artificially, with more means than would have been necessary to maintain them before, unless they are linked to ultra-technological life support systems, thus becoming cyborgs. This is actually a characteristic of our time, the idea to ‘never die’. Are we not already starting to accept and sometimes even to appreciate, even within historic monuments sector, highly visible, radical or technological extensions to our ruins?

Ruins can become the foundations of a new society in the making, and this seems logical. The architectural heritage we are bestowed with is being remodelled in the image of our society. We are scared of death and we pack and sell fast. Eternity is getting shorter by the day. ●

2 Ruin of ancient Kaunos on the Aegean coast of Turkey

Dr Cédric Avenier, researcher, Building Cultures Laboratory, ENSAG

Urban Design as Tool to Reconnect People with their Urban Heritage

Judith Ryser and Farnaz Arefian report on findings from the recent Silk Cities conference

In this issue on urban design and conservation, it is pertinent to broaden our view to issues outside the UK. For the many heritage consultants who are, or wish to be, active in the Middle East and Central Asia in the rehabilitation, development, design and reconstruction of heritage settings, a recent conference at UCL provided a wealth of valuable information.

The second international conference on Silk Cities was organised by the Silk Cities Initiative and the Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU/ UCL) on 11-13 July 2017 and was attended by more than 70 participants, including many from and active in the region. Three days of vibrant discussions, exchanges of ideas and collective activity contributed to the development of recommendations for the future of urban planning and design in historic settings. The region of interest (the Middle East and Central Asia) is home to ancient settlements and early human endeavours. Urban characteristics, such as historic city centres still exist, particularly along the historic trade routes, beside contemporary city formations. However, the urban continuity that once existed across generations in physical and social terms has been disrupted by rapid urbanisation, globalisation and urban economic pressures, in addition to conflicts and frequent, destructive natural disasters.

This conference was relevant to the professional community and UDG members in a number of ways. Dealing with pressing issues in historic cities is more complex than dealing with newly-built cities and urban areas, no matter where they lie. Beyond our nostalgic admiration of ancient cities, there are many challenges that urban governments, professionals, and residents face when linking urban heritage, design, planning and development within urban transformation processes. The most sustainable approach is to go beyond exporting a one-size-fits-all attitude to a context that is historically, culturally and professionally profoundly different to that of the UK. To this end a deeper contextual understanding is vital when dealing with issues in contemporary historic cities from a design perspective.

ACROSS DISCIPLINES, SECTORS AND GENERATIONS

The conference specifically addressed the following geographic areas: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Mongolia, Pakistan, Palestine, Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Taking a forward-looking approach, it applied cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral perspectives to examine contemporary historic cities in the region, and to act as a cross-generational tool and a bridge between the younger and more experienced generations, as well as bringing together academia and practice. In-depth case studies, some of which are described below, were grouped around the following topics:

- Urban heritage and cultural identity
- Governing urban heritage
- Post-crisis urban reconstruction in historic contexts
- Urban economy in an inclusive society in a historic city
- Potential policy transfer on urban heritage.



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1 Sanctuary Kalan Mosque, Bukhara, Samarkand after restoration. The inscription was only added after 1987. Photograph by Elena Paskaleva.

These two Silk Cities conferences and those that will follow are designed to leave tangible and easily accessible results, via the Silk Cities website and forthcoming publication, and especially in realised projects. The aim of the Silk Cities Initiative and design network is to broaden the exchange worldwide and across professions and generations.

Urban designers, who have participated in regeneration in the region, reported two issues as being essential: competences and social responsibilities. Designers' attitudes towards the historic urban fabric are crucial, especially amongst those who contribute to conservation in countries other than their own. Their greatest challenge is to gain the trust of clients in charge of regeneration and the recipients of foreign design interventions. Establishing good communication was key throughout the projects presented, either directly or by means of urban design institutions or places of learning. What those involved



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in regeneration projects considered essential was a continuous monitoring process, which included dialogues with local people directly affected by these interventions. Such monitoring and feedback enables those involved to adjust their approaches and designs.

WHAT IS HERITAGE?

A more general question raised by those who seek to reconnect populations to their urban heritage was the meaning of heritage. Opinions differ, but it is clear that there is no single answer. Regeneration is related to specific historic periods, but this tends to be determined by the custodians of the patrimony, who may be tempted to leave out or eradicate inconvenient pasts. There is also the danger of focusing on the physical restoration of historic buildings, groups of buildings or neighbourhoods and turning them into static museum environments, thereby preventing the influence of change in everyday life. The same is true for the evolution of building technologies and materials. For example, when certain crafts are no longer available, what is a legitimate modern replacement?

The built environment is constantly changing and adapting to new individual needs and lifestyles, as well as new technologies and more long-term social change. Like humans, buildings have lifecycles and require maintenance and refurbishment. They succumb to external threats – natural disasters, war destruction – but also pressures from land and real estate owners, or were simply poorly constructed initially or represent a change of architectural fashion. When single or groups of historic buildings are earmarked for regeneration, urban designers are among those given a role in determining the criteria for preservation and change. However, politicians, other figures in authority and international cultural institutions are most likely to take the lead in regeneration strategies; these can contradict urban designers' approaches, which are predominantly about the buildings, but also their historic meaning and the people who use them.

SAMARKAND

An example of the complexity of defining history is Samarkand in Uzbekistan, one of the most renowned ancient cities on the Silk Road. Elena Paskaleva showed how decision-makers at various times (i.e. at the end of the Soviet era and after the independence of Uzbekistan) decided to reconstruct the



There is the danger of focusing on the physical restoration of historic buildings, groups of buildings or neighbourhoods and turning them into static museum environments

Timurid monuments just as before, i.e. its mosques, mausoleums, and madrasas which had been partly destroyed. However none of the materials or skills were available to reproduce an exact copy of the previous monuments. Reference was made to early photographs and 19th century drawings as the original plans were not available. The rebuilt complex with new inscriptions is now a tourist attraction, but it seems to have lost its role and meaning for local society, which is segregated from the site by walls, leaving little interaction with the visitors.

Another example which emphasises the symbolic nature of heritage was post-Soviet Dushanbe in Tajikistan. Otambek Mastibekov showed three successive statues which had replaced one another in Dushanbe, each with the aim of creating local identity and allegiance. The same change of approach has influenced the restoration of the surrounding historic buildings. Some valuable heritage has been destroyed for political and nationalistic reasons, rather than for archaeological identity.

POST-CRISIS RECONSTRUCTION

The conference session on post-crisis reconstruction in historic contexts explored the complexities that exist after disaster situations. This addressed urban heritage and identity during the reconstruction of destroyed historic cities as a result of conflict or natural events beyond the restoration of its renowned monuments, such as citadels and bazaars, upon which international organisations such as ICOMOS were focusing.

Bam, Iran, which was struck by an earthquake in 2003, saw specific attention given to housing reconstruction and

2 Three different statues occupying the same location at different times in recent history, Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Images from Otambek Mastibekov



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the reconstruction of the city. Farnaz Arefian showed an example of housing reconstruction as a process of bringing together households, architects, reconstruction funders, and local institutions, to collectively deliver self-determined quantitative and qualitative objectives, and deliver urban and architectural characteristics to connect people to their destroyed city, mentally and physically, and in a very complex situation. The challenge is even greater when previous design and planning regulations have been inadequate in addressing the characteristics of housing development. An important task in managing housing reconstruction is to identify improvements and how to integrate this into the process.

Naraqh in Iran is of particular interest, because of the social capital approach to revitalising the city. It is a very small city, neglected and in decline over a long period of time but revitalised through a social approach led by a very dynamic mayor, Mohmoud Moradi, who mobilised a dedicated community locally, nationally and internationally. Moe Naraghi showed that regeneration was conducted in two ways: physical-historic and social-cultural. Clearly, the physical fabric needed restoration, but the local economy was also ailing, suffering from younger people leaving an ageing generation behind. Using reconstruction activities as a vehicle to develop new skills and attract, as well as retain, the younger generation were key to the mayor's regeneration strategy. An important feature was the sustained involvement and material support of people who had ancient family ties with this city, even those who had made their lives elsewhere.

LESSONS TO LEARN

What lessons can be learned from regeneration and conservation projects in the Silk Cities for conservation in our own or other cultures? The first is that there are no universal criteria for the regeneration of historic urban areas and, in particular, no single points in history to refer to. Secondly, there are no set rules about how to incorporate design principles which can accommodate contemporary uses, nor how to use modern materials while

respecting heritage remains. Clearly, a lot of subjective judgements are made in such regeneration processes and they are best developed with local practitioners and current or future users. From the examples discussed, it was shown that external interventions can sometimes block standard approaches that may be detrimental to the future viability of regenerated buildings. Finally, even if innovative interventions are carefully planned, they may not withstand adverse destructive natural or man-made events, despite efforts to incorporate greater robustness and resilience in designs. These historic cities, like all others, are subjected to a constant process of change, and over time, choices have to be made about what is worth preserving and what requires creative innovation. ●

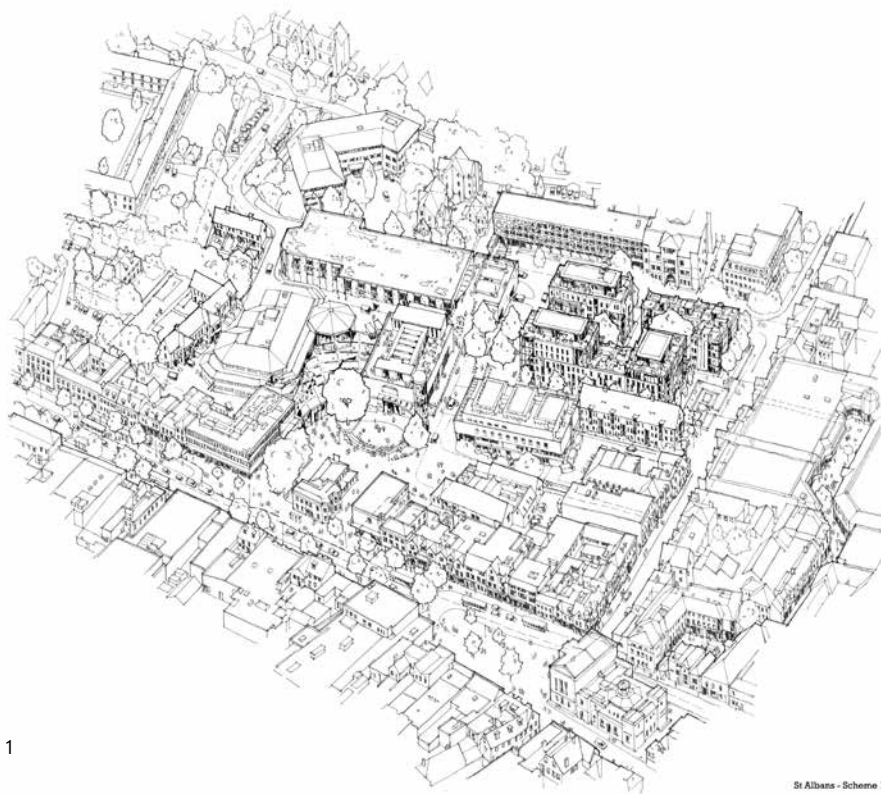
Judith Ryser, researcher, journalist, writer and urban affairs consultant to Fundacion Metropoli, Madrid
Dr Farnaz Arefian, founder of Silk Cities Initiative and principal consultant/ researcher, Civitas Phoenix Associates

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3 Scenes from Bam, Iran after the earthquake in 2003, and the consultative process for reconstruction

Design Codes for St Albans Conservation Area

Vanessa Gregory describes how the local community's involvement shapes conservation approaches



groups, the Cathedral, the Chamber of Commerce, St Albans District Council's spatial planning officer and portfolio holders for planning and community engagement. Look! St Albans, our community voice on design was born. Our one aim was to facilitate the *Enquiry by Design* process and to encourage the community to take part in our venture. We agreed that design codes would offer a clear and yet flexible tool to enable developments to take place. Our intention was not to stop development, but to set the bar at a level that was acceptable to the whole community, and would prove durable. Many in the community believe that consultation too often takes place just prior to a planning application being submitted to the local planning authority. Therefore irreversible key development decisions have already been made and designs prepared with associated costs. Consequently the wider community is excluded from the creative part of the process, when local knowledge and a diversity of skills could help to realise designs that everyone could be proud of.

St Albans is a small Cathedral city northwest of London and was named after Britain's first Christian martyr. It grew on the hill adjacent to the Roman city of Verulamium, and the built environment reflects the many centuries that have passed. It remains a thriving market town today.

Significant areas of the city centre were ready for redevelopment, but there was continuing concern that many post-war developments within the historic core lacked architectural merit. As one resident said we were running the risk of becoming St Anywhere not St Albans. The city centre is important not only to the community who live within the historic core of St Albans central Conservation Area, but to people from the entire district who come into town to shop, meet, work and for entertainment. It is the district's collective front room.

THE START

In April 2009, I attended a Historic Towns Forum conference in Cambridge which included a presentation by members of The Prince's Foundation for Building Community. I immediately thought their *Enquiry by Design* process and clear and sympathetic understanding of historic fabric would be extremely useful in St Albans and readily told them so. They were enthusiastic to work with the community but finding the mechanism and funding would be the test. Thanks to the *Localism Act* of 2011 and The Foundation being part of the DCLG Communities and Neighbourhoods in Planning programme, the dream of getting them involved in St Albans became a reality later that year.

At the end of 2011 the City Centre Steering Group was formed; it included a wide range of individuals, community

LOCAL VIEWS

We asked everyone who was interested in being involved to take photos of aspects of our city that inspired them and that they found appealing. To enable anyone to join in we set up our web presence on the photo-sharing website Flickr. People soon found out that this was a new and exciting way to get involved, where ordinary members of the community sat down with professionals on an equal footing to co-create.

As one participant said 'I attended the workshop full of enthusiasm but very aware of my lack of professional skills. Our facilitator John Dales soon dispelled those fears by engaging us all with a wonderful mix of technical knowledge and experience, together with an open mind which relished all our suggestions and challenges. My confidence grew throughout the day as I realised that this was indeed going to be a community-based and co-operative exercise, and our combined local knowledge had real value!'

Look! St Albans published the workshop report including the draft design codes for central St Albans, co-authored by the community and The Prince's

1 The scheme developed with ImaginePlaces for the civic area in St Albans. Illustration by Charles Gardner of Matrix Partnership

Foundation. This was presented to the community and it was agreed that Look! St Albans would become a fully constituted group working in the spirit of neighbourhood planning. The intention was to invite willing developers and landowners to work with us on site-specific opportunities at an early stage, in preparing their proposals through our design charrettes.

DESIGN CHARRETTES

Our somewhat unique design charrette processes are independently facilitated by people acceptable to both parties. Neither party can change the outcome of the design charrette. It is understood that the concepts that flow from charrettes would need testing before being worked into planning proposals. Our charrettes are also open to all. The independent facilitators ensure that all participants can have a voice. The different ways in which ideas, concerns and comments are captured and translated into proposals means that there is a suitable mechanism for everyone to get their ideas across.

The cost of the facilitators and the output are met by the landowner or developer, and we act as community hosts, paying for local publicity and refreshments etc. Look! St Albans does not express an opinion, but we do write a letter of recommendation to the local planning authority endorsing the outcome of the design charrette.

We were asked to host our first design charrette by St Albans District Council, acting as trustees and owners of the Museum of St Albans, a small but sensitive site within the Central Conservation Area. On the opposite side of the road are the Marlborough Buildings (Grade II listed). The Museum had been gifted to the city in the 19th century and had housed the town's post-Roman history, until the building was assessed as not conducive to the current needs of a modern museum and art gallery. The building was much loved by the community and its disposal, to pay for a new museum in the Old Town Hall, could have been very contentious. Instead it was to be retained for conversion into new homes, and we were tasked with finding a design that would help this to work. The charrette led by a facilitator looked at layout, access, parking, landscaping, setting, scale, massing, height, uses, appearance, light, roofs, materials, durability, privacy, and orientation to include energy efficiency. Informed by the design codes, the history of the site, historical drawings, planning policies, the draft Area Conservation Appraisal, market and need site analyses, and the landowner's vision were also utilised. Forty-seven people attended one or more sessions of the charrette and contributed in total 329 hours of work.

To add fun to what could have been a daunting task, the lead facilitator used building blocks made to scale of the Look! St Albans design codes. After the charrette, one attendant wrote to say that he had visited the site again and felt so involved with its future that he would have liked to have helped with designing the interior!

Four different design concepts were developed and voted upon at the report-back session; the clear winner with the highest level of support was Design Concept 1 Oak Tree Gardens. This was worked up into a planning application, which passed through the planning process with very minor changes. Work has now commenced on site and we will soon see our concept plan become a reality. For members of the community to be able to walk past a development that they had been so intimately involved with will be something many will cherish.

WORKING AT A LARGER SCALE

Our second charrette was a different, larger and more challenging masterplanning process. The Partnership – consisting of St Albans City and District Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust and Boulton LDN (owners of the adjoining Maltings shopping centre) asked us to host the charrette. The three-hectare site in the heart of the city centre involves an ensemble of mid-20th century civic buildings, including the locally listed Alban Arena, a large car park, a public



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Our intention was not to stop development, but to set the bar at a level that was acceptable to the whole community, and would prove durable

garden and large swathes of underperforming public realm. To add to the challenges, the site included significant level differences and connected infrastructure networks between some of the partly vacated buildings.

The facilitators gained views, comments and challenges from attendees in various ways including site visits, hands-on drawing and placing scaled building blocks and trees onto site layout plans. One of the facilitators translated the concepts into computerised 3D image, which could be viewed from various perspectives. Two masterplan concepts came forward from which the landowners could take elements for further testing, before bringing them back to the community to work on design details ahead of detailed planning applications.

With the support of St Albans Chamber of Commerce and other local businesses, we were able to leaflet 35,500 premises in addition to our usual stakeholder invitations and general publicity

2-3 The design charrettes facilitated by ImaginePlaces to help the community to find designs that worked well



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to the wider community. On this occasion, 166 people gave more than 1,000 hours of their time, and in a remarkable atmosphere of joint endeavour. We, including The Partnership, and ImaginePlaces, who provided the lead facilitator, were jointly shortlisted by the Royal Town Planning Institute Awards 2017 in the Excellence in Plan Making Practice category.

4 The design charrette process facilitated by ImaginePlaces

For the Museum of St Albans design charrette, we achieved the only Highly Commended Award for Community led Placemaking (Southern England) in the Planning and Placemaking Awards in 2016.

It is important to note that our draft design codes are not adopted policy by St Albans District Council, but that their power lies in the fact they were community led and community endorsed. We have a unique Memorandum of Understanding with our local planning authority which states in essence that they support our methodology and will recommend us to developers at the pre-application stage. It is a process that we would recommend to other communities seeking to achieve greater control over their historic environments. ●

Vanessa Gregory, Chair, Look! St Albans



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Conservation in Milton Keynes

Chris Hooper describes his new role as a conservation officer

My career change from investigating fraud to becoming a conservation officer has been described as a sedate mid-life crisis. With transferable skills and a recent master's degree in Historic Environment Conservation I was lucky enough to be offered a role as a conservation officer in Milton Keynes.

The master's degree had provided hands-on experience of historic materials; knowledge of national guidance and legislation; use of recording; an

1 Bradwell Abbey, site of the Medieval Priory in the heart of Milton Keynes

understanding of significance; and knowledge about the historic environment. In commencing a career as a new conservation officer, it is not necessarily skills therefore that need to be gained but knowledge, which required on-the-job training and, above all else, experience. Why, I am often asked, would you go to work in Milton Keynes? The misconception is that as a New Town Milton Keynes has little to offer by way of history, and therefore few opportunities to gain experience as a new conservation officer.

FIFTY YEARS OF HISTORY

Given that Milton Keynes was first officially designated as a new town in 1967 (and currently celebrating 50 years since its designation) it is fair to say that there has been a vast amount of progressive development within the borough, although only the foolhardy would expect there to have been nothing of historic interest in the area prior to this. In an area which is rapidly expanding, the need for development is paramount. The breadth of variation in heritage assets potentially affected by development in Milton Keynes is considerable. From Roman remains (Magiovinium) to Anglo Saxon mounds (Secklow Mound), the fabulous Bradwell Abbey the historic towns of Stony Stratford, Olney, Newport Pagnell, the historic railway works and workers' homes in industrial Wolverton, and the now famous Bletchley Park, where the wartime cryptographers of GCHQ were based, there is a vast array of historic environments to protect and conserve. Therefore a conservation officer in Milton Keynes can experience the breadth of the historic built environment in the space of a day without leaving the borough.

By way of contrast, there are many historic towns and cities in Britain which have the character and appearance of their built heritage protected by designated conservation areas. Many of these protect areas of significant age, and also hold the character and appearance of that conservation area to a particular period of history. For example, a cathedral city may have predominantly Georgian architecture, using recognised and familiar styles of historic buildings. There, a conservation officer could spend much of his/her working life looking at similar issues and problems, no doubt developing highly specialised knowledge, but for a new conservation officer trying to learn the trade this could be limiting, as the necessary range of skills and experience could be quite narrow.

READING A BUILDING

It is always impressive to stand alongside a more experienced colleague and hear them 'read the building' at what seems like a simple glance. That is, to be able to date different parts of the building and piece together its history, identify the building materials, and the non-sequiturs that may be either significant idiosyncratic features or modern alterations, as these may affect its significance both positively and negatively. The Holmesian skill of both seeing and observing applies in this context, and as the year has passed, my own building reading has improved considerably. The experience of visiting many buildings and other historic environments over many years amounts to a wealth of experience to draw on and, as a new conservation officer, this is both impressive and daunting. The gap in skills in this instance may be filled by firstly visiting as many sites as workloads allow, and secondly not being afraid to ask questions. The answers we seek are not just what is historically significant, but why is it significant. The skill is being able to adequately answer the question of 'so what?' when identifying items of historic significance. This approach then informs any decisions regarding development proposals.

PLANNING HISTORY

In addition to understanding the significance of historic assets, there is also the importance of understanding the recent planning history. The experienced local conservation officers have a rapport with the areas within their remit and knowledge of the timeline of changes to the area and planning regulations;



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particular changes to be aware of have been the designation of conservation areas, and related Article 4 directions.

There are areas where alteration to non-designated historic buildings has taken place prior to the designation of conservation areas, then also prior to the application of a later article 4 direction. This adds to perceived complications when considering applications for alterations to houses within these conservation areas. In order to maintain the character and appearance of conservation areas, any original features must be conserved where possible; however, there is the unfortunate perception that alterations prior to designation serves as precedent for later changes.

Furthermore there are often alterations to buildings in conservation areas which are applied for to reconcile previous inconsistencies; for example 1970s aluminium windows to be replaced with something more sympathetic such as sash windows, albeit in uPVC. The movement towards sympathetic maintenance of the character and appearance of the conservation area relies upon accurate understanding of the area's and buildings' histories.

2 26 High Street, Stony Stratford, a house refronted in 18th century, and formerly the Rose and Crown, the reputed site of Edward V's arrest in 1483.

3 The Grade II listed Crown public house, Stony Stratford. Photograph by Roland Turner via Flickr



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		Significance of Loss				
		Minor 1	In CA 2	Listed 3	Rare 4	Irreplaceable 5
Likelihood of Loss	Unlikely 1	1	2	3	4	5
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	Certain 5	5	10	15	20	25

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LOCAL POLICY

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are, of course, necessary reading in the role of conservation officer. Local policy will vary between local planning authorities (LPAs), but variation from national guidelines will often be minimal. Planning officers rely upon the expert opinion of the conservation officer and must therefore have confidence in any advice given. As a new conservation officer it is therefore vitally important to have full awareness of any nuances of local planning policy and, in particular, where they add to existing national guidance.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT CONSULTATIONS AND PLANNING ISSUES

The response to an application for the consent to alter a listed building should ideally be a dialogue in which the developer

recognises him/herself the significance of a building and its setting. With careful application of cognitive interviewing, conversation management (and other buzzwords), it is usually possible for this process to be painless. Where a proposal is not acceptable and a compromise is not possible, a refusal is required; and much like writing an investigation report for Crown Court, the application response must be able to withstand professional scrutiny. Thankfully, the number of heritage applications that can be accepted, either as they are or by being amended, far outnumber those that must be refused.

ASSESSING BUILDINGS AT RISK

Every local planning authority should have a *Heritage at Risk Register* (HAR). While many do not, or do not regularly maintain it, it was my first project as a conservation officer to review, rationalise, and maintain the HAR register for Milton Keynes. Risk assessment is a fairly universal approach, and though the subject may change, the techniques are transferable. What helped to address one of the key issues in identifying buildings at risk was applying a uniform measure for each of these, and then prioritising the buildings, to ensure that not only the most at-risk buildings were addressed first, but also where the greatest risk of losing significance was present. Therefore, in addition to the Historic England risk scale of A-F, which identifies the risk of structural loss of a historic building, in this case I also applied a scale for prioritising which sites to address first.

The 5 x 5 risk assessment method is used globally and I applied it to assess the risk of heritage loss in failing historic buildings. The skill of identifying the current state and likelihood of further loss of a building is important, but also the additional ability to assess the potential loss of significance allows heritage assets to be prioritised. This ensures that the most significant sites at risk receive the attention that they need to prevent avoidable loss of heritage. Regular review of the HAR register and appropriate assessment ensures that any loss of significance within the borough is minimal.

CONCLUSION

It is key to note that the skills of observation, research, and assessment are transferable; but being able to read a building, gain local knowledge and experience from enthusiastic engagement with colleagues, other conservation officers and bodies, are essential along with continued practice. ●

4–5 The restored Enigma codebreaking huts at Bletchley Park
6 The 5 x 5 risk assessment method used here to assess the risk of heritage loss

Chris Hooper, Conservation Officer, Milton Keynes Council



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Counting our Heritage

Richard Tuffrey reviews the role of the third sector in assessing heritage at risk

These are challenging and arid times in local government. We know that we should be focusing the ever-decreasing resources on key priorities, but are we clear about what these priorities are in the first place?

Insofar as historic buildings (or heritage assets) are concerned, most local authorities in better times carried out a quinquennial stock-take of their condition. This usually involved conservation officers tramping around their districts undertaking a simple assessment and making a photographic record. Although extremely time-consuming, the survey amassed invaluable evidence to give an overview of the state of a locality's heritage and allowed limited resources to be focussed on the most needy cases. However, few authorities these days can resource surveys using their own professional staff and so alternative ways of undertaking them have to be found.

PILOT PROJECT ON NEW APPROACHES

By good fortune, English Heritage (now Historic England) were seeking to address a similar problem when in 2013, they put out a call for pilot projects to look at innovative ways of undertaking building condition surveys of the nation's stock of grade II listed buildings. Applications for funding were invited, and a joint bid from High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council was successful and chosen as one of 14 trial projects.

The accepted standard approach to assessing the condition of historic buildings, be it as part of the national survey or at a local level, involves the use of simple form that looks at the condition of the key building elements – roof, gutters, walls, windows, etc. – as being in one of four categories ranging from good through to very bad condition. The form also takes into account whether the building is fully or partially occupied, or vacant and, via a flow diagram, enables an overall assessment of risk to be arrived at. The final outcome of an assessment is that a building is judged as being: not at risk, low risk, vulnerable or at risk.

Recognising the decline in professional conservation staff, two of the key issues to be addressed by the pilot project were, firstly, whether it was possible to train non-professional volunteers to undertake an assessment which could be trusted; and, secondly, whether sufficient volunteers would come forward to

undertake this work. Since 2008, High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council have been working in a strategic alliance in order to make more effective use of their combined staff resources. At the time of the pilot project in 2013, the alliance's resource of specialist staff consisted of a Conservation Manager and two Conservation Officers. This small team managed nearly 1,300 listed buildings and 46 conservation areas in High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands. These figures excluded the Peak District National Park, which has its own conservation team and which was not part of the pilot project. The geography of both areas is similar and, whilst part of the administrative boundary is contiguous, the project covered two areas separated by land within the National Park. Both areas consisted of small and medium sized towns and villages set within a rural context. The key difference between the two areas was a greater number and a wider spread of listed buildings throughout the rural parts of Staffordshire Moorlands, compared to High Peak where they were concentrated in the towns and villages.

The project required the appointment of a consultant to assist with its administration. Clearly, expertise and an understanding of historic buildings were needed, but the consultants also had to have demonstrable skills in training and capacity building. Fortunately, a local consultancy – Urban Vision North Staffordshire (UVNS) – fitted the bill perfectly. A project team was established involving UVNS and the in-house

1 Leek, Staffordshire, where volunteers undertook building condition surveys



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The project demonstrated that there is an interest and willingness amongst members of the public to become involved



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conservation team with the consultants providing the following services:

- Advertising and writing to the various town and parish councils, civic societies and amenity groups to seek volunteers
- Arranging and delivering the training sessions
- Organising and supervising the allocation of survey areas; and
- Collating the data and preparing the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) report for English Heritage.

Although the call for the projects was made in December 2012, they were subject to a long lead-in given the need for the final details (including the tenders) to be signed-off by English Heritage, so that work did not get underway until May 2013. For internal reasons, English Heritage had set all of its pilot projects an absolute deadline to submit the results and the MoRPHE reports by the end of August. This left a small window in which to carry out the work over the summer months. While the survey period did not prove to be a problem, there was criticism regarding the inadequate time given to the various groups to put forward volunteers.

VOLUNTEERS' INVOLVEMENT

Notwithstanding this, however, the response to the call for volunteers proved a pleasant surprise. The project plan submitted to English Heritage calculated that a minimum of 30 volunteers would be necessary to make the survey work practical, and in the end 41 came forward. The volunteers ranged in terms of their qualifications and experience from a conservation accredited architect through to enthusiasts with no relevant qualifications or experience. Most of the volunteers came from one of the many local amenity societies and parish and town councils.

UVNS arranged three training sessions for the volunteers covering the process to be followed in the project; practical advice on the assessment process including definitions of what was meant by 'poor', 'at risk', etc.; and preferred standardised photographic images (most volunteers used their smart-phones). Each volunteer was also issued with a form of identity and a letter of introduction from the Council to demonstrate their

authenticity. Under the terms of the Council's insurance, volunteers were restricted to carrying out survey work and taking photographs from public highway land only.

The training sessions were also used to allocate survey areas, so that volunteers were issued with lots of 10 properties at a time, and an invitation to come back for more once their initial assessments had been processed and moderated by the project team. They were asked to complete their assessments on paper on site and transfer these to a spreadsheet, which had been pre-populated with details of each of the listed buildings (reference number, address, etc.). Photographs were saved to memory sticks issued at the training sessions.

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The findings of the pilot project proved to be very encouraging:

- The number of volunteers who gladly came forward was greater than expected – particularly given the short notice of the invitations. Fortunately, the weather conditions allowed the surveys to be carried out in comfort, and the project demonstrated that there is an interest and willingness amongst members of the public to become involved.

● Virtually all of the volunteers were able to carry out the assessments with only the short amount of training given. The project team mediated some of the results where 'rogue' standards were being applied, but these were few and far between. The project had deliberately

2–3 Examples of the kind of buildings surveyed
4 The spa town of Buxton, Derbyshire. Photograph courtesy of University of Derby

made the process of recording the results low-tech, but this proved to be unnecessary. With a few exceptions, all of the volunteers had smart phones or digital cameras and so were able to submit the data and photographs digitally as requested. In fact, other projects have piloted the use of pre-loaded tablets so that data can be directly uploaded. The use of tablets is being taken forward by Historic England as its preferred methodology following the pilots.

- Virtually 100 per cent of the buildings in High Peak were successfully surveyed whereas only 50 per cent (approximately) were surveyed in Staffordshire Moorlands reflecting the district's higher numbers and more remote locations.

However, there were some concerns:

- The administration and collation of the data was very time-consuming although tablet-based technology is likely to address this issue in the future;
- Providing high quality training is essential. This project was fortunate in having locally based, well experienced consultants to undertake this;
- It is still an expensive process: the whole project cost approximately £30,000. Whether this could be afforded by small authorities on a regular basis is an important consideration.

CONCLUSION

The use of the volunteers to undertake field survey work is proposed here as an argument against the retention of professional conservation officers for this type of work. However, the reality facing most local authorities is that resources have been stripped back to the absolute minimum, which is unlikely to be reversed in the foreseeable future. Going back to our starting point, the use of the third sector allows survey work to be carried out enabling professional officers to focus on the most needy cases. In the case of High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands, there were few surprises amongst the heritage assets being found to be at risk. It is usually the case that these buildings are well-known to the conservation officers and are at risk for complex reasons. Instead, professional input could be focused on the vulnerable buildings to stem their further deterioration or decline into being 'at risk'.

One of the most significant challenges for any authority using the third sector revolves around the need to manage expectations. Building condition surveys are just a process of taking stock; they do not, in themselves, bring any additional resources. The project team certainly detected an expectation amongst the volunteers that, once surveyed, the issues affecting any vulnerable building would be immediately addressed. Organised feedback in the form of presentations and seminars for the volunteers is necessary to manage this.

Related to the same challenge, another issue concerned role continuity. It was evident that the volunteers, having made the initial investment of their time, would have liked to retain some ongoing involvement, an enthusiasm that would ideally be encouraged rather than be allowed to dwindle. However, buildings at risk surveys have traditionally been carried out only once every five years, which is too long a gap to retain the enthusiasm of the volunteers.

Almost certainly the way around this is to consider the scale of the project and, specifically, whether it would work better as a county-wide project. To demonstrate this point, it is worth looking at the successful project managed by Heritage Lincolnshire and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Here, the scale of the project (Lincolnshire being a large county) and its scope (the assessments extending to listed buildings, archaeological remains, conservation areas, parks and gardens) is such that a continuous programme of works can be organised in phases due to the magnitude of the task.

These issues aside, the overall conclusion from this project, and repeated in most of the other pilot projects, was that there is definitely scope in using the third sector in monitoring the



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condition of heritage assets. In addition to time, volunteers often have a far more detailed knowledge of a locality, including the owners of the heritage assets, at parish level or smaller which can be used to advantage. On the other hand, care needs to be taken to avoid volunteers launching personal campaigns that might frustrate the overriding objectivity of the project. Adequate training is an absolute precondition to give reliable results and, with the low-tech approach of this particular project, the resources needed for the supporting administration and collation of the data should not be underestimated. Training deserves further consideration as to whether through the Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) programmes or another route, this could be provided free of charge. The administration issue is probably easily resolved by the use of mobile tablet technology.

This article has set out some of the practical issues surrounding the potential role of the third sector. A more general benefit to the conservation profession is that the direct involvement of the local community interested and concerned about heritage issues will give a deeper understanding of the context in which the local planning authority operates. ●

5 The Pump Room, Buxton, a Grade II listed building, was on the Buildings at Risk Register, now part of the Buxton Crescent and Thermal Spa restoration project. Image by Rachel Barker Photography

Richard Tuffrey, Regeneration Service, High Peak Borough Council & Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, and Treasurer of the Historic Towns and Villages Forum (HTVF)



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Volunteering and the Heritage Skills Gap

Helen Campbell-Pickford analyses the profile of those who get involved in the historic built environment

In order to gain a better understanding of the role of volunteering in the historic built environment sector, recent research by the Historic Towns and Villages Forum (HTVF) drew upon the experiences of 50 volunteers and managers, including the learning from their work, transferable skills, and how organisations used their knowledge and skills.

We found major differences between early, mid and late career persons, who volunteer for many different reasons, but this article focuses on the tensions between the needs of volunteers and the organisations which employ them – where volunteering is perceived as training for employment. It refers specifically to volunteers in the historic built environment, as their profile differs significantly from other sectors (e.g. working with children, disabled or elderly people, animals, in sports, etc.). Our findings show that if a more diverse range of people are to be engaged in their heritage, both in employment and for leisure, organisations need to rethink how they invest in volunteers, and specifically how to make volunteering more accessible to young people and those of lower socio-economic status.

FROM VOLUNTEERING TO EMPLOYMENT: A NATURAL PROGRESSION?

‘... the assumed relationship between volunteering, employability and employment has been a persistent feature of government rhetoric for at least the last 30 years.’

(Kamerade and Ellis Paine, 2014, p260)

The debate about whether the changing roles of volunteers in the historic built environment is perpetuating or solving the skills gap, is taking place in a complex background, in which volunteering has become a more ambiguous activity than the simple altruism it once was thought to be. With competition for good quality jobs increasing, various kinds of unpaid work including internships, volunteering, work experience and even workfare (compulsory work for those receiving benefits) have muddled the waters between those working without pay, and the organisations – including publicly funded institutions and charities – which benefit from it. With volunteering programmes

funded to increase employability, the UK government survey *Drivers of Volunteering* (2011) recognised that these opportunities have economic value: ‘Volunteering as an altruistic gesture is challenged, with the literature more concerned to recognise and understand that engaging in volunteering often entails an exchange or transaction... the development of transferable skills increasing their employability’.

As such, many of the managers interviewed agreed that opportunities for volunteering should be open to a more inclusive demographic. However, tensions persist between volunteers who want to learn on the job, and organisations who want minimal cost labour, in terms of financial costs, but also time, resources and focus.

A REPRESENTATIVE WORKFORCE?

The 2011 UK Government survey also found that heritage volunteers were more likely than any other group to volunteer in the museum/galleries and libraries sectors and were more likely to be single and without children; a high proportion lived in London and, crucially, they were more likely to agree that they were already able to influence local cultural facilities. Many are also educated to graduate or post-graduate level, although even an MSc in a relevant subject is not a guarantee of paid work, and graduates are expected to do years of volunteering or internships before qualifying for a low starting salary.

The low numbers of young and ethnic minority people and those from the

1 Dover Castle, Kent, managed by English Heritage, uses volunteers for its activities. Photograph by Harshil Shah, via Flickr

regions volunteering in the heritage sector are particularly striking because as Bennett and Parameswaran's survey of youth engagement (2013) found, ethnic minority youths are more likely to volunteer than young white British men; rural youths are more likely to volunteer than urban and, young people from single parent households equally likely to volunteer. The respondents repeatedly emphasised that they were aware of the importance of voluntary work for building networks as well as gaining experience; but what is stopping them?

PERSONAL, ORGANISATIONAL AND STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

Many organisations in the sector, including charities and taxpayer-funded organisations, offer skills development as an inducement to volunteer. As one of the largest 'employers' of volunteers, the National Trust has over 60,000 volunteers doing the equivalent of 1,590 full time jobs and offers training for different roles. English Heritage describes its volunteering roles on its website as 'a great way to gain valuable work-related experience, learn new skills and receive training and support'. Like other organisations, they do not claim that it leads to employment.

Our interviews suggested the reasons why individual factors affected both the opportunities to volunteer and the chance of gaining paid work in the sector. Volunteering, like paid work, favours the single, well educated, well connected and financially secure: organisations are more willing to take on people with the ready skills and aptitudes, than those requiring more training or support (for example, because of physical or mental health problems). Volunteering does not solve problems around childcare, travel from remote locations, or employers' prejudices (Kamerade and Ellis Paine, 2014, p265). Most importantly, it is simply not an option for those who are financially dependent on their full time work, unable to move to where employment is available, or unable to take on the debt required to study for accreditation. A degree of financial flexibility is required to study and to volunteer; and this risk is higher in the sector, where work is not guaranteed even with post-graduate qualifications.

Organisational barriers also discriminate against young people, particularly those from low socio-economic status backgrounds. Time and resource constraints for some interviewees meant that they were reluctant to take on those who needed training, particularly when planning how volunteers would fit into an existing task or team. Administrative time was taken up by induction into health and safety regulations, claiming for travel expenses, food allowances etc. Insurance, additional desk space, and equipment was expensive; one project which required the volunteers to supply their own car and laptop for a building survey in a rural area had to exclude those unable to afford these. A very small number of the managers interviewed expressed concerns that their volunteers took 'more managing than they were worth' or that they would actually lower the quality of work being done; many expressed a desire to employ more young and diverse volunteers. However, their organisations were not structured to turn volunteers into future leaders or ambassadors; they tended to regard training as a cost, not an investment, since unpaid workers were likely to move on. As one interviewee said 'I place the onus on the volunteer to get up to speed. If you want to make a contribution, make it in a way that is usable'.

These personal and organisational barriers to moving from volunteering to employment are heightened by legal barriers. Volunteers are not required to commit to regular hours, making it risky to rely on volunteers to do work to a deadline. However, legislative frameworks also limit the maximum times for work experience and internships, and interns must be paid at least minimum wage. There is considerable government guidance available to employers on how to avoid inadvertently creating a work relationship with volunteers which is akin to employing them formally.



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CHANGING ATTITUDES

Our interviews illustrated the tensions between managers who expressed a strong desire to widen the demographic of volunteers, and the organisational and legal barriers which often prevent them from doing so. Managers understood that more diverse volunteers would give better representation of communities as well as a stronger pool of potential employees, but were reluctant to invest in training. With young people today poorer than previous generations, fewer will be able to work unpaid or take on additional debt with the risk of never securing similarly skilled paid work. The heritage built environment sector needs to consider strategies to widen access to those with the skills to offer, but insufficient financial security to undertake potentially long periods of unpaid work, with little investment in training and limited opportunities to transfer to paid work. ●

Helen Campbell-Pickford, Doctoral Student, St Antony's College, University of Oxford

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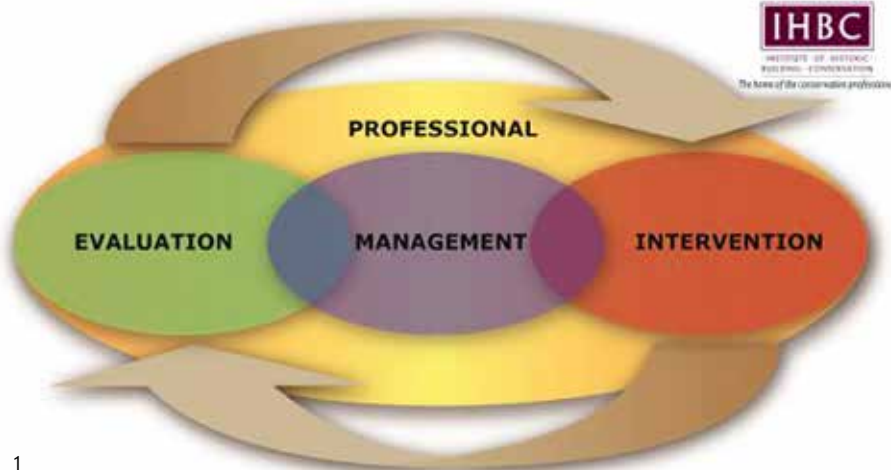
2 Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire

3 Waddesdon Manor, Bucks.

Both sites are managed by the National Trust and have volunteer opportunities. Photographs by A D Teasdale and Jim Bowen, via Flickr

Interdisciplinary Place Care in the 21st Century

Seán O'Reilly reflects on a common approach between conservation and urban design



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Looking at urban design practice from the world of conservation, it is clear that both value interdisciplinary skills in helping to secure the care, management and development of places. That focus on innate interdisciplinary skills make both conservation and urban design stand out from other traditional built environment disciplines such as architecture, engineering, planning or surveying. Reflecting this, perhaps unconsciously, in England's local planning services, officers' roles in both conservation and urban design are often integrated. While each approach has its own priorities and skills sets, support and advocacy for the distinctly interdisciplinary nature of conservation practice also suggests opportunities for urban design.

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATION

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), the UK's professional body for built and historic environment conservation specialists, is fortunate in that through the designations of historic fabric and conservation areas, conservation has a core regulatory planning infrastructure that specifically supports its aims. A statutorily-supported body of specialist local and central government officers is tasked with delivering that legislative framework. Many officers come from diverse backgrounds – history, architecture, planning, surveying, engineering, archaeology and more – which embeds an interdisciplinary approach.

The conservation sector also has an externally validated core statement that specifies its interdisciplinary foundations: the *ICOMOS Guidelines on Education and Training in the Conservation of Monuments, Ensembles and Sites*, or the Guidelines (ICOMOS 1993). This document is a widely-recognised statement on conservation skills that defines conservation as an 'interdisciplinary activity' due to the need for 'a holistic approach to our heritage'.

Focused first on conservation skills, but reflecting also concomitant processes and practices, the ICOMOS Guidelines report is a global standard and specification in built and historic environment conservation. As such, it serves as the critical bar that distinguishes the conservation practices that it demands

from others, and sets out a vision of conservation practice as distinct from both generic heritage operations (with which conservation is often confused such as history, archaeology or heritage management) as well as from mainstream built environment activities, which may be about the built and historic environment, but lack conservation-specific priorities and skills.

The impact of the ICOMOS Guidelines cannot be underestimated. For example, it serves as the baseline pre-condition for discussions in England on the specification of relevant, credible conservation accreditation in the planning process. The Guidelines underpin the evolving regulatory standard for specialist built and historic environment practice, especially for the heritage consent processes.

This respect for the Guidelines is not new; it is the outcome of a long-standing legacy of engagement with their contents and values. The Guidelines has been the core standard for conservation accreditation since the 1990s. It remains fundamental to the work of the built environment link body, the Council on Training in Architectural Conservation (COTAC), and is the baseline for the IHBC's specification of conservation skills and competencies (IHBC 2008).

Following this experience, urban design practice could reap corresponding benefits from a prominent, ideally international, statement on its skills needs and priorities, and their rationale. However there are more lessons to be learned from the conservation experience.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

For example, the Guidelines has serious limitations; its portrayal of interdisciplinary conservation skills envisages the skills set operating only in one of two ways: as an add-on skill for an individual with conservation accreditation in a specific, traditional discipline, or within an interdisciplinary team of distinct disciplines, with team-members' skills supported by personal accreditation.

Unfortunately, that is not how the IHBC operates its accreditation. In its Full Member accreditation, the IHBC formally assesses interdisciplinary skills in an individual, as a specialist and professional qualification in its own right. Therefore

1 The IHBC's Conservation Cycle of Areas of Competence

the accreditation offers an entirely distinct and autonomous level of quality assurance on individual competence in interdisciplinary practice, one that we see as uniquely appropriate to the complex processes of 21st century priorities.

In contrast, the ICOMOS Guidelines presents interdisciplinary skills as an extension of a practitioner's core skills, calling the practitioner a 'conservationist', suggesting more a predilection than a set of skills. It does not recognise that interdisciplinary skills are also achieved and used where a specialist is personally trained, skilled and quality-assured in a whole range of interdisciplinary practices to deliver conservation. Though its historical context helps to appreciate the reasons for these limitations, the Guidelines has also served as a barrier to the understanding of interdisciplinary skills in an individual practitioner.

While recognising both the potential and limitations of statements such as the ICOMOS Guidelines, successful advocacy for interdisciplinary skills remains challenging. For example, government bureaucracies find it challenging to understand organisations that focus not within the traditional boxes of the government departments, but across them. Central to such advocacy is the detailed specification of the requisite interdisciplinary skills, and in that context urban designers can review the models and criteria in the IHBC's conservation accreditation.

CONSERVATION CYCLE

For the IHBC, the starting point for defining skills is our model Conservation Cycle (IHBC 2016-7), where we use the Cycle as a model for why our members need the skills we test them on. It

identifies Areas of Competence, and we test applicants for conservation competence in their primary area of practice, say in design if they are architects. But we also test for competence in areas of practice critical to conservation outcomes, say in history and research for that same architect. In this way, we can be confident that their work is suitably informed by factors that shape conservation both within and beyond their main area of practice. If successful this leads to accreditation as an 'interdisciplinary practitioner' in conservation.

Our Conservation Cycle is indebted to the ICOMOS Guidelines. The diagram for the Cycle envisages a conservation process unified by the overarching professional skills – the Professional Area of Competence – of the specialist conservation practitioner. These skills encompass both the philosophical and environmental justification for conservation and its practice, as informed by ordinary professional standards, which is especially important when heritage activities can have so many derogatory associations.

The different practical areas of competence – Evaluation, Management and Intervention – are generic equivalents to practice areas for traditional disciplines, for example History (Evaluation), Planning (Management) and Architecture (Intervention). Our Conservation Cycle is fundamental to all of the IHBC's diverse operations supporting the practice standards and ambitions of our members. This includes determining and regulating practice standards, sector advocacy, advice and public relations, as well as managing professional disciplinary issues and offering support, guidance and events to access to the discipline, as well as to underpin continuing personal development (CPD).

CONSERVATION PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

Without a more substantial statement on practice, however, the credibility of our processes and models are perilously reliant on the goodwill of those outside the organisation to take the time to interrogate them seriously. The IHBC's most important step to-date in advancing the cause of interdisciplinary conservation practice is the recent production of the jointly written Conservation Professional Practice Principles (HTVF, IHBC, Civic Voice 2017). This is a core statement on how interdisciplinary conservation practice is embedded in the delivery of successful built and historic environment conservation outcomes.



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The ambition for the joint publication is to both complement and offer balance to other principles, standards and practice guides, such as Conservation Principles by Historic England, British Standard BS 7913 *Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings* (2013), as well as the former Historic Scotland's Memorandum of Guidance (1998), and England's superseded but still well-regarded Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 *Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994).

For the IHBC too, the new document serves also as an overarching link to the our more detailed and targeted practice guidance and support, such as our Research and Guidance Notes, available on our developing online Toolbox, as well as more substantial statements on policy in publications and embedded in our consultations on heritage values, design, retrofit and local authority capacity.

As well as serving as a core document for future initiatives, *Practice Principles* is intended to help members understand skills needs in line with our membership criteria and regulatory standards. This is an area that is particularly relevant to complex service delivery scenarios typical of the private sector than our more familiar regulatory, public sector interests.

With these contexts, tools, services and backgrounds the IHBC hopes to keep flying the flag for the unique benefits of interdisciplinary practice in the 21st century. Perhaps we can look to urban designers to add their considerable weight to make the uncommon idea of interdisciplinary practice just a little more familiar to the world around us. ●

Dr Seán O'Reilly, Director, IHBC
All of the papers and sources can be found through links on the IHBC's Toolbox at <http://ihbconline.co.uk/toolbox/>

2 The newly published *Conservation Professional Practice Principles* guide



Conservation Professional Practice Principles

Dave Chetwyn explains the scope of new guidance

The nature of conservation professional practice has been a matter for much debate and some misunderstanding over the past decade or so. At one end of the spectrum, professional practice is perceived as being focused on understanding significance and on the technical aspects of conservation. However, for many built environment and placemaking professionals, it is about finding practical solutions and balancing a wide range of social, economic, environmental issues within various legislative frameworks (including planning, building, highways, health and other regulatory regimes). This needs to be done within finite capital and revenue budgets.

A new guide, *Conservation Professional Practice Principles*, focuses on the placemaking perspective of conservation professional practice. The guide has been prepared jointly by the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), Historic Towns and Villages Forum (HTVF) and Civic Voice, with financial support from the Herbert Lane Trust. The membership of these bodies is diverse and this is reflected in the content of the guide. The IHBC is a multi-disciplinary professional body, with members from all sectors and the private sector as its largest group. The HTVF has a very diverse membership, from large-scale developers and private consultancies to local authorities and local community groups. Civic Voice is a membership umbrella body for civic societies. The target audience is therefore wide and includes built environment students, professional practitioners (already involved in conservation or considering specialisation), civic society members, developers, consultants, building owners,

heritage national bodies, conservation courses, and more.

SPECIALIST AND MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

The guide recognises the multi-disciplinary nature of conservation professional practice, requiring specialisation from a range of professions, including planners, architects and surveyors. The activities undertaken by conservation professionals are diverse, from providing technical advice and statutory applications to undertaking feasibility studies and preparing business plans. Other tasks include design works, dealing with grants, policy writing, designations, defining special interest (significance), compiling evidence, repair specifications, project management, technical statements, masterplanning and numerous other activities.

The need to understand the scope of particular professional disciplines and to identify the mix of skills required for each project is identified as a key element of professionalism. This challenges those that would seek to present heritage conservation as a generic profession.

The importance of community and stakeholder engagement is highlighted as an essential part of managing of historic places. This includes early stage engagement to identify issues, views and relevant information. But it also involves local people and stakeholders in looking at options and finding solutions. Later consultation can then test planning policies, project proposals, masterplans and other proposals. Too often it is only the

1 Parkhill, Sheffield, a Grade II* listed building, regenerated and reopened for residents

later consultation that takes place. Highlighting the importance of early engagement and more participatory approaches is therefore important, and can help to avoid delays and additional costs.

RECONCILING VALUES OF HERITAGE

A fundamental part of the approach in the guidance is the need to reconcile values. Many owners and occupiers of heritage are interested primarily in the utility value or investment value of building assets. The guide explains how one of the key challenges for specialist conservation and heritage professionals is to find solutions that reconcile heritage values with the need for places and buildings to adapt to be functional, convenient, and genuinely sustainable. For example, offering an appropriate quality of accommodation for those that own, occupy or use heritage properties is important in securing economically viable uses, essential for their survival.

This applies to all uses, from residents to business and leisure users. Heritage protection is based on cultural value (or special interest or significance). But heritage areas and buildings also have a wider value to economic development, local community activities and in terms of wider environmental and sustainability goals.

These social, economic and environmental values of heritage are described in the document. For example, historic areas that have undergone commercial or industrial decline can often become transitional areas, supporting new enterprise and small businesses. Conservation also supports skilled craft-based employment. Many historic areas have intrinsically sustainable characteristics, including good pedestrian permeability, a fine grain of mixed use and high-density party wall construction.

In terms of defining significance or special interest, the key aspects are identified as:

- Design movements and theories
- Townscape, landscape and spatial characteristics
- Technology, materials, fabric and features
- Associations
- Completeness and scarcity.

The document avoids the problem of focusing on a building and places equal emphasis on townscape. An important component in understanding the special interest of urban areas is in understanding townscape and the spatial characteristics of streets, spaces and the public realm. This includes enclosure and the definition of streets and spaces by buildings, and other features as well as key public spaces and other townscape features. Therefore the spatial characteristics of streets, spaces and the public realm are recognised as an important part of historic character.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Professional practice is about making balanced judgments, finding creative solutions, negotiating and compromising in order to find optimum outcomes for heritage assets. The factors that need to be considered are described as including:

- Conservation philosophy
- Heritage values
- Utility value
- Social, economic and environmental considerations
- Legislative and policy frameworks
- Urban and architectural design matters
- Community and stakeholder knowledge.

Thus balanced judgments must be made against a wide context, and there is a challenge in reconciling the cultural and other values of heritage against a complex local context, whilst complying with different legislative frameworks.

The guide also warns against a narrow focus, for example on special interests or significance in isolation, which can lead to inappropriate, intransigent and unrealistic plans, projections or



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decisions. Focusing only on the heritage significance of fabric can lead to poor quality and unsustainable decisions because it considers only a small part of a complex process. In some instances this can lead to heritage assets becoming non-viable, threatening their survival. Fundamental to this is the recognition that change created the historic environments and that change is an essential part of managing and developing those environments.

Conservation is recognised as a complex and creative activity, based on finding solutions to conserving historic buildings and places and meeting their full potential. Thus, the guide sets out a real world and proactive approach to conservation. Heritage is not just about cultural values based on the past, but is part of the infrastructure of modern society.

CONCLUSIONS

In practice, heritage is often approached as an integral part of wider placemaking and planning activities. For example, many neighbourhood plans include heritage policies, but as part of a wider strategy to achieve sustainable development and growth. This is a healthy approach, ensuring that heritage is not consigned to a cultural silo.

For conservation to be perceived as a positive activity and to maintain public and political support, it needs to recognise the wider values of heritage and offer creative and constructive solutions. This is at the heart of professional practice. ●

2 De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea, a Grade I listed building, which has been successfully restored

Dave Chetwyn, Managing Director, Urban Vision Enterprise CIC and D2H Land, Planning, Development Ltd



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Managing Contemporary and Historic Development and Design

Louise Thomas describes Oxford's approach to its architectural heritage

As a city known for its dreaming spires and world-famous historic architecture, Oxford is also home to a remarkable collection of innovative and exciting contemporary buildings, which sit juxtapositioned with this heritage. The long tradition of wealthy alumni or patrons giving large endowments for new centres of learning has led to a very positive attitude amongst both clients and the local planning authority towards the city's future vision in the light of its significant heritage. Unlike many other renowned cities, Oxford's city centre is not a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and so makes an ideal case study in managing change, as each proposal is a new opportunity to examine what is judged to be appropriate. At a recent Historic Towns and Villages Forum (HTVF) event at Kellogg College in Oxford, this approach to managing contemporary design was explored through a walking tour and seminar on an area in the city centre.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

Led by Professor Steven Parissien, architectural historian and director of Compton Verney Art gallery and Park, delegates saw Oxford University's landmarks as well as the grain and character of the ordinary surrounding neighbourhood streets. The predominant form in many college buildings is based on private quadrangles, and many famous architectural street scenes (Broad Street, St Giles, Turl Street, etc.) were in fact designed to look considerably older than they are, as college dons (the then clients) favoured more medieval building styles well into the 18th century.

Highlights on the walking tour included the Middle East Centre (Investcorp Building) at St Antony's College designed by

1 The Middle East Centre (Investcorp Building) at St Antony's College designed by Zaha Hadid Architects (2015)

Zaha Hadid Architects (2015), which in the discussions throughout the day found favour with both the speakers and delegates, as it was seen to 'do no harm' to its surroundings, but not how it joined the neighbouring buildings. The Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, once the site of the city's Radcliffe Infirmary, is a large, and hence rare, piece of developable land for which the University originally appointed Rafael Viñoly Architects to produce a master plan (2008), later revised by Niall McLaughlin. It is currently only partly developed with Viñoly's Mathematical Institute (2013) and the controversial Blavatnik School of Government by Herzog & de Meuron (2016). The masterplan itself is in fact a set of policies governing the use of basements, limiting storey heights in key areas, the general location of entrances and access, circulation, views and relationships to the adjacent listed buildings. It encompasses the nature of the development management processes with the City Council.

URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

As the aim of the HTVF seminar was to explore design principles for contemporary development in an historic setting, Louise Thomas introduced the seminar by explaining why the view from the street is so important. Oxford in particular has a great deal of inaccessible private realm, and the city is home to many people who rarely have an opportunity to experience the buildings and spaces that make it up. The experience from the public realm should therefore be valued just as much as the architecture of the buildings from the inside, or more.

She summed up the key urban design principles for new development in historic settings as:

- **Recognising the roles of both the special and ordinary:** this is very pertinent in a city of landmarks and burgeoning with named legacy buildings. Understanding the hierarchy of streets, spaces, and buildings as part of a town's urban fabric, is key to whether developments work well in their setting or compete with their neighbours. The design and location of the Blavatnik School of Government sparked debates throughout the day, as the combination of its scale, massing and materials were seen as both a missed opportunity for a 21st century contribution to Oxford's skyline, as well as creating an eyesore on the neighbourhood shopping street of Walton Street.

- **Including active frontages:** this conveys attitudes to the street and the wider public in it. While most examples visited allowed a good inside-outside relationship to take place and an understanding of a building's use, there were conspicuous blank walls presented to prominent

city streets, as though the public realm is not important once people have entered a college.

● **Places, not just spaces:** with the generous land holdings of most Oxford colleges, the public realm and how it is intended to be used is important. The design of the Blavatnik School was again an example of creating an ambiguous, but nonetheless large public space with no clear purpose yet.

● **Logical scale and massing:** as evident in the design of most historic buildings, proportions can reflect both the human scale and make grand statements, as Daniel Robertson's 1828 Oxford University Press building demonstrates. The scale of buildings, not just their height, determines what makes streets alongside them welcoming and attractive, or bleak environments.

● **Contrast or empathy:** many ideal examples visited on the walking tour were either very contrasting responses to the historic context, or sought to copy, reflect or complement their surroundings. Interestingly these principles also marked the difference between developments that were noteworthy for either approach, and those that could inexplicably 'be designed for anywhere'.

● **Patterns/ Articulation:** in a similar way, how new developments respond to great landmarks, especially those known for their materials, colours and patterns, sparked debates about appropriateness. The design relationship between William Butterfield's 1882 ornate Keble College and the new Beecroft Physics Centre by Hawkins Brown which is alongside and nearing completion, was hard to understand as the latter was seen to be bland, not worthy of its key position and a poor response to the richness of Butterfield's brickwork.

● **Texture:** Oxford's many brutalist concrete buildings are perhaps forgiven their bulk and greyness for their fascinating textures and grain. Other examples like Rick Mather Architects' ARCO building (1995) demonstrated the significance of the pedestrian experience as a valuable design principle.

PLANNING APPROACHES AND TOOLS

Highlights from the other expert speakers included Oxford's former Head of City Development, Michael Crofton-Briggs on how town planning is managed in this ever-changing historic city. The main conservation principles are established in the NPPF (paragraphs 128-137), Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2, and the Local Plan. Other tools included the Oxford Heritage Plan, View Cones Study, Tool kit and Conservation Area Appraisals, context analysis, verified views, and advice from Oxford Design Review Panel.

Michael also looked at the design of the long-awaited new Westgate Shopping Centre, which is due for completion in October 2017. Both the long-distance views and close-up experience will be important as it represents a large amount of floorspace broken down into three urban blocks. He summarised the planning approach as being analysis, assessment and decision-making, with the City Council's added strategy of engagement, assessment and communication, so that the needs and motivations of applicants are understood and the wider community are given plenty of opportunities to get involved too.

Architect Alan Berman, who has designed many buildings in Oxford, spoke about the effectiveness of the design review panel process in helping to refine design, and the need for architects to understand context far better. Comparing the Blavatnik School with Foster's Carre d'Art in Nimes, he described how the latter meets the street gently with a series of steps and a generous awning, rather than hitting the ground too hard.

Christina Duckett, an architect and conservation officer at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, spoke about the significance of professional judgement, alongside useful policies and practical toolkits, to assess the appropriateness of new development in historic settings. She raised the need to pursue design quality in any circumstance, rather than taking a NIMBY attitude, especially when dealing with housing growth in historic settlements or new retail schemes. She recommended



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deconstructing a place to identify the key qualities which determine its character and to inform the design of interventions. This applies to the settlement scale through to buildings and parking arrangements, and is endorsed by the *Building in Context Toolkit* (www.building-in-context.org) for engaging communities successfully.

Concluding the afternoon seminar, Debbie Dance of Oxford Preservation Trust argued that the city needs to continue to be beautiful and for the benefit of all its inhabitants – town and gown. Having the ambition to recognise opportunities for exceptional design sits alongside careful consideration of impact when assessing change, so that poor decision-making does not destroy assets, nor downplay the significance of what can be delivered. The Trust's work is as much about architecture, as it is about settlements in the landscape, views, scrutinising new planning policies, and the management of the city's diverse built and natural heritage.

As the event was so well attended, the Historic Towns and Village Forum is planning similar seminars to examine issues around housing design quality, managing change in historic contexts, and supporting historic high streets in the 21st century. ●

Louise Thomas, Director, Historic Towns and Village Forum

2 The controversial Blavatnik School of Government by Herzog & de Meuron (2016)
3 The new Beecroft Physics Centre by Hawkins Brown (2017) adjacent to William Butterfield's 1882 Keble College

Regeneration and Traditional Building Skills

Oluwaseun Soyemi describes the Heritage Lottery Fund's approach to embedding skills training in their work

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was established in 1994 to allocate money raised through the National Lottery to heritage projects that will have a lasting impact on people and places. It is the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, and because funding comes from National Lottery players, it strives to ensure that funds are distributed to achieve the widest possible benefits for the widest possible audience.

To-date over a third of HLF funding (£2.8bn out of a total of £7.6bn) has gone towards the historic built environment. The support for the historic built environment includes developing the capacity of the sector through apprenticeships, bursaries and other skills development initiatives. Projects are encouraged which embed training opportunities within their capital repair programmes or develop stand-alone initiatives.

SKILLS AS OUTCOMES

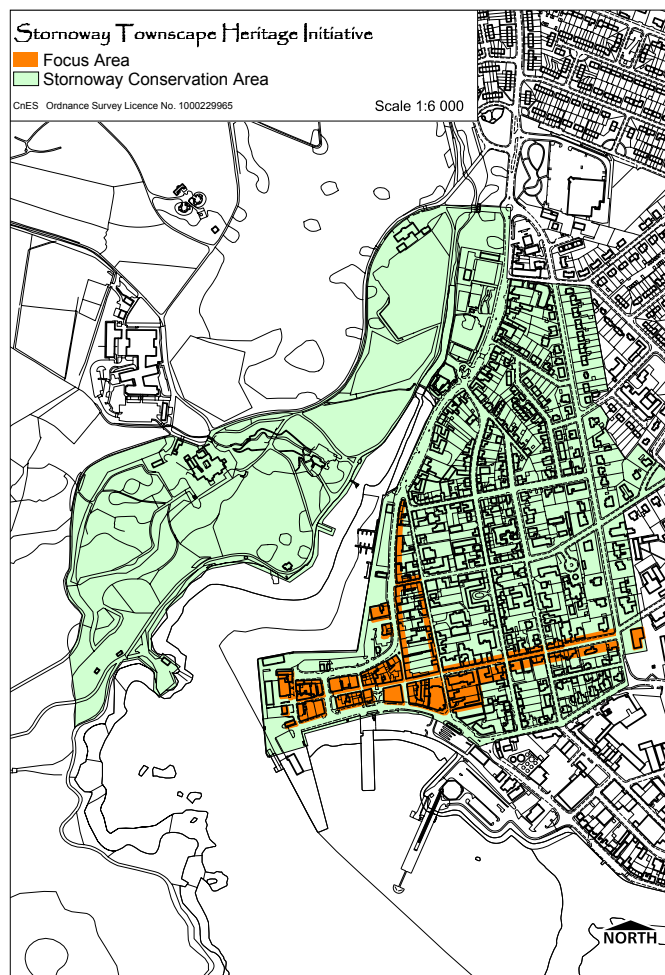
In July 2012, the HLF published its current strategy (Strategic Framework 4) which sets out a new outcomes framework to help the sector to articulate more clearly the difference that projects will make and to inform funding decisions better. One of the 14 outcomes in this framework directly relates to skills: 'with our investment people will have developed skills'. This commitment to skills development and specifically within the historic environment, is demonstrated by the weighted status that it is given in the three funding programmes – Townscape Heritage, Heritage Enterprise and Heritage Grants – through which it supports area-based projects. And while achieving a weighted outcome by itself does not guarantee that a scheme will receive HLF support, it is a clear indication that it values the skills outcome highly.

The HLF approach to area-based regeneration is best demonstrated through the Townscape Heritage funding programme. We ask that schemes are informed by a detailed understanding of the area's significance and how this has evolved over time. Knowledge of the special qualities that make a place unique and help to create its distinctive character and identity, should then be used to determine how best to intervene to regenerate and re-enliven the place. However, this understanding should not be limited to the physical fabric; it must extend into the demographics of the place and the prevailing social and economic conditions. Only then can a complete picture be developed, and only then can regeneration be approached in a sustainable way that responds to the needs of the community.

This means, for example, that an area that suffers from higher than average unemployment with a sizeable youth population might consider developing a partnership with a local training college to develop a work placement initiative in collaboration with the contractors appointed to deliver the repair programme. Sustainable regeneration requires actively engaging the community at every opportunity so that it feels it owns the place, that it can become invested in its future and that it can become a better place to live and work.

STORNOWAY TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE

IN 2004 the Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar (the local authority for the Western Isles) aimed to restore key buildings and revitalise an Outstanding Conservation Area in the heart of Stornoway, on the Isle of Lewis. By pulling together funding from the council



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and Historic Scotland, working in partnership with local community groups, and with support of a grant of £1,225,000 from HLF, the scheme helped to retain and reveal the dominant Victorian character of the heart of Stornoway, which is the main commercial centre for Lewis and Harris and the gateway to the Western Isles. This was achieved by carrying out repair and restoration of landmark buildings such as the Town Hall, removing unsympathetic features, improving the public realm and bringing buildings back into use, alongside training initiatives and community engagement activities.

Heritage focused construction training provided young people with a range of skills including the use of lime mortar, the construction of sash and case windows and the creation of decorative plasterwork. Local schools, businesses and community groups learnt about

2 The Townscape Heritage Initiative map for Stornoway

the importance of Stornoway's built heritage through a series of events, talks and lectures. As a result, there is an improved awareness of the historic value of Stornoway's Outstanding Conservation Area.

TRADITIONAL BUILDING SKILLS

Embedding traditional building craft skills training into a scheme that seeks to regenerate the local historic built environment seems logical, perhaps obvious. These types of projects are often responding to market failure and limited local authority finances, conditions that go hand-in-hand with a depressed socio-economic environment. Local people, who lack the skills that would make them employable, are provided with new skills to help to improve their built environment, and thus achieve the dual impact of pride in themselves and pride in their place.

Research into our Townscape Heritage programme has shown that schemes have a greater chance of success where they are embedded within wider regeneration strategies, and where they are demonstrably part of a bigger area renewal plan. This has the added benefit of helping to ensure that skills gained can be sustained through potential demand from future regeneration schemes. Furthermore, these craft skills will continue to be needed in order to deliver the regular maintenance required to preserve buildings repaired through the Townscape Heritage scheme.

However, beyond the local context and the success of individual schemes, there is indeed a shortage of traditional building craft skills. We know from the *Skills Needs Analysis 2013* research commissioned by Historic England, Historic Scotland and the Construction Industry Training Board, and from the *Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage Skills Survey* in 2015, that there continues to be a skills gap in the traditional building conservation sub-sector. Although the number of accredited conservation professionals increased by 2,200 between 2008 and 2013 and the trend has remained steady, it remains low in relation to the estimated six million traditional pre-1919 buildings in England and Scotland. This adds credence to the statement in April 2017 by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) highlighting the risks to the historic built environment due to the shortage of specialist building craft skills.

The HLF Skills for the Future funding programme is a strategic response to the broader issue of the skills deficit within the heritage sector. Funding is provided for paid work-based training placements to improve and diversify the workforce. One such project funded through the programme was *Building on the Past* in Lincoln, delivered by Lincolnshire County Council.

BUILDING ON THE PAST IN LINCOLNSHIRE

In 2010, with the help of a £475,000 HLF grant, this project aimed to increase the number and diversity of people with skills in stonemasonry, joinery, lead work and glazing, and to enhance awareness of these skills in the local community. Training was delivered through 18-month work-based traineeships, with bursary and mentor support to achieve the NVQ Level 3 Heritage Skills qualification. The scheme also sought to attract people who are currently under-represented in this workforce such as women, people from black and ethnic minority communities, and people with disabilities. Sixteen trainees were recruited including four women and one individual with dyslexia. Based at the Lincoln Cathedral Works Department, trainees undertook work-based training at the Cathedral and other sites in Lincoln. More than three quarters of the cohort achieved either the NVQ3 qualification or had gained relevant employment by the conclusion of their apprenticeship. In addition over 200 people, from volunteers to home owners, participated in 67 taster courses in ten craft skill categories ranging from lime mortar use to working with stained glass.

There clearly remains some way to go to meet the skills gap in the traditional buildings sub-sector. While HLF funding alone is unlikely to achieve the goal of meeting the skills gap, its



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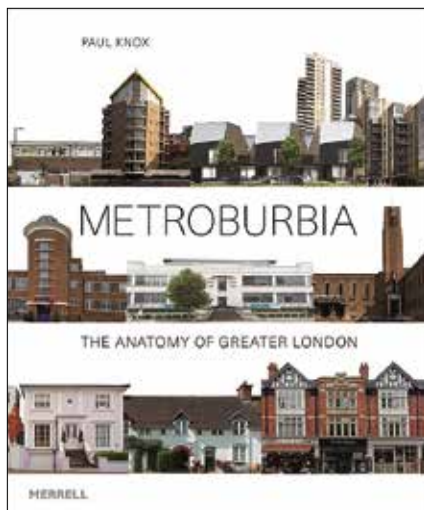


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approach of encouraging training to be embedded in area-based regeneration schemes, alongside targeted strategic funding interventions such as the Skills for the Future programme, is making a difference. ●

Oluwaseun Soyemi, Policy Advisor, Heritage Lottery Fund
See www.hlf.org.uk if you have an idea for a skills focused project

2 Stornoway Town Hall after restoration. Photograph by Hayden Blackly via Flickr
3 A trainee developing stonework skills



Metroburbia: The Anatomy of Greater London

Paul L. Knox, Merrell, 2017,
ISBN 978-1858946511

This coffee table book about London's suburbs and their development contains many photographs of buildings – without people or cars – annotated by lengthy but hard-to-read captions. It is structured into place-based sections, but there are only four maps apart from a few historic neighbourhood plans.

This American author, who has written extensively about American suburbs, conceives London as seven radial sectors. Three are narrow strips along the Thames East and West and the Lea Valley; the other four are spaces in-between. His divides are not dissimilar to the key diagram in the latest London Plan. The fourth (undated) map represents London's built up area. Yet none are able to convey the grain and diverse characters of London's suburbs, nor explain the massive interventions in more recent times, and why and how they have transformed specific areas.

Knox describes five historic layers of development. They start with pre-modern times and distinguish between the Victorian-Edwardian period, interwar suburbanisation and 'automobility', welfare state and everyday Modernism, and end with the neo-liberal counter-reformation from 1979. The chapters on the 19th century up to the Second World War have many historic details, including the key protagonists instrumental in London's rapid and often unfettered development. His emphasis is on architectural style rather than on the neighbourhoods and their people, which would say more about Greater London's anatomy.

The post-war chapters contain many inaccurate statements which are not referenced (e.g. 40 per cent annual house price inflation in London) or not quite accurate (e.g. Britain – instead of UK – acceded to the EEC), leads one to query the veracity of other statements. In reality, the unsatisfactory physical conditions of many social housing

estates in today's London suburbs are due to many reasons. What their inhabitants have in common is the threat of displacement to make way for wholesale reconstruction at much higher densities – with little, if any, low income housing – thus reinforcing London's already stark social polarisation. Neither the Battersea Power Station redevelopment nor White City, or Old Oak Common, Barking Creek and others are shown, let alone regeneration projects around stations and along new public transport corridors.

Perhaps his selections correspond to ideals about American suburbia, a green world remote from congestion and the squalor of city centres – a far cry from London's suburbs. ●

Judith Ryser

Shanghai Street Design Guidelines

Shanghai Planning and Land Resource Administration Bureau et al, Tongji University Press, 2016, Available for £12 from www.bookschina.com/7339427.htm

Cities need high quality street environments and public spaces that are not dominated by moving and parked vehicles. *Manual for Streets* (2007) and the New York-based National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) are two key street design guides. This well-produced and lavishly illustrated guide may not be easy to procure, but it is well worth the effort.

The full title includes 'humanised street shaping', and the language in the translation is more endearing than usually found in publications. For example, well-designed streets should 'promote friendship', while buildings along the street should satisfy 'the visual experience while walking'.

In the Roads to Streets chapter, accommodating vehicles is not be the sole objective, and the guide attempts to



reconcile old and new ways of thinking by correlating road classifications (expressway, artery, sub artery, etc.) with street type classifications (commercial street, living and service street, landscape and leisure street, etc.), illustrated with an interesting matrix of photo examples. It rightly argues that classifications do not have to be continuous (as I showed in the *Devon Traffic Calming Guidelines* in 1991), thus providing more scope for variations.

It states that the shift away from motor domination requires 'more delicate, user friendly and intelligent planning, design and management' to encourage streets that are 'safe, green, vibrant and smart'. A chapter is devoted to each.

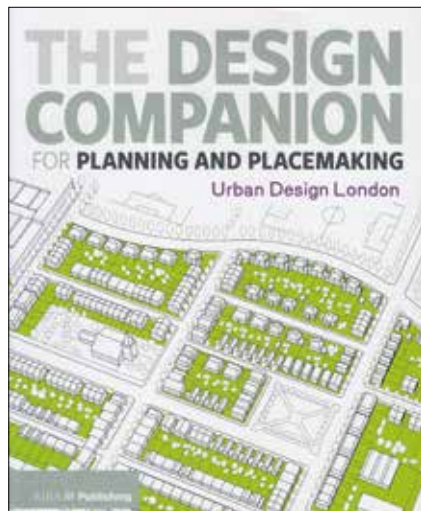
There are many examples of entirely new neighbourhoods and settlements, from which a selection of masterplans and figure-ground illustrations are shown.

Other themes include landscaping, design and use of (behind the brass strip) private street space, corners and crossings. Most topics are covered, from lighting and landscaping, to bus stops with bicycle bypasses. A new element (to me at least) is the inclusion of advice on how to integrate the facilities and equipment associated with smart technology, such as electric charging points, solar panels, and information screens.

More attention could have been given to public transport streets, and the design of junctions, always a point of conflict between users, and (perhaps deliberately) neglected are Chinese electric scooters. These sell better than cars, can travel at speed, and yet are tolerated in cycle lanes and pedestrian areas, posing a traffic safety and design challenge that is not addressed.

The relevance of this guide for a British audience is surprising, and it is an immensely interesting and enjoyable document.. ●

Tim Pharoah, transport and urban planning consultant



The Design Companion for Planning and Placemaking

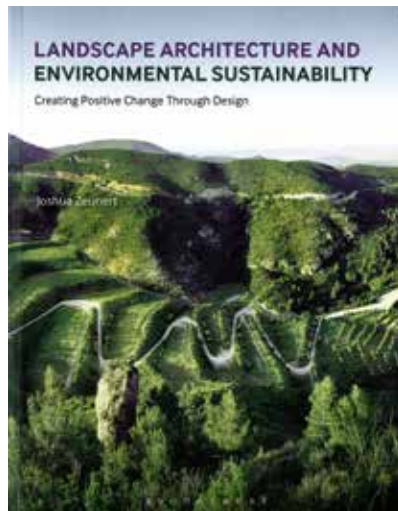
Urban Design London,
RIBA Publishing, 2017,
ISBN 978-1-85946-748-0

Since the demise of CABE in its original incarnation, the urban design world has been missing its publications and in particular, waiting for an update of the invaluable *By Design*. Esther Kurland and her team at Urban Design London have now picked up the challenge and produced the *Design Companion*, which fulfils a similar role to CABE's original guide but geared towards the London context, and acknowledging the new policy environment of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) and current preoccupations. It is intended to help planners to deal with design matters. Having run very many workshops for its potential readers, the authors know what their needs and concerns are, and respond accordingly.

The first part of the book starts with definitions of design, the elements of development (layout, scale, density, etc.) and what makes a good place. It then covers legislation and the processes of planning and design, including who is involved and how to read plans and other drawings. It therefore combines some theory with very practical issues that will resonate with local authority planners. The language is jargon-free and concepts are explained simply: 'Density is the amount of development on a given piece of land' (p37). This is followed by different ways of measuring density and what they mean.

The second part of the book deals with specific topics, from small-scale to town extensions, from tall buildings to environmental issues, from housing to small scale development, from streets to public spaces and more. It does this in a practical and applied manner; for instance there is a section on Negotiating Tall Buildings Proposals, followed by another on Assessing a Scheme.

In every chapter of the book there are



'items to consider'; the text does not say that one scheme is better than another, but how to look at the issues involved. 'Consider' is a very clever and gentle way to guide those who will use the book. Equally useful are the references to the NPPF whenever they are relevant.

The book is generously illustrated which makes it easy to read and clarifies points made in the text. It is a pity though that the location of many of the photographs is not identified. The only other gripe, addressed to the publisher, is that proof reading budget seems to have been slashed; this is surprising as my own experience with RIBA publishing is that they were exceptionally careful in ensuring the quality of their product. ●

Sebastian Loew

Landscape Architecture and Environmental Sustainability, Creating Positive Change Through Design

Joshua Zeunert, Bloomsbury
Publishing, 2017,
ISBN 978-1-4725-9062-6

This very attractive book explores the role of landscape architecture in multi-dimensional sustainability. The author adopts a practical approach using projects and initiatives with project summaries, quotes and interviews with nine key figures to explore the themes. By the author's own admission, the book is not concerned with providing great depth on each dimension, but instead it encompasses a wide spectrum of examples of sustainable design possible in landscape architecture.

Landscape Architecture and Environmental Sustainability is divided into nine sub-themes: historic environmental events which have had an impact on the environment, such as the Industrial Revolution;

new ecological landscape ideas, which set the scene for the chapters that follow; landscapes' ability to heal and mitigate post-industrial areas and green the city; sustainable environmental infrastructure which addresses landscape architecture's multidimensional role rather than simply 'adding parsley to the pig' as in previous grey approaches; food interventions, such as accommodating more productive space; social activism and artistic installations, to make political statements; social sustainability, bringing communities together; places with a light design touch to reveal their value; and finally, landscape and performance, which allow the measurement of processes. Zeunert concludes by asking how to move this 'relatively boutique' profession to a more important position.

Zeunert's design background means that the book is generous in its illustrations and well-designed in a large format to best show the many images (although some could always be bigger).

The examples are excellent and inspirational; most fascinating are the before, during and after photographs of key international project sites, which readers may remember over long careers, and which help to make Zeunert's arguments. Also valuable is the setting in context of many projects which are recognisable in passing, rather than in the bigger picture – such as Emscher Landschaftspark in the Ruhr and Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park, both in Germany. While many of the examples are Australian or North American, there are useful European and Asian projects too. Like Alan Tate's updated 2015 *Great City Parks* (reviewed in UD141, p40), this book offers powerful arguments for landscape architecture and strategic urban design's value in structuring places, and against the all too common incremental and land ownership-driven approaches to design that are seen the world over. ●

Louise Thomas

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Ordinary housing for ordinary working families

In July I gave a talk about early municipal housing in central Birmingham. I showed seven case studies, which went from the first council houses (1890), to the first council flats (1900), and on to the first high-rise flats (1955). I illustrated each one with a 1:1250 scale OS map from the 1950s, when all seven places were still in existence. Now only three of the seven survive. I was a schoolchild at the time these maps were published, living in a suburban high street, and knew next to nothing of these inner city places. But when I look at these 60+ year old maps I experience an acute nostalgia for an inner city fabric which I never knew; and which was soon to be destroyed by postwar modernisation and comprehensive redevelopment. It was a fabric typified by density and heterogeneity, before land use zoning and the motor car spaced everything out and simplified it. Surrounding the flats built in 1900 in Milk Street, just a couple of blocks from where I now work in Digbeth, the map shows buildings marked as Metal Stamping Works, Machine Tool Works, Printing Engineering Works, Motor Equipment Works, Glass Sealing Works, Metal Plating Works – industry now all gone.

I am under no illusion that to live in these inner city streets was other than to live a life that was harsh, impoverished and unhealthy – life expectancy was short. Violent too – I know from reading *The Gangs of Birmingham* that the Milk Street gang was one of the most notorious street gangs from the 1870s onwards, at a time when

Peaky Blinders were a nasty and threatening everyday reality and not retro-chic fashion statements. Gang members lived in the squalid courts of back-to-backs, some of which were replaced by the two-storey deck-access flats, but I don't imagine that the culture changed dramatically with redevelopment.

The Milk Street flats were demolished in 1966, when I was an architecture student in the city; the year before I had worked on the night shift at Alfred Bird's custard powder factory two blocks away, packing fruit jellies. Yet I was unaware of them; and if I had been aware, I doubt I would have appreciated their significance. This is an element of my nostalgic ache – the fact that I co-existed with these places but did not know them, and that now they are gone. This produces a kind of guilt. An even more direct cause of guilt is that a few years later, in 1970, when I worked in a converted flour mill for Associated Architects, on the opposite side of the street were the council houses built in 1891 in Lawrence Street, the second of my seven case studies. Through the iron windows, I watched them being demolished in 1972, and thought nothing much of it. A few years later, I would have campaigned for their retention, and perhaps for conversion to accommodation for Aston University students.

There were three narratives in my talk – the first the comparative residential densities (not always what you might expect); second, the gradual move over the decades away from the urban typology of the block and the street, towards the freestanding object; and the third, the overcoming of the official prejudice that working class people needed to have houses, flats being an alien continental idea. The extremes of these shifts were the Ryder Street houses of 1890, and my seventh case study, the Duddeston Manor flats of 1955. These are 12-storey architect-designed buildings in brickwork, designed at a time when high-rise flats

could be shaped as place-specific pieces of architecture, before they became mass-produced factory-made products in the 1960s. Following the destructive fire at Grenfell Tower in London in June, there was inevitably a nationwide anxiety about fire escapes and the flammability of cladding on tower blocks. I imagine the residents of the four Duddeston Manor buildings continued to sleep soundly. Their buildings have their original brickwork envelope, and with six flats on each floor, each building has no fewer than seven staircases. They were unsurprisingly criticised at the time of their construction for being an expensive way of housing working class families. But unlike many subsequent tower blocks, they are still there, and locally listed. ●

Joe Holyoak, architect and urban designer

Philip Gooderson, *The Gangs of Birmingham: from the Sloggers to the Peaky Blinders*, Milo Books, 2010.

- 1 Council flats in Milk Street, 1900
- 2 Council houses in Lawrence Street, 1891
- 3 The first high-rise flats, Duddeston Manor, 1955

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