

24 Cullen



URBAN DESIGN AND TOWNSCAPE

Gordon Cullen Tribute

Practice Profiles of Colin Buchanan, ECD,

PRP and WML International

Plus Design in the Countryside

UDQ Issue 52

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URBAN
DESIGN
QUARTERLY

AUTUMN PROGRAMME 1994

Wed 16 November Prof Doreen Massey
"Lefebvre & the History of Space"

The UDG events are held on Wednesdays at the London Exchange, 77 Cowcross Street, London EC1 at 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm. Tickets are available at the door - £2 members, £3 non-members and £1 for students/concessions.

Other Events

Thur 17 November

Joint RTPI/RIBA Conference supported by UDG

"Spirit of Abercrombie"

To be held at the RIBA. Details described separately on this page.

Fri 18 November

Joint RTPI/UDG Conference

"Design, Crime and Vandalism"

Details from Linda Cox 071 636 9107.

There is a 'Landscape Matters' exhibition at the Building Centre which continues until 11 November. Associated with the exhibition arranged by the London Chapter of the Landscape Institute are the following lectures:

31 October

Kansai Airport

Alistair Guthrie Ove Arup Partnership

7 November

Hampton Court Garden Restoration

Jan Woudstra and Marylla Hunt

9 November

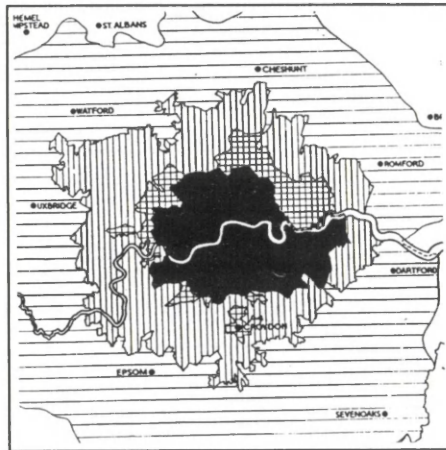
Thames Landscape Initiative

Dr J Gardiner of the NRA

All lectures are at the Building Centre beginning at 7pm.

'THE SPIRIT OF ABERCROMBIE' - PLANNING & DESIGN CONFERENCE

The RIBA - London Region and the RTPI - London Branch are organizing the fourth annual planning and design conference at the RIBA on Thursday 17th November 1994 and have invited the *Urban Design Group* to be associated with the event. The conference entitled 'The Spirit of Abercrombie' will commemorate fifty years of the '1944 London Plan' produced by architect/planner Sir Patrick Abercrombie, and with a view to projecting the wisdom forward to 2044. The



opening address will be delivered by the Rt. Hon. John Gummer MP, Secretary of State for the Environment. Professor Sir Peter Shephard, CBE, FRTP, PPILA, PPRIBA, HonFAIA - Dean Emeritus, Graduate School of Fine Arts University of Pennsylvania, will present the keynote address. Sir Peter was one of the original members of the Abercrombie design team. He will give valuable insight into the influences that led to the design and production of the plan, as well as his vision with hindsight for the next fifty years. Other speakers include Professor Peter Hall of the Bartlett (formerly Professor of Planning at the University of California) and Architect Cedric Price of the Architectural Association. Paul Finch, AJ editor and Planning in London co-editor is the conference chairman. The cost of this full day conference including lunch is £35 per delegate. A date not to be missed. Further information from RIBA London Regional Director: Meta van der Steege on 071 580 5533.

BUILDING FOR TOMORROW

An international Workshop held in Barcelona in April brought together participants from thirteen different European countries to see how the lessons from seven experimental settlements involving ecology and community planning could be brought from the fringe into the mainstream.

The organisers of the event, the European Academy of the Urban Environment in Berlin invited Hunt Thompson Associates to facilitate and report on the process, having previously worked together on a study of the October district in Moscow and at the Community Planning Weekend at West

Silvertown in London's Docklands. The experts representing the seven schemes included Lucien Kroll, masterplanner for the Ecolonia project in Holland and Barbara Able from the practice Joachim Eble, who are involved in permaculture in Germany. Other leading roles were played by Margrit and Declan Kennedy from Germany, Marilyn Mehlmann from Sweden and Robert Fowles from Cardiff School of Architecture.

The two days of presentations, working groups and late night discussions led to positive conclusions for "Building for Tomorrow".

The Workshop's final conclusion stemmed from an accord struck between representatives of the 'people and process' movement and representatives of the more technical, product related approach: - where participatory and ecological processes are initiated from the outset, with respect for contributions from all participants, frameworks for physical, social and economic *and* ecological change can be agreed and initiated by consensus. Lucien Kroll, architect and urban designer, Belgium, expressed this in the following way: "The people possess the knowledge how to live, to dwell, to organise cities. I always try to understand it, to translate it and to build it poetically and go deeper, more completely into that civilised landscape. Architecture can help."

John Thompson summarised the findings of the Workshop to the Eco-Cuitat (Eco-City) Conference in Barcelona: - "If the technical and human sides of ecology remain separate they can easily be side-lined - but fused together, they can and will become the most powerful movement for beneficial change".

Copies of the Report of the Barcelona Workshop, Building For Tomorrow, are obtainable from Sue Hargreaves at Hunt Thompson Associates, price: £9.50.

SOURCE BOOK

Members should have received their copy of the 1994 Source Book. Additional copies are available at £5 for members and £8 for non-members.

QUARTERLY PRODUCTION

Any people interested in helping to produce the Quarterly, i.e. editing and doing layouts, are asked to contact the editor. ■

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Zaha Hadid

Remember those sweltering evenings in June? It was on such an evening on June 29th that Zaha Hadid spoke to an undeservedly small audience about her approach to urban design on the occasion of the second Annual Urban Design Group Lecture.

Describing her early experiences of London, as an architecture student, she gave a personal and perceptive account of the physical changes caused by its growth from a series of villages to a great metropolis. This led her to a question "How do you create a civic and public zone to meet today's needs?" Not, she suggested by leaving an important space such as Trafalgar Square "like a pretend Italian piazza, imprisoned by traffic and surrounded by pigeons". Her project for Grand Buildings illustrated her preoccupation with "layering and programming" public space. Rather than accepting a single street level she created a number of interlocking levels to encourage a richness and diversity of public activities. Where traditionally there would have been solids defining the spaces she created voids, new spaces, and links to surrounding areas. Her live projects at this time, both in Tokyo and Germany were on "weird" extremely narrow sites where all her ingenuity in programming and layering were needed to achieve amazingly vital results.

These were followed by two harbour studies in Hamburg and Cologne which led to her most recent project, the harbourside Media Complex in Dusseldorf. Here she has created a "new urbanity, not an edge or marginal scheme". On the street facade the buildings continue the rhythm and scale of a traditional narrow warehouse alley. On the harbour side the scheme explodes and fragments into four dramatic glazed fingers, four office blocks clutching a "black box", a broadcasting room, between them. The layering of the building is continued in the surrounding landscape. But for Zaha Hadid landscape is not something which "gentrifies the space through shrubbery". She creates a new geology, breaking the earth's crust and leading pedestrians through the fissures into her own geometrically structured rocky water's edge.

The same concern about the treatment of spaces around her buildings has produced

another innovative landscape around the magnificent Fire Station at Vitra. Again a structured, geometric and artificial scheme, well suited to its purpose, the almost choreographed rituals of fire drill. The scheme also sets the pattern for future buildings which "will grow like furniture in a large room".

The slides were excellent. How sad that, as yet, there is no example of her work to visit in Great Britain. Since she spoke, her success in the Cardiff Bay Competition has been announced so that omission will soon be rectified. ■

Elizabeth Young

Urban Design Tomorrow

The third discussion evening in the series 'What is a City' was held in September, the first being concerned with the concept of the city, the second how it might evolve and this evening devoted to ways in which urban design is relevant to the future of the city.

Chris Glaister continued in his role as Chairman and the panel included Andrew Warner, a chartered surveyor dealing with planning issues, John Montgomery, a planner and an economist, and Robert Holden, a landscape architect involved in practice and teaching.

RELEVANCE

The first question put to the panel was 'how relevant is urban design, as at presently practised, to planning issues?'

Andrew Warner felt that developers were less rapacious today and more were prepared to put money into design issues. Robert Holden's view was that unless we get global economics and the transport situation right we are merely tinkering with the system with urban design. John Montgomery was worried about many approaches to urban design, which appeared to be tidying up and seeking to create order whereas surely the object should be to encourage people and their activities - creating places where things can happen; he referred to the area outside the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith where agreement had been reached with surrounding owners to recreate a proper public realm but this had been stymied by local authority bureaucrats.

Robert Holden described improvement

proposals in a London Borough which did not happen because the two committees involved failed to agree; he instanced this as a lack of vision and compared it to Europe, more specifically France, where the strong mayor system showed direct results; in the USA, apart from the mayors the Chambers of Commerce got directly involved to make things happen.

The cultural aspect was also raised and Andrew Warner described the situation in Leicester Square where Haagen Daas wanted outdoor seating and it took about a year to get approval to eight seats; there were servicing factors to consider but it was the attitude that was negative. By comparison Barcelona approached the company to persuade them to put seats outside their site. Nevertheless it can happen here as shown by the Edinburgh Festival licence extensions and Manchester's encouragement of outdoor drinking.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

Is urban design pursuing superficial issues whilst strategic issues are not being faced? The view was put forward that urban design should permeate the whole structure of environmental decisions - we should not push ourselves into a narrow area but ensure that an urban design approach was involved at all scales. There were examples where that had happened such as New York under Mayor Lindsay where the Urban Design section sought to maximise public policy benefits from development - some decisions were proved wrong but it was a positive approach to the urban design process; San Francisco and Portland were also examples of this and so was Birmingham.

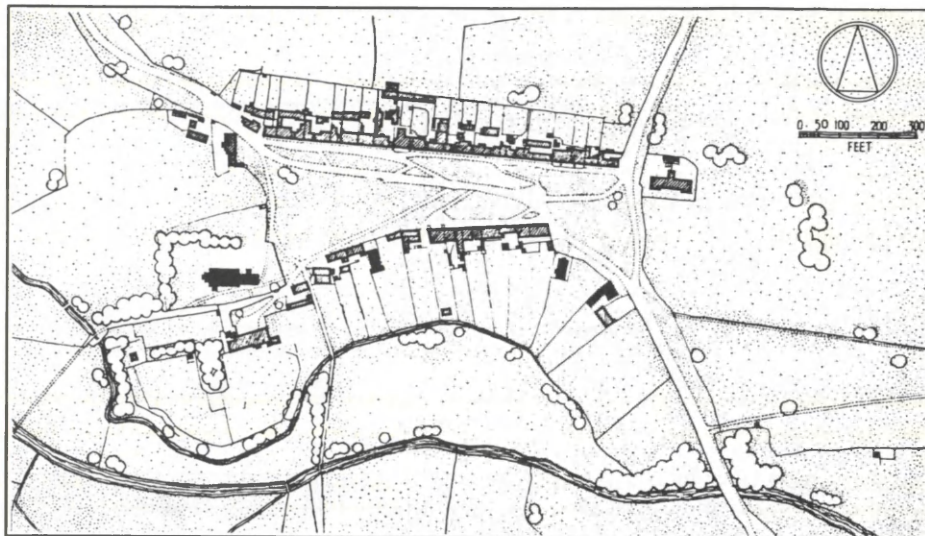
MECHANISMS

Could the mechanisms of the present system be improved? We needed to create a feeling of ownership of the city by the public which meant improving the dialogue between the public and the planners. In Spain, for example, planning proposals are exhibited in three dimensional form. The French education system seemed to introduce a better appreciation of culture. Training of Planning Committee members would help and we needed to get local authorities to work in an integrated way, not as separate compartments of highway engineers and separated disciplines. ■

Rural Design and Urban Design: The Missing Link?

VIEW
POINT

In this paper, Jeff Bishop of BDOR in Bristol argues the need to move beyond a narrow construct of 'urban' to consider the applicability of the principles and methods of urban design to the shaping and management of rural areas. He suggests that there are lessons to be learned in both directions, and that making such a move will help to bring urban design closer into line with developing thinking on further themes - notably sustainable development.



'Imagine an urban countryside, a highly varied but humanised landscape. It is neither urban nor rural in the old sense, since houses, workplaces and places of assembly are set among trees, farms and streams.'

This description was chosen - quite deliberately - by Kevin Lynch to underpin his slightly tongue-in-cheek 'Place Utopia' which formed the worked example chapter of *Good City Form*.¹ The choice of a wider landscape for this utopia was one result of his unease at the way in which many of his ideas, from those in *The Image of the City*² onwards, had been colonised by urban enthusiasts to give them increasing justification for arguing the distinctiveness and superiority of urban form.

Lynch was concerned that the broader perspective on people and places, on meaning, legibility, identity and order, that he and others - notably McHarg³ and Appleyard⁴ - had begun to develop was being weakened. He saw assumptions being developed that only clearly urban form can give meaning and order, and hence that urban designers are the only true guardians and shapers of the broad-scale physical fabric. He wished to reassert the relevance of his approach to any landscape or territory, even to 'Managing the Sense of a Region'.⁵

In this, there are parallels with my own work on Milton Keynes in the late 1970s,⁶ where the results of the study of resident perceptions of the new "city" challenged professional constructs. This work showed clearly that it is possible to structure a large-scale place to give order and coherence, to balance local with overall identity, and all in a manner which does not demand recourse to

traditional urban visions. In fact, the results showed more consistency with developing notions of perceptions of rural landscapes than with those from the then well-established urban tradition.

This is nowhere clearer than in Walter Bor's comment on changes in Milton Keynes planning that had made it into (in his term) "an enormous patchwork". He, of course, followed the old urban (and intensely male) tradition by assuming that a "patchwork" is intrinsically bad. It certainly *was* a "patchwork", but the results showed that it could be highly valued, and extremely effective. There *were* anomalies; in particular from the apparent lack of 'congruence' between form and patterns of use and movement that Lynch's work argued to be so important. The Milton Keynes results showed highly urban patterns of movement co-existing quite happily with images of a mainly rural pattern of settlements. Residents conceived the whole place as villages set in a landscape, each with its own by-pass and all just down the road from one of Europe's largest covered shopping centres (known as 'the city'!).

OLD IDEAS RESURFACING?

With Kevin Lynch's sad death during an exchange of ideas about all this, and shifts in my work pattern, these ideas lay deep down in my mind for some years. They came flooding back around three years ago when we were approached by staff at the Countryside Commission to discuss emerging issues around the theme of the "Design of Buildings and Settlements in the

LOCAL DIVERSITY MATRIX	Landscape Assessment	Settlement Pattern	Building Design
Physical Influences	Geology, overall form, hydrology, slope, climate, natural and semi-natural vegetation, ecology	Settlement location, re: landform, water table and supply, shelter/exposure, aspect, habitats	Materials, micro-climatic response, ground conditions, habitats
Spaces and Enclosure	Openness, distance or enclosure, vistas and views, horizons, skylines, sub-divisions, change over seasons	Scale, topography, enclosure, openness, boundaries, sequences, consistency, connections, public and private space	Public and private spaces, division, enclosure, constriction
Forms and Patterns	Managed vegetation, effects of trees, hedges, boundaries, agriculture, buildings, distinctive areas, legibility, impact on the landform, proportion of cover features	Pattern of field and farm development, legibility, tree and boundary patterns	Volumes and massing, consistency and variety, orientation, number of storeys, height, boundaries
Characteristics	Tone, colour, light and shade, variation over time, seasonal change, texture, contrast, variety, consistency, management, strategic landmarks	Tone, colour, light and shade, variation over time, seasonal change, texture, contrast, variety, consistency, management, local landmarks	Tone, colour, light and shade, shelter, security, boundary details, roofs, walls, openings, eaves, verges, ridges, planting, condition, distinctive features
Circulation	Orientation, general pattern of roads, rail, paths and watercourses visual effects of moving through, views opened, and closed, density of traffic, permeability	Pattern of roads and paths through and across settlement, signage, lighting, verges, condition, surveillance, safety, density of traffic	Circulation in and around buildings, through, between and across spaces, access to buildings, condition, surveillance, safety, public and private access
Change	Deforestation, plantation, intensified agriculture, minerals extraction, trunk roads, reservoirs, landfill, strategic planning	New villages, agglomeration, abandonment, infilling, suburbanisation, by-passes, infrastructure, public utilities, local plans	Redundancy and reuse, design guidance, 'extensions', coach lamps and gnomes, signage, standardisation, development control
Values	Meanings, attitudes perceptions and symbols at: national, regional, local and personal levels in terms of: environmental, historic, social and cultural factors		

Countryside"⁸ (as the eventual work came to be titled). The issues emerged following general reaction to a Commission policy paper on "Planning for a Greener Countryside".⁹

This latter paper attracted almost as many comments on the design of buildings and settlements as on all other issues put together. This was encouraging (and had to be acted upon), yet the topic of design, architecture, even aesthetics caused worrying ripples in an organisation with no background in this area and a fear of the secret garden which we professionals have constructed for our territory. So far has this construct of a secret garden imbued even other professionals that the best the Commission hoped for, at that stage, was some sort of generic design guide. They had no idea that engaging with design would overlap remarkably with almost all their other policy areas; in particular with developing research, policy and practice on landscape appraisal and assessment. We took it further with them; into aspects of links between design and access, recreation, countryside management and community participation.

They became especially excited by two emerging themes, both of which are also central (if in varying form) to urban design. The first theme was the need to look beyond individual buildings and design detail to the nature and form of settlements and their relationship with their landscape. The second theme was the need to hunt out, critically describe and then - through new

design - to celebrate and enhance local distinctiveness.

Though we still hesitate about its use in practice, we developed a "Local Diversity Matrix" - shown above - which enabled us to give coherent attention to the many aspects which shape local diversity and distinctiveness. In this matrix, we linked together the different physical scales of landscape, settlements and buildings to a range of factors covering the original, underlying shaping forces of geology and climate, through the resulting patterns of 'figure' and 'ground' in how we read places, to local idiosyncratic features, and on to the influence of movement and change over time. Finally we added one further, indispensable factor - values. This covers the established, (and changing), meanings and values given to the area and its settlements and buildings by local communities.

However, our work with the Countryside Commission was not intended to be theoretical. The aim was to provide the Commission with modes of intervention in planning, development and design processes which would help to deliver a higher quality of building design in rural areas, and hence reinforce their remit for a beautiful and accessible countryside. Having developed, through the matrix, what we considered to be a good working basis whereby one could assess the contribution that any new building might make to reinforcing local distinctiveness, it was then essential to describe how this could be achieved - and

especially in a way which could assist designers and planners.

As a matter of principle, we were keen to avoid what we have always considered to be the trap of design guides. From experience of working with development control planners, with designers and with developers, we have become convinced that any design guide is only as good as the weakest link in the chain - and this is just as likely to be an architect as a plansmith or a developer's technician. Moving forward from narrow prescription - especially in the context of celebrating diversity - demanded an approach which would place the onus firmly on designers to put in the work to demonstrate in their designs a full understanding and appreciation of the nature of specific sites and their context.

This general approach places our work firmly in the territory explored by John Punter in his study for the Department of the Environment on design policies in local plans.¹⁰ The (hopefully) forthcoming guide to good practice will argue the centrality of appraisal-based policies, setting a descriptive and analytical framework against which future design proposals can be tested. Our own developing methods introduce appraisal at two levels, and also introduce some innovative and already fairly controversial ways of generating and using that appraisal.

EMERGING METHODS

We have recently tested the two main methods for the Countryside Commission,

working with another consultancy (SGS Environment, their landscape group in particular) and Cotswold District Council. The results have recently been presented to the Commissioners, where they were received extremely positively - as they were in a series of regional seminars for the majority of local planning authorities across England. (They are not yet, however, public, so all comments which follow are mine alone.) The methods are:

COUNTRYSIDE DESIGN SUMMARIES

Produced mainly at district level and by planning authorities, these are area-wide appraisals of landscape, settlements and buildings in different zones of the district, offering broad guidance not on how to respond (as per a design guide) but on what a design should respond to.

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENTS

Produced mainly by village communities, in association with planning authorities, as a more specific appraisal in terms of the generic framework, these offer very explicit guidance about the setting to which any design must respond - but still stay clear of prescribing what the response might be.

We can now be much clearer about the eventual status of these outputs. The Countryside Design Summaries will be incorporated into district-wide local plans in all three of the areas used for testing. The four Village Design Statements will all be securing status as Supplementary Planning Guidance. In fact, the VDS for Cottenham (in South Cambridgeshire) has already been approved - the first time ever that an entirely community-written document has been incorporated fully into the planning system. In all four villages, the community groups are continuing their work and are now moving on to consider appropriate development briefs. In one of the four, this has led to an increased housing allocation, increased land values and potentially better layout and design.

IMPLICATIONS

Each method is rooted in a desire to bring often conflicting parties together to link general policy to detailed local practice, to provide a 'common language' for all, to create a shared awareness of value, and to widen the decision-making base. In general, the matrix described above provides the 'common language'.

Interestingly, much of the field work testing the matrix and the overall approaches in real-life situations led us to tackle issues which, in another setting, would be regarded as classic urban design. In one village, the issues of permeability and the privatisation of public space were central. In another, the district-wide appraisal paid particular attention to legibility. In one of the Cotswold studies, the local authority found itself getting close to "understanding and manipulating the developer's goals through the planning machinery to achieve quality in the public realm" (a minimally adapted UDG Agenda principle).

There can be no doubt that we were (UDG Agenda again) addressing questions of helping users to achieve their aspirations, and operating as promoters and enablers. In fact, the latter techniques were probably more critical, and raise questions about the balance between drawing-based work in urban design and that of process management, facilitation, and consensus-building. The work drew us into appraisals of relationships, balance and structure at a level well beyond that of individual buildings, while also alerting us to aspects of landscape structure and character. If anything, the latter has implications beyond urban design and into landscape assessment, suggesting that this rapidly growing area of professional expertise urgently needs some input from more instrumental, designerly thinking.

When looking back, we find parallels between our approaches and those outlined in UDQ by John Punter in his paper on research in the USA.¹¹ In that paper he suggested that "very few cities consider the ecological, natural resource and conservation aspects of landscape and build it in as a crucial contextual factor in design", and also highlighted the lack of attention in UK practice to sustainable development and social equity. Our work reinforces this.

WHERE NOW?

All this leads us, inevitably, to the conclusion that the time is long overdue (even if the substitute words fail us) to put aside redundant distinctions between urban design and rural design - at least in the way the latter has been construed in our own work for the Countryside Commission. We are now actively exploring (with clear support from 'high places') the applications of the approaches both to Conservation Areas and to

urban neighbourhoods. It would be great pity for the overall advancement of urban design as a key, but currently undervalued, process were we to gain some interest from the dyed-in-the-wool-urbanists only after the methods found their way into urban practice.

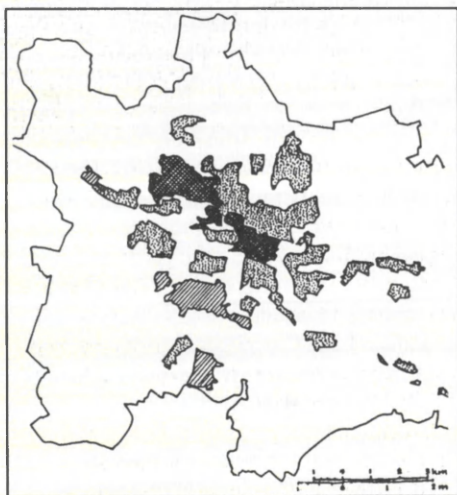
Our recent work suggests that UK urban design urgently needs to consider its relevance to **all** parts of the country; we believe the principle for doing so is clearly established. Our 'nose' tells us that urban design practice - in general - would be enhanced by this move, and that rural areas would benefit from it. We feel that there is also much to learn about the balance between the general advancement or urban design practice (part of that being empowerment and capacity-building) and the actual doing of urban design projects. Finally, we have a fear that urban design will become beached if it fails to look more broadly, in particular when facing the growing momentum of sustainable developments arguments. Hopefully, the pages of the next UDQ or two could contain some responses to, perhaps even elaboration of, these arguments. ■

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Glasgow and its Towns

Hildebrand Frey, Director of the Urban Studies Unit at the University of Strathclyde, summarises the major issues and conclusions reached at a series of seminars held in Glasgow this year. Between the end of February and mid March 1994 the Urban Design Studies Unit at the University of Strathclyde organised four seminars about the role of urban design in the regeneration of Glasgow. The seminars did not, and were not intended to, break new ground; but there was discussion with a little difference. First, the seminars were not events at which the 'converted' talk to each other but meetings at which sceptical but open-minded professionals of all the city's agencies, departments, associations and groups actively involved in the regeneration of the city came together to listen to arguments and comparisons and discuss issues and problems of their concern. What is also remarkable is that the series was initiated not by the University but the City of Glasgow's Town Clerks Office in collaboration with planners and architects involved in the regeneration of the Gorbals.



Above: City Structure. Hatched section shows central and southern areas with coherent urban structure. Dotted section shows areas of comprehensive redevelopment during 1950s and 1960s.

The seminars - supported by Glasgow District Council, Glasgow Development Agency, Strathclyde Regional Council, Scottish Homes, The Glasgow Institute of Architects, and the Department of Architecture and Building Science - came about as the result of the perceived lack of development strategies and specifically urban design in Glasgow's regeneration process.

Support was considerable, perhaps indicative of the importance attributed to the discussions. Next to local speakers - Frank Walker, Thomas Markus, John Punter and myself from the University of Strathclyde and Mark Baines from the Mackintosh School of Art - interesting speakers could thus be invited: David Mackay (MBM, Barcelona); Günter Schlusche (Berlin/IBA); Ulrich Loening (University of Edinburgh, Centre for Human Ecology); Richard MacCormac (MacCormac Jamieson & Prichard, London); Anthony Costello (Ball State University Muncie, USA); Paul Stouten (RIW-Housing Research Institute at the Delft University of Technology); Lucien Kroll (Atelier d'Urbanisme, d'Architecture et d'Informatique, Brussels). But major contributions were also made by many delegates in form of questions, comments or even short papers.

MAJOR ISSUES

But what was it all about? First, there are many here in Glasgow who believe that they actually *do* design the city and *have* strategies. In response to their claim it was relatively easy to demonstrate that in Glasgow we design individual parts of the city but, with a few notable exceptions, ignore the need to generate a design framework for the integration of all these parts into good towns and a good city.

Secondly, many still believe that urban design is primarily and solely concerned with formal and aesthetic issues, the cosmetic treatment of preconceived projects in the city, and therefore largely irrelevant in the process of tackling the city's 'real' social, economic and structural problems. The seminars demonstrated with the help of examples particularly from Barcelona and Berlin that good urban design, rather than following development projects as an after-thought, sets the rules for the physical as well as programmatic integration of development projects, influences the city's 'performance' and shapes its very form and structure not for

their own sake but in reaction to a very wide set of social, economic, environmental and functional issues and criteria.

Thirdly, many here in Glasgow disapprove of urban design because it has frequently been in the past, and is still perceived today, to be rigid and all-prescribing masterplanning, hindering if not strangling rather than enhancing urban development; the depressing results of comprehensive development in the 50s and 60s are an eloquent reminder. The seminars argued and demonstrated that good urban design frameworks are primarily concerned with the 'hard' areas of the city, the long-lasting and image-giving public spaces, buildings and monuments. Grey or 'soft' areas of the private realm have to be flexible, adaptable to changing socio-economic conditions and needs, and should remain largely unregulated except for the overall massing and height of development in order to prevent any interference with the public realm's structure, form and image.

A fourth important objective of the seminars was to show how urban design 'fits in' and why the spatial structure and physical form of the city is so important. Examples demonstrated that an improved image of a city or urban area generates not only directly a social, spatial and formal gain but also indirectly an economic benefit, though the latter cannot be predicted with any accuracy.

It was furthermore shown how social, economic, environmental and functional needs, demands and problems perceived by the citizens lead, ideally and necessarily in a participatory process, to the generation of action programmes. They in turn result in the physical changes of the city. The impact of these changes must be realistically predicted before they are carried out and requires to be monitored after changes have taken place. Examples of urban regeneration projects in Glasgow clearly illustrated the lack of impact analysis which causes many if not all of their benefits to be lost again in a very short time.

THE LESSONS FOR GLASGOW

At the end of the seminars some very clear recommendations emerged with direct relevance for urban regeneration in Glasgow. As the discussion embraced the city at large rather than specific parts, details or issues, these recommendations are fairly general and need to be worked out in detail at seminars and workshops to follow, but a first small

step towards a regeneration strategy was made.

It was agreed that Glasgow's regeneration had to achieve all of the following goals: a sustainable city and city region; an economically thriving and a socially balanced city; and a structurally, spatially and formally legible and imageable city. To achieve these goals demands the co-ordination of all action and the prediction and assessment of the environmental, economical, social, spatial and formal impact, of all regeneration projects in the city.

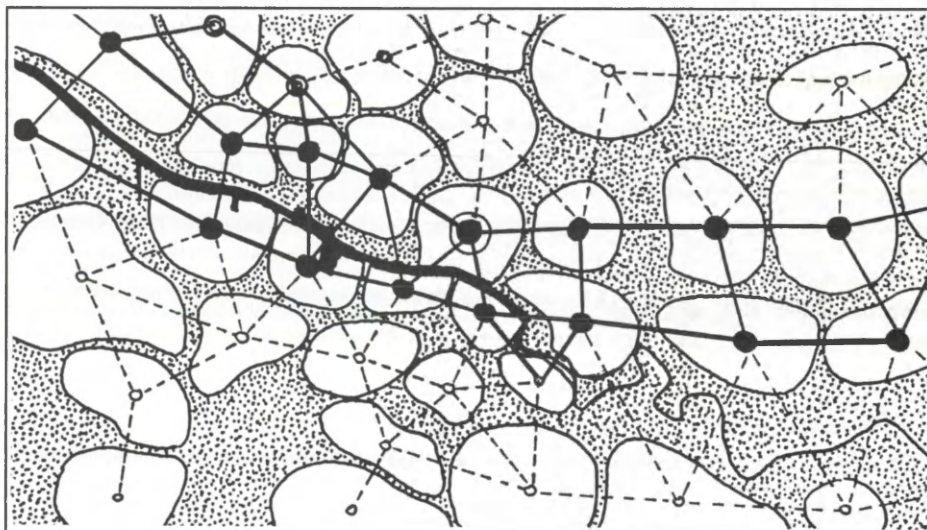
To achieve a sustainable city, Glasgow has to consolidate its development clusters to become real towns with mixed use and all major facilities and amenities of a town. If not all clusters can become effective towns, a clear and rather painful decision is required which clusters should be reinforced and which others may have to return to a more rural role. The large areas of open land between the towns should be used for industries and food production; large-scale research and commercial units; recreation and sports; recycling of waste; public and private transport.

To achieve an economically viable city, inward investment should be attracted not least through the enhancement of the city image as consequence of high quality design of the public realm.

To achieve a socially balanced city requires, next to educational, job creation and social programmes, the consolidation and repair of the spatial structure and form of deprived areas, high quality design of the public realm of these districts, a much larger variety of different house types and forms of tenure attracting a population of mixed social and income levels; and high quality landscaping of open spaces.

To achieve a legible and imageable city the public sector must take responsibility for the development of the public realm and must act upon it. This requires urban design to become an integrated part of the planning system and public funds to be made available for the improvement of the public realm.

The role of urban design is to develop a three dimensional framework for the city's form and structure, based on the historical growth pattern of Glasgow, consolidating the city as agglomeration of linked towns. The framework should include: the introduction of a comprehensive plan for the nature and use of open spaces between towns, especially the



river Clyde area; the reinforcement of the major spatial links between towns; the generation of an integrated transport strategy in which the pedestrian, cyclist and public transport have priority.

The design of the towns' major public places should involve: the conservation of the historical substance including its image-giving skyline; the design of the towns' gates and arrival points; the high quality design of the major squares and streets; a plan for the pattern of uses in these major public spaces; design rules for surfaces enclosing major public spaces; and a comprehensive landscaping strategy for the public spaces.

POSTSCRIPT

No doubt, the seminars were only a starting point and discussions were perhaps too

general and all-embracing. Many are now concerned that the momentum gained is not lost. An essential next step is the organisation of further seminars and workshops, each with a very clear focus. Of particular importance is the generation of operational plans to implement step by step the regeneration objectives and programmes of Glasgow and its towns.

One immediate practical outcome of the discussions is the inclusion of Professor Punter and myself from the University of Strathclyde in the working group responsible for the development of a comprehensive regeneration strategy for the Gorbals. This seems to me a significant first stage of a new approach to the management of urban regeneration in Glasgow. ■

Nîmes

Design Led Planning

Chris Couch, Professor of Urban Planning at Liverpool John Moores University, describes measures being taken in Nîmes to exploit its artistic and cultural heritage.

According to Jean Bousquet, Mayor of Nîmes, architecture and urban design are important to him because they provide the physical framework for living: "we are surrounded by architecture, it's like a second set of clothes for everyone... the quality of our architecture is indicative of the strength of our culture".

Of Roman origin with a well preserved medieval centre, Nîmes is a city of around 150,000 people in western Provence. While known for its strong artistic heritage the city had, until recently, a slightly depressed air, overshadowed economically and culturally by its neighbours, Montpellier to the west and Avignon to the east.

Such is the power of French local authorities and the office of the mayor in particular, that Nîmes has become in the early 1990s, one of the main focusses of attention in French urban design and planning. Driven by the enthusiasm of Jean Bousquet and his belief in cultural and design led regeneration, the town has become very 'à la mode'. It has been transformed, at least temporarily, into a mecca for visiting planners and architects and is enjoying something of an economic renaissance. This has been achieved, or at least strongly influenced, by a combination of coordinated environmental planning policies and the development of a series of high quality 'flagship' building projects.

Local government in France is very fragmented, with many urban areas divided between a number of communes, each with its own planning powers. Thus, historically, the planning of Nîmes had fallen between the Département de Gard, the Ville de Nîmes and a number of surrounding communes. One of the first steps towards good planning was to bring the whole urban area within the jurisdiction of one planning authority and in 1988 the local authorities agreed to set up the Agence d'Urbanisme et de Développement de la Région Nimoise with the task of preparing and implementing a coordinated plan for the whole agglomeration.

The 'new' planning of Nîmes has proceeded on two levels. The more prosaic

level but vitally important to the implementation of physical planning ideas is the preparation of the Plan d'Occupation des Sols (POS): the legally binding land use and development plan. Preparation has been divided into three phases. Phase One, completed in July 1991, dealt with La Plaine Sud de Nîmes to try to bring some order and protection to the rural area of development pressure between the motorway and the airport. The second phase covered the city centre and the Garrigues (the area of low, dry hills and small-holdings to the north) and was the subject of a public inquiry in April 1993. Within the context of this plan virtually all the medieval core has become a pedestrian zone and a secteur sauvegarde (conservation area). The final phase will deal with the suburban area south of the city centre and north of the motorway: the development zone.

The process of preparation and the content of the POS are only remarkable because they are informed by the second, higher level of planning. This plan, known as the Plan d'Ordonnement (literally, a plan for the general arrangement of buildings) has no legal status but for the planners of Nîmes it provides the strategic framework for physical planning. What the plan does is to establish the key physical characteristics, constraints and opportunities within the agglomeration and to set out a small number of critical urban design proposals for specific parts of the city. This is not a set of criteria but a series of proposals. It is not comprehensive. If fully implemented, the proposals represent major changes to the physical environment of the city with improvements to both visual appearance and legibility.

The Plan d'Ordonnement has three main proposals. They relate to:

- the boulevard périphérique sud;
- the axe Nîmes-Campagne nord-sud;
- the Diagonale Verte

THE BOULEVARD PÉRIPHÉRIQUE SUD

Built as a ring road in the post-war period the périphérique sud cuts an ugly swathe through the southern suburbs of the city. The concept is to 'urbanise' this whole suburban zone through increasing densities and 'civilizing' environmental works. The most important proposal is to change the character of the ring road to create an urban boulevard where buildings are to be brought closer to the road to enclose the environment; where traffic speeds are to be reduced and its flow

more controlled; and to provide a link between a series of new urban projects. Urbanising the first stretch of the road is currently at the design stage but three projects have been built. In the west lies the 'ville active' project: a retail and business zone that tries to cater for the spatial requirements of edge-of-town commerce while providing a strong design framework and integration with housing and social facilities. Nearby is the Stade des Costières: a new indoor sports hall and 20,000 seat outdoor stadium for football, rugby, etc.

THE AXE NÎMES-CAMPAGNE NORD-SUD

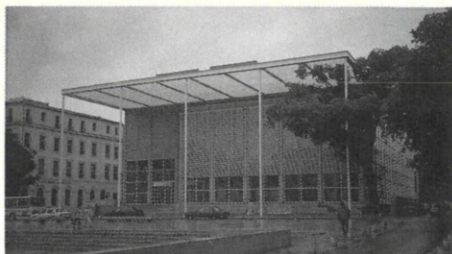
This was the concept of the Norman Foster team. To the west of the medieval city centre the 19th century inhabitants had built a great formal boulevard running south from the Jardin de la Fontaine for over two kilometres through the city. Foster's idea was to provide a symbolic link between the gardens (the heart of the city) and the southern horizon. Thus he proposed extending the axis through 8 kilometres gradually transforming its function and character from urban street to suburban avenue and finally to country road.

DIAGONALE VERTE

Perhaps the most immediately appreciated by the people of Nîmes will be the *Diagonale Verte*. This series of public open spaces, both hard paved areas and soft green areas, is to run north-west to south-east through the city linking the Garrigues in the north with the agricultural plain to the south. Beginning at the Jardin de la Fontaine it too has been the location for a series of urban projects.



The Canal de la Fontaine (shown above) links the gardens with the city centre. In a recent project the city have cleaned up the canal, rebuilt and widened the pedestrian promenade alongside, planted semi-mature trees and replaced the old street furniture. Traffic movement has been restricted and adjoining buildings, which were run down,



are beginning to be renovated. Just to the south lies the Place d'Assas. Dug up to construct an underground car park in the late 1980s, it was rebuilt in 1993 to provide a home for a number of large outdoor sculptures. Unusually and successfully, the artists were involved in the design of the square from the beginning allowing the artifacts to be shown to best advantage while being integrated into the fabric of the city.

Around the corner from the Place d'Assas is Foster's new Carré d'Art. Opened in 1993 it is the most important centre for contemporary art in France after the Pompidou Centre in Paris. Not only is it a superb example of modern architecture successfully inserted into the fabric of an old city but its construction has provided an opportunity to rebuild the adjoining Place de la Comédie so as to calm traffic and improve the pedestrian environment around the art gallery and the adjacent Roman Maison Carré, where the number of visitors has more than quadrupled since completion of the works. It is a classic example of how investment in one building can provide a catalyst for the regeneration of a whole area (shown above).

To the south the 'diagonal' route continues along the tree-lined Boulevard Victor Hugo to the Arènes where the city have roofed over the roman arena to provide a summer and winter venue for concerts and cultural events of all kinds. This is a bold example of conservation combined with economic use and provision of a new facility. There is nothing precious about building preservation here. The attitude appears to be: it is part of our heritage, we respect it but we will use it, not just look at it.

To the east of the Carré d'Art lies the medieval core of the city centre. Formerly run down with many vacant buildings, the city has taken a powerful stand, effectively banning cars from the centre for most of the day, repaving the entire area to indicate the pedestrian's dominance, replacing street furniture and signage. Combined with steady investment in building refurbishment and conversion the effect has been to upgrade the urban fabric and bring inhabitants and economic life back to the inner city (as shown in the next column). The objectives have been to retain or recapture the best parts of its historic identity while making the area functionally more useful in the context of the late 20th century city.

Measures introduced include:

- retaining a building mass and density in keeping with the rest of the city centre;
- retaining the domestic urban scale and character of the streets and facades;
- refurbishing those buildings of architectural merit or which form key elements in the townscape, while permitting the demolition and replacement of others;
- removing the 'parasitic' constructions (e.g. workshops) that have appeared in the inner courtyards of blocks and refurbishing as semi-private spaces.
- repaving and refurbishing the streets.



The 'diagonal' runs through the Esplanade Charles de Gaulle: again combining the need to provide underground car parking with the opportunity to refurbish the surface area. The policy of the city is not simply to limit the use of the car in the city centre but to encourage the use of bus services with more frequent services on realigned routes.

Passing along the Avenue Feuchères and under the main railway station the final stretch of the diagonal verte follows the line of a small stream, le Petit Vistre, out into the countryside.

CONCLUSIONS

In Nîmes it is possible to observe a number of features of interest to British planners and urban designers. It demonstrates the ability of the French local authority, with its decentralised planning powers, local identity and civic pride, to develop its own solutions to planning problems. In the case of Nîmes, the city has chosen a strategy for economic development based around exploitation of its artistic and cultural heritage and environmental improvement. At the same time, high standards of architecture and urban design are being pursued for their own sake: because the physical fabric of the city is the people's second set of clothes.

Far from there being a choice between economic development and environmental

quality, as evidenced by the poverty of thinking behind the British Enterprise Zones for example, in Nîmes well considered physical improvements are leading to economic benefits. The Carré d'Art and the refurbishment of its surroundings have brought more tourists and more spending to the area; pedestrianisation and environmental improvements in the medieval city have encouraged a return of people and economic activities; the whole exercise of the Plan d'Ordonnancement and the architectural projects has had a powerfully beneficial but unquantifiable effect on the image of Nîmes and its ability to 'sell itself' in the investment markets of the world.

To be useful, strategies to enhance the townscape of a city need not be comprehensive criteria-type policies, along the lines of the fatuous 'good design will be encouraged' so often found in British Local Plans but can take the form of specific proposals for sections of the city in order to provide a clear physical framework and structure, i.e. to improve the legibility of the city; and to offer examples of good urban design that others may follow.

In Nîmes not only are good modern buildings inserted into historic areas without visual detriment, but they enhance the townscape and economy. Indeed, one of the general points about French urban design is the willingness of architects to propose and planners and local authorities to accept bold, innovative and visually exciting solutions to design problems in historic areas. There seems to be a confidence about urban design in France, both on the side of designers and on the side of the commissioners and controllers of development that is generally lacking in this country.

The final point is that few British local authorities have attempted to produce anything like the Plan d'Ordonnancement. Few British Development Plans can offer any strategic urban design concepts to guide and lead the future development of their towns and cities, let alone using design strategies to being economic and social benefits. Urban design in Britain has become too detached from the planning process for this to happen. Yet in Nîmes, as in many other continental cities, plans have been prepared that indicate what the city will look like in the future, why it will look like that and what the benefits will be: a rationally argued urban design strategy leading the planning process. ■

Reviews of books on Los Angeles, Japan, Skyscrapers and Urban Change

UNDERSTANDING URBAN DESIGN

An Introduction to the Processes of Urban Change, David W Chapman and Peter J Larkham, Faculty of the Built Environment, University of Central England, Birmingham, 1994. £10.00

One of the very real problems in being both talented and tenacious is that you leave in your wake a legacy of lesser talents who seem forever destined to pick up the themes and techniques which you laid down for the first time. In theory, there should be no problem here, since most of us have followed in the hallowed footsteps of one urban designer or another, reading their books, visiting their built projects and meeting together over an evening to share what one hopes are insights into their life's work. Things begin to go badly wrong, however, when the disciples begin to lose the message in their enthusiasm to be labelled with the master.

Since the untimely death of Francis Tibbalds, there have been numerous well intentioned attempts to honour his memory by means of prizes, project awards and dedicated meetings. It is testimony to his very great influence on us all that such enterprises should be placed on the same level as those associated with, say, Lewis Mumford or one of Francis's greatest heroes, Kevin Lynch. Further, Francis Tibbalds' own practice continues very much in the spirit of its founder to this day.

What are we to make of this book-cum-brochure emerging from the University of Central England Faculty of the Built Environment? The publication sets itself, by its dedication 'to the memory of the life and work of Francis Tibbalds', a very high standard indeed. Here is a very curious document of about 75 pages, neither a layman's guide nor a student's primer, and certainly not a manual for professionals.

A bewildering variety of poorly reproduced photographs, amateur looking drawings and quasi-scientific diagrams and symbols of the usual urban 'suspects' fills its margins, comprising a tawdry scrap-book of urban design marginalia, from an illegible plan of UK Green Belts through to a Corbusian vision of the future by way of comparative shopfront proposals. The text, likewise, reads as a typical student dissertation in which academic references are supplied as a

substitute for analytical thought and there is a pinched and preachy feel to the running text.

How has this come about, since the publication is clearly well intentioned by its authors? It has nothing to do with the poor illustrations, since the redoubtable Kevin Lynch himself certainly could not draw in any conventional graphic sense. However, Lynch's back-of-the-envelope sketches were always brimming with intent and purpose; it was possible to see a concept, or a record of the qualities of a place he visited, shine through the child-like graphics.

Certainly the text contains some useful vignettes which could be culled by urban design students as a shortcut to taking the source books down from the library shelf. Perhaps Urban Design has now become such an orthodoxy that it can support a whole tier of lesser rate commentaries aimed at informing a secondary market of Town Councillors, specialists from other professions and interested members of the public at large.

If so, it does Francis Tibbalds a grave disservice. His own book, *Making People-Friendly Towns*, was published shortly after his death. Francis is understandably very hard to beat in terms of his passion and perception, and the book is shot through with very high calibre examples from his own practice. Kevin Lynch and Lewis Mumford, although no rivals to Francis in terms of graphic ability, could spice an argument with vivid language and a poetry which extended even into highly technical matters. If the work of these three great men is reheated or turned into scrapbook items by others who do not appear to understand the material before them, then is it any surprise that the 'product' loses so much in translation? Surely Urban Design is far too important to be treated like this.

Neil Parkyn

HETEROPOLIS

**Los Angeles: The Riots and the Strange Beauty of Hetero-Architecture
Charles Jencks, Academy Editions 1993,
hardback £24.95, paperback £17.95**

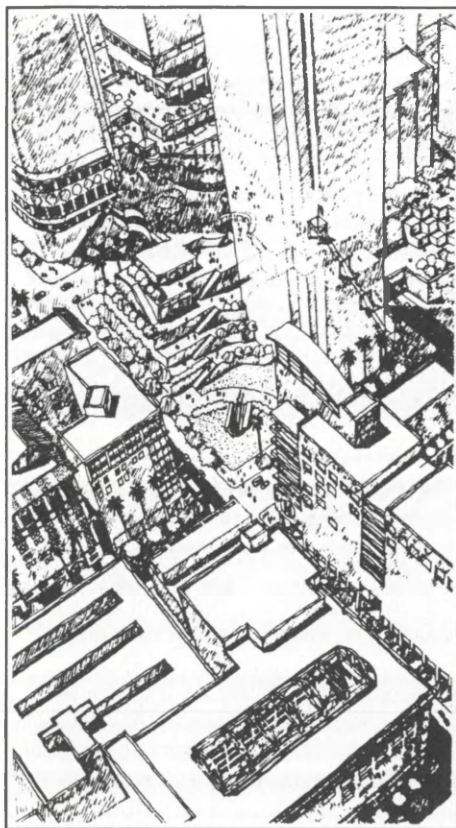
Los Angeles is a city which always seems to polarise opinion - people either love it or loathe it, it's either "sunshine or noir" as Mike Davis puts it, the apocalypse arrived or

a foretaste of paradise, city of hope or despair. Whatever the popular wisdom, it is certainly a city which inspires writers, academics and serious commentators to take a holistic view. From Reyner Banham's 1971 "Los Angeles - The Architecture of Four Ecologies" to Mike Davis' 1992 "City of Quartz" and Stephen Brook's 1992 "LA Lore", writers have taken on the whole spectrum of the development of Los Angeles from its history and geography, to its demography and sociology, plus all its quirks and idiosyncrasies to build up their picture of the city and their scenario for its future.

Now Charles Jencks has come under the spell of Los Angeles and has written a book about an architecture which he sees as embodying both the spirit of the city and the hope for its future. Jencks is definitely of the school of boosters (see Mike Davis, pp 24-30). He enthusiastically draws from a wide collection of data - population studies (over 100 different ethnic groups, 40 different lifestyle clusters, 86 languages spoken in schools), politics, philosophy, economics. He analyses the causes of the 1992 Justice Riots, explores eco-systems, enclaves and eclecticism, and surveys the abundant local flora and fauna in his study of the fine-grained heterogeneity of Los Angeles. It is this heterogeneity which is seen in LA's new architecture, an architecture, Jencks says, which represents the plurality and multi-ethnicity of the city, the subcultures rather than an overriding mono-culture.

At first glance "Heteropolis" is an architecture book of the glossy variety - lots of lovely coloured photographs of buildings. Demographic charts and socio-political analysis seem rather out of place in this setting. But, says Jencks, this is heterogeneity itself and, as he explains in the introduction, he "will switch voices suddenly depending on which tone is more suitable for a particular context".

Heteropolis is the city of difference but the problem that Jencks sees in modern day LA is that it is the place where the politics of universalism (the abstract idealism of US modern liberalism) clash with the politics of difference. His solution to this problem is the introduction of "double-coding", the notion of weaving together the two conflicting philosophies into an intelligent strategy of hybridisation to create the "politics of recognition", a policy of "radical inclusiveness that overcomes the prevalent



tendency to see things in either/or terms."

According to Jencks it is the architects' role to create the framework for this synthesis by representing all the various cultural discourses without judgement. He believes architecture can cast a new light on the multi-cultural debate and in several chapters devoted to describing this architecture of "en-formality", he presents convincing arguments to prove his hypothesis.

The LA architecture of en-formality redefines public space in a way that allows different groups of people to enter into a fluid social situation. It suggests new ways of making creative responses to situations which are at an impasse. Los Angeles, Jencks says, may not survive if it does not deepen commitment to the two contradictory philosophies - it is a city "on the verge of either splitting up or making something strange and exciting that no-one has seen before".

This is Charles Jencks at his most spirited and evangelical. He comes as a prophet, warning of doom, but at the same time revealing LA's great gifts and unfolding the potential it has to become a model world city. It will be interesting to see if any other polis

inspires Jencks to further abandonment of his usual divisive "isms" approach. I certainly hope so. This is a good book for anyone who has ever held a view about Los Angeles.

Francesca Morrison

LOS ANGELES: WORLD CITIES

Series Editor Maggie Toy

Academy Editions £69.95

A sybaritic sun-drenched city sitting, Pompeii-like, astride a potential natural disaster, a place where fantasy and reality embrace, where - if the luscious photographs in this book are to be believed - the sky is always deep blue, except for when it is tinged with a scenographic purple hue as the street lights twinkle against the setting sun...

Los Angeles is the second of the projected series on world cities. Like London, its predecessor (reviewed in the April 94 issue of *Urban Design Quarterly*), it is - as one would expect with a price tag of nearly £70 - a heavy and lavishly produced volume. In two parts, it kicks off with a series of essays under the general heading *Social and Planning History*. Apart from rehearsing a lot of well established LA folklore of the "no there there" variety - freeways, earthquakes, bush fires, mud slides, riots, smog, ethnic diversity and so on - the five essays end with the transcript of a forum "Learning from Los Angeles" held at the Royal Academy in 1993 whose participants, including Ed Soja, Eric Owen Moss, Conrad Jameson, Charles Jencks and Ralph Erskine, aired many of the social and planning issues currently facing the conurbation.

The second part of the book is a tripartite overview of recent architectural projects, undated, though starting probably with the *locus classicus* of the current phase of LA design, the controversial house extension that Frank Gehry built for himself in Santa Monica in 1977-8. This section is presented under three headings, *Los Angeles as it might have been...*, *as it is*, and *as it will be*, each introduced by a short perceptive essay by Maggie Toy, the series editor.

So what impression does this catalogue of projects give of life in Los Angeles today? In a city - or rather, county, since that is what LA is - with a population of 13.4 million (expected to grow to 18.1 million by the year

2010) we find that the avant-garde rich inhabit exaggerated and distorted houses made of brightly coloured plywood and chainlink fencing, eat out in sophisticated themed restaurants, go shopping in scaled down fantasy malls, and work either in anonymous multinational downtown skyscrapers or in deconstructed designer studio offices.

Outside the compact downtown area - chosen inexplicably for the dust jacket (it could be almost any major city in the State) - there is an inventive and witty group of young architects, or school as Charles Jencks has elsewhere referred to them, with a lightness of touch and formal dexterity, and enough clients to indulge their design skills.

A quick glance at the location map helpfully provided at the end of the book shows that the projects are almost exclusively located in a narrow band stretching from downtown to Santa Monica and Venice Beach, some fifteen miles away, the area of greatest personal wealth in the county. Given the emphasis in the text on social and ethnic issues it's disappointing that there are no projects from the districts whose populations are predominantly Hispanic, black or Asian, or those areas of greatest poverty where we read of "the recent discovery of thousands of homeless living under a freeway that had been enclosed by side walls". Perhaps there is no public housing worthy of illustration?

Despite the rather facile graphic presentation many of the projects show a preoccupation with the art of place making, a recurring theme through the work of Charles Moore and Frank Gehry, the elder statesmen of the period, as well as in the projects of younger practices like Morphosis, Eric Owen Moss and Frank Israel. While Gehry's Loyola Law School is a dignified new pedestrian plaza not far from downtown, the Jerde Partnership's shopping malls have all the razzmatazz of Disneyland. The private residences illustrated - large enough sometimes to be like small villages - must be among the most inventive spatially anywhere.

This book brings together a number of serious essays covering a wide range of contemporary urban issues facing the city with a selection of thrilling new-wave architectural projects, both of which show that the legendary diversity and exuberance of LA is flourishing; enjoy!

Peter Howard and Helena Webster

FROM SHINTO TO ANDO Studies in Architectural Anthropology in Japan. Gunter Nitschke. Academy Editions 1993, £27.50

This is a collection of essays about Nitschke's interest in the 'Anthology of Architectural and Urban Form in East Asia', which concentrates on the symbolic. Contrast this with the socio-economic on which he says traditional architectural history and theory is based, revolving around the disciplines of archaeology and artistry. He emphasises throughout the importance of the unconscious mind towards common and unchanging threads that explain and direct our built forms.

The essays vary in their intensity and profundity, but all are for the serious scholar to ponder over and definitely not for the casual reader. There are informative plans and diagrams, many small black and white photos and larger expansive full colour plates that we have come to expect in books on the Japanese arts.

In the first essay, the renewal of time, space and man is explored by reference to both the Ise Shrine, the most sacred of shrines in Japan that is rebuilt every twenty years, and the celebration of Daijosai, the first fruit tasting rite. The continuing theme of time and space is explained in the second essay using Ando's Christian Wedding Chapel at Mount Rokko, Kobe, and the old hermitage of Shisendo near Kyoto. The designer of Shisendo, the mystic Ishikawa Jozan, apparently knew that 'what is to be empty must first be filled' - the principle on which all meditation techniques are based. Ando is compared with Sen Rikkyo, the great 16th century tea master, in the design of the Chapel. The entrance path leads up to the Church, but before entry, Ando created a ninety degree turn to the right with a vertical slit in the wall that allows a view of the sea - or infinite space. You then enter a dark passage before seeing a view of the well lit interior of the church - the destination. All this is a preparation for that final goal in a similar way to the tea master preparing his guests before arriving at the tea house.

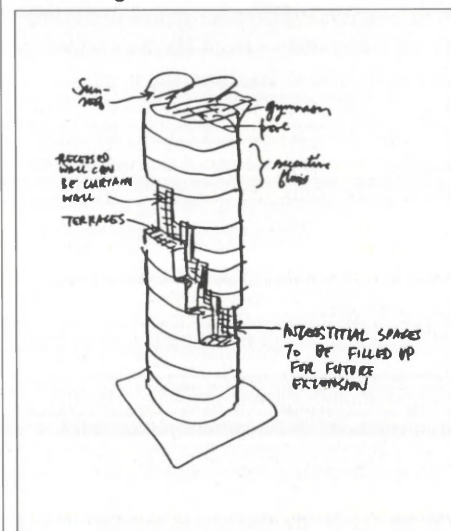
There follows a treatise on the Japanese and Chinese Character 'Ma', translated by Nitschke as 'place', where he presents a number of uses of the character. Ma was adopted by Japanese Buddhists to express the

notion of empties or void and Nitschke cites the Ryoanji rock garden with its fifteen rocks in a sea of gravel as being a fine expression of this. 'Beyond Fence and Focus, Beyond Sacred and Profane' is the next essay that begins with the Ise Shrine, passes through the Fushin-on tea house and ends with the Lotus Pond Hall of Honpukuji Temple by Ando. The participant actually enters the pond by descending the staircase in the centre in order to gain access to the sanctuary - pure poetry.

The reader is left with a colourful picture of ritual fans used in a fire festival, but probably the best epilogue is to start at the beginning again and grapple with those concepts that passed over your head on the first reading. A longer and more detailed introduction would have helped in understanding, or perhaps some sort of summing up at the end. Overall it is an exploration without any definitive conclusions which is perhaps why Nitschke avoids any drawing together of the ideas at the end.

Philip Cave

BIOCLIMATIC SKYSCRAPERS Ken Yeang. Artemis £24.95



The last issue of the UDQ featured an article on Singapore which included vignettes of bioclimatic skyscrapers drawn by Ken Yeang. In the wake of this article comes a review of Ken Yeang's book.

The concept of the 'bioclimatic' building, ie one that responds to climatic conditions and is energy efficient, is nothing new; indeed

its origin goes back to the dawn of man. However, the skyscraper is a 20th century invention and the application to it of bioclimatic principles seems to have been noticeably lacking.

Ken Yeang was a student at the AA in the 1960s when skyscrapers in his part of the world (South East Asia) were in their infancy. He did a PhD at Cambridge on eco-architecture and today runs a successful and influential practice in Kuala Lumpur.

According to Ken Yeang high-rise buildings are sustainable in as much as their concentration of activities enables a reduction of energy in transportation; but in design terms they have generally been wasteful of energy. The incorporation of climatically responsive design features would add to the construction costs but would create significant savings in operational costs.

Such design features include recesses and balconies on solar-facing facades in order to introduce shade, ventilation and space for planting (curtain-wallings being sustainable only for non-solar facing facades); wind scoops on facades to allow natural instead of artificial cross-ventilation within the buildings; and planting boxes and trellises to allow vegetation to reduce heat and improve the climatic, as well as ecological and aesthetic, environment.

The product of these design principles is a sort of 35-storey Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Examples of Ken Yeang's work are illustrated in his book and can be seen in Malaysia and elsewhere in South East Asia.

There are, I suppose, three generations of high-rise: the pre-war buildings of New York, Chicago and Moscow which are stately and in some cases ornate; the post-war curtain-walled boxes; and now the bioclimatic. Because Malaysia has skipped the first two generations, the buildings of the third have given the country a distinctive cultural identity.

This is an interesting book but the reader gets the impression that all bioclimatic skyscrapers are (a) Malaysian and (b) designed by Ken Yeang. Maybe this is true. The reader is also tempted to ask whether a bioclimatic Malaysian skyscraper would look visually acceptable in London where most high-rise buildings belong to the curtain-wall generation. The answer must be a qualified yes. ■

Tim Catchpole

Introduction to Cullen Tribute



David Rock, whose work with Gordon Cullen included the study of Ware introduces the special topic for this issue.

Although Gordon was 80 when he died in August, he still would have had much to offer because the themes he expounded have a universal relevance. To many, especially the younger ones amongst us, he will be Mr. Townscape, but his skills and experience ranged wider than that. We can now begin to put his contribution to urban design and planning into context, although inevitably this will change with time, as legends do.

Gordon's life has been well listed elsewhere in national obituaries and will be covered in detail in AR's October issue. Suffice it to note that he joined Regent Street Poly School of Architecture in 1933, but never finished the course - what a loss it would have been to urban design had he qualified! Work with Raymond McGrath, Godfrey Samuel and Tecton 1934-36 and wartime planning in the West Indies followed, before he joined the AR in 1949 as art editor, leaving in 1956 to be a consultant.

His brilliant draughtsmanship for a long time overshadowed the importance of his other creative work, especially his writing. He hated being asked to do only perspectives on a scheme, and did so only when he had to. He was involved in many important awakenings of thought, beginnings of movements and the opening-up of attitudes: Casebook (1949); The Functional Tradition (Lyme Regis 1950); The Nautical Style; South Bank Translated (1951); Floorscape (Woodstock Unwinding 1952); The Exploring Eye (1958); and whole philosophies of planting (1952), outdoor lettering, street furniture, and everything visual. All that seems passé now, but "environment" in the fullest sense was then not part of the formal architectural and planning vocabulary. He supported Ian Nairn and AR's Outrage (1955) and Counter Attack (1956). He proposed many urban design schemes, eg Barbican 1957, forever arguing to get the visual approach back into planning - this at a time when comprehensive redevelopment was the buzz phrase. He took the visual approach into traffic engineering (Switch on - Road Policy 1957). His book Townscape was published in 1961.

In the 'Sixties, Alcan sponsored the seminal series - A Town Called Alcan - with four circuit linear regional plans (1964); The Scanner (1966) where human and physical factors were set out and interrelated and the Optic Chain introduced; then Notation (1968), "the observant layman's code for his environment". In 1970-72 a group of us worked with him to extend the "map" of human and physical factors to include the negative, something, typically, Gordon had not wanted to

include.

All these theories were applied and developed over the next 25 years in many consultancies including his work with me on the Ware report (1973-74). It was not generally known over those consultancy years that he worked under the tremendous restriction of poor eyesight. He once described to me that with one eye, anything he looked at had a white blinding light at its middle so that he had to keep moving his head to be able to get a full view of anything; while the other eye was so short-sighted that he needed to be very close to the paper to see anything.

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

In eulogizing Gordon we must not underestimate the milieu and times in which he worked. Just as Gaudi seems less unique when you see his contemporaries' work in Barcelona, so Cullen must be seen as a product and unusually-gifted chronicler of his working environment and of the group he joined at the AR who were plugged into a rich mix of people aware of the sea-changes in society and its approach to the environment and planning. He was one of four assistant editors to five editors: J. M. Richards, Nikolaus Pevsner, Ian McCallum, Osbert Lancaster and the owner, H. de C. Hastings. The latter, as Ivor de Wolfe, wrote 'Townscape, a Plea for an English Philosophy Founded on the Fine Rock of Sir Uvedale Price' in 1949, having used townscape in 'The Art of Making Urban Landscape' five years before Cullen joined the AR.

The eclectic mix of AR's contributors included Vanessa Bell, Raymond Mortimer, Evelyn Waugh, Cyril Connolly, John Piper, Osbert Sitwell, Clive Bell, Wyndham Lewis and Eric de Maré, all tied into the boundary-breaking issues of their day.

AR's issues, including townscape, have to be seen in their planning context, alongside the massive formalisation of town-planning between 1943 and 1951 - the setting up of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning; the Barlow, Uthwatt and Scott reports; the Acts of 1944 and 1947; the New Towns and National Parks; the three London Plans. Urban design (not then a term) owed much to the Beaux Arts tradition of planning - the axial avenue, the cross avenue, the rond-point, the vista. To apply the Picturesque theories of landscaping - irregular, as rich in surprises, as skilful in the use of the happy accident, as nature herself - to the urban scene, as Wolfe did in 1944 and 1949, was new. Even by 1953 the Ministry of Housing and Local Government's authoritative 'Design in Town and Village' was still largely rooted in comprehensive redevelopment.

So Gordon's skill was in chronicling the group's ideas which he did brilliantly in a variety of easily-understood, attractive sketches, diagrams and words. He loved to transform theories into



organised tables of principles and sub-lists and articles into a series of pictures and captions. He also took on the campaigning zeal of the AR, although his anger was suppressed as Nairn's was not.

THE SEEING EYE

He was brilliant at quick decision-making, putting down what then seemed the obvious. My work with him at Ware (1973-74) was typical. A day's walking around that small Hertfordshire town produced strong, diagrammatic analyses and design sketches which formed the basis for the team's work over the next six months in producing that seminal report 'Vivat Ware'. He isolated himself from the rough and tumble of organisation and that real-politik that takes ideas into reality, and the financial reality of his proposals - he left that to others. Typically he was not interested in the following twelve years of my grinding work in "caring" for Ware, in applying 'Vivat Ware' - and correctly so, because his great strengths could be better applied elsewhere.

He had one disciplinary rule which I admired. However late it was at night, or however drunk, he would always pin out a drawing sheet in his studio (a hut at the bottom of his garden) and make enough marks on it to attract him back to the board next morning.

Gordon's work continually formed a link between the past and the present in "seeing" the environment for what it could be, and giving proper value to that vital interplay between people and traffic, whatever the pressures. He kept his eye on the golden horizon as a lesson to us all. ■

Townscape as a Philosophy of Urban Design

William M Whistler and David Reed wrote the text of this paper in the 1970s for the Council of Planning Libraries Exchange Bibliography no. 1342. It was felt this gave a useful background to the ways in which Cullen's views contributed to using townscape as an approach to an urban design philosophy.

The word townscape has become associated with a variety of concerns in environmental design ranging from the conservation of pre-industrial towns to the development of design guides for residential areas. The idea of townscape has been praised as the saviour for our urban environment and has been attacked as being only concerned with the superficial visual aspects. The purpose of this short paper is to present an outline of what townscape is, how it has developed and what its contribution is as a philosophy of environmental and urban design.



The Oxford English Dictionary cites 1880 for the first use of the word 'townscape', and 1889 for its specific use in the current sense. '... Some of the quaint townscapes (to invent another word) of our romantic, unspoilt English towns...' ¹ Clues to the present meanings of townscape can be found in the use of the word by Thomas Sharp in 1948 where he attempts to give a name to the act of improving cities: '... by an analogy with an equivalent art practised by the eighteenth-century improver of land, it might be christened Townscape...' ²

This civic design orientation was given a further refinement by Ivor De Wolfe who labels townscape as a visual art of town planning that is a contemporary extension of the English picturesque school of landscape design. ³ De Wolfe sees the emergence of townscape as a new radical tradition in architecture in that it breaks with the modern movement by emphasizing "character" and significant differentiation. Also important to early development of townscape is Gordon Cullen's *Townscape Casebook* which accompanies De Wolfe's article. Through a series of descriptive headings including "The Eye as Fan dancer" and "The Eye as Articulator", Cullen illustrates how the eye might be used by this new visual planner in seeing the physical environment as an "art of the Ensemble". Thus, by the early 1950s townscape has come to mean a theme of urban design which emphasizes the visual perception of the environment. The assumption that is made at this time (similar to the contemporary assumptions about planning) is that this visual perception and consequent "improving" can be accomplished in an objective manner through an understanding of the emotional effects created by the juxtaposition of physical elements of the environment.

THEMES

Within this general theoretical framework of assessing the physical environment in visual terms, several loosely defined but generally complementary themes in urban design became associated with townscape:

- One major development was an emphasis on designing to reinforce the uniqueness of place, being sensitive to the *genius loci* or the significant differences between one area and another. This became the cause of a series of design studies, usually at the village scale, in *The Architectural*

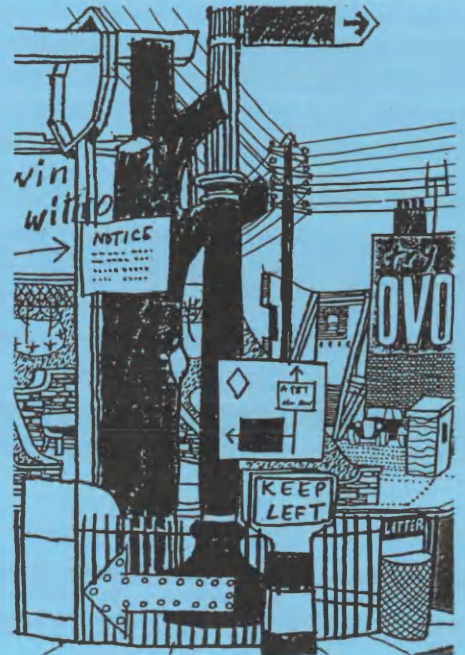
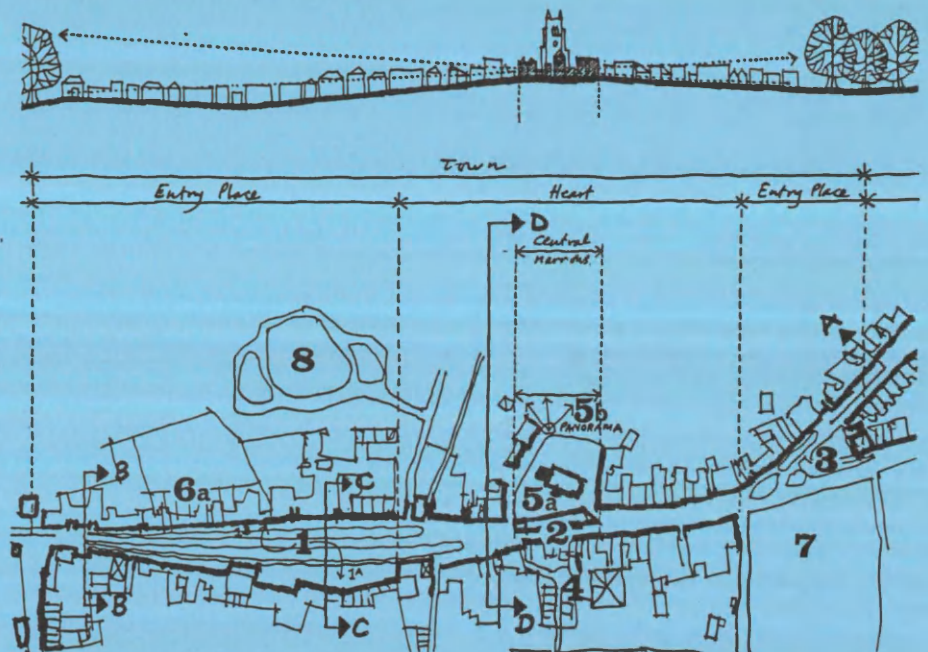
Review which, by 1960, were formalised into a regular monthly townscape feature. Typical design issues dealt with in this series were the effects of a motorway plan on the physical fabric of a town, the visual effect of modern large scale development, and the general tidying-up of pre-industrial towns whose character was deteriorating. ⁴

The high point of the *Architectural Review's* series was the application of the visual art of townscape to a theoretical new town, called *Civilia*. ⁵ This proposal, planned on townscape principles of inducing drama into the environment and of providing significant differentiation, was illustrated through a series of photographic collages of modern architecture. Its popular rejection began to show that the appeal of townscape was more than the visual art of the ensemble.

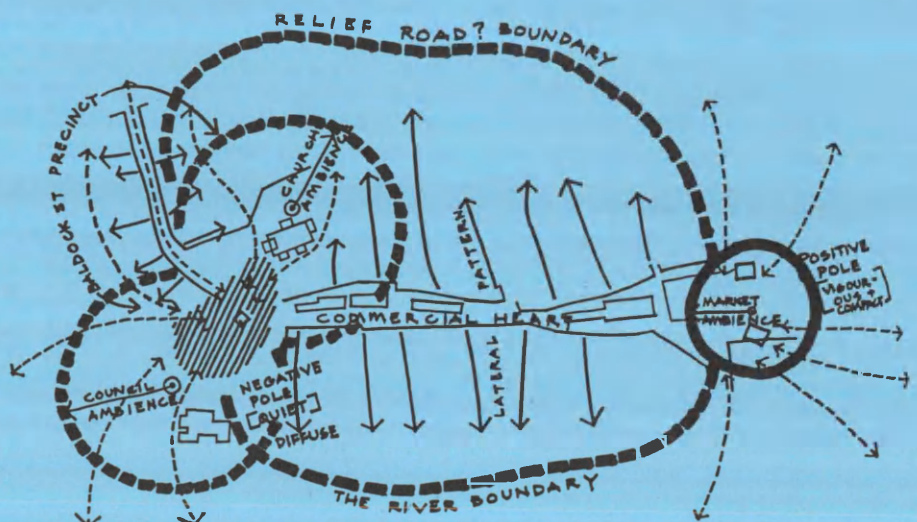
- Concurrent with *The Architectural Review's* emphasis on *genius loci* came the development of a negative reaction to suburban sprawl, which was concisely articulated by Ian Nairn in an article entitled *Outrage*. ⁶ In this searing attack on those who record suburbia as Utopia, Nairn shows how mindless repetition of speculative housing standards is re-making Britain into an un-differentiated visual blur. *Outrage* became a classic in this field although its basic message has remained unheeded as Nairn shows in his *Outrage 20 Years After*. ⁷
- A third theme that became associated with townscape in the early 1960s was the gradual enlargement of the meaning of conservation from the preservation of buildings of architectural merit to include the preservation of certain building groups or spaces as important elements in the physical setting of the town. A good early example of this theme is found in *Tenterden Explored*. ⁸ The present acceptance of the validity of the townscape conservation argument however is due primarily to the publication of *The Character of Towns* ⁹ which illustrates concisely what the principles of townscape conservation are and how they might be achieved.
- One popular but mistaken idea that has developed as a theme is that good townscape is only the result of higgledy-piggledy individual additions to the physical environment. This illusion is

due primarily to the use of historical examples which presumably owe their appeal to their individual charm rather than being a part of a larger pre-conceived design theme. Recent information about the extent of design and aesthetic controls operating in baroque, renaissance and even medieval times has shown that classics of townscape such as the English Cotswold village and the Piazza del Campo were the result of the right degree of design intervention. Both Gordon Cullen and the editors of *The Architectural Review* have maintained that townscape is not purely the result of accident but depends on a degree of pre-planning to turn chaos into variety within order. This theme has been the basis of design guides such as *The Essex Guide for Residential Areas*,¹⁰ design briefs such as *Vivat Ware*¹¹ which develops a physical development framework for an existing town, and *Maryculter: Final Report*¹² which contains a townscape plan for a proposed new town.

- The fundamental theme of townscape as a means of providing excitement, drama and emotional response to the physical environment is most closely associated to the work of Gordon Cullen who has remained the leading figure in its development. His seminal work, *The Concise Townscape*,¹³ (originally published in a longer form as *Townscape*) consistently emphasizes that the starting point for design is the individual's experience of the environment. This theme is developed through several loosely organised concepts. Firstly, there is the concept of creating a place. Cullen points out the physical and visual elements which allow us to canonise public space. Secondly, he introduces the concept of serial vision which illustrates that the individual's reception of spatial information is the constant play off between the existing view and the emerging view as the observer moves through urban space. Thirdly, he formulates a casebook of these design devices such as 'juxtaposition' or 'immediacy' which cause us to interact either emotionally or actively with the environment. As well as having developed a significant proportion of the visual analysis methods used in *The Architectural Review's* townscape articles, Cullen produced *The*



Top: Tenterden Study 1967
Above: Townscape Casebook 1949
Right: Outrage 1955
Below: Vivat Ware 1974



Townscape as a Philosophy of Urban Design

Scanner,¹⁴ a check list of human and physical criteria necessary for creating an urban environment capable of satisfying the range of human needs from physiological safety to individual self-fulfilment, and *Notation*,¹⁵ a shorthand system for evaluating the physical environment. Cullen's works can be seen as a formative basis for townscape as a philosophy of urban design.

TOWNSCAPE AS A PHILOSOPHY

Because townscape is lacking a methodology and relies on journalistic flowery language it is sometimes dismissed as not a serious contribution. However, townscape is a philosophy of urban design in much the same way as le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse* is a philosophy of urban design - it is basically an intuitive application by a designer of a belief in how people operate in a city. Corbusier talked about the need for sunlight, fresh air, flowing open space and ways to facilitate car travel between points. Cullen talks about the possession of space accommodating the range of human needs and emotions, and also about traffic and movement serving to vitalise areas of the city. These are abstract ideas by themselves and it is the resultant physical form and the visual perception of the form which can give these terms meaning.

The significant contribution of townscape is that it is a design philosophy based upon satisfying a fuller range of human needs including those which are at least partially met by the visual environment.

The emphasis on visual perception, however, has allowed the idea of townscape, as advocated by *The Architectural Review*, to make the mistaken presumption that apparent form can be divorced from content. Two implications of this incorrect idea are that the visual message can be abstracted from the cultural message and that the creation of a strong image can be a substitute for content. Both of these fallacies are summed up in the visual message of Port Grimaud, the modern resort village designed according to townscape principles in 1965 and built in a counterfeit pre-industrial vernacular style. The illusion of Grimaud is in believing that the quaint effect of the various juxtaposed buildings and spaces can be created in a totally modern form and imagining that townscape appeal has nothing in particular to do with the implications of using certain

building forms and elements such as arches, cobbles and local vernacular which carry with them the message of stability and acquired strength through aging and familiarity. San Grimaud is the height of townscape as a stage set. The image is of a quiet provencal village but the reality is a very expensive holiday resort. Civilia on the other hand is planned on similar concepts but is built of concrete and glass, and the effect of the cultural message is made clear.

As mentioned, the misunderstanding that the effect of visual perception is the only theme in townscape, and the belief that townscape is actually an intuitive designer's contribution to providing a more satisfying environment is borne out by recent works of environmental psychologists and writers on visual perception. Several of these writers refer to townscape, or more specifically Cullen's *The Concise Townscape*, as being the physical and visual edification of their theories.

Rapoport and Kantor put forward the hypothesis that there is a human need for complexity in the visual environment and that one of the most satisfactory ways to provide this complexity is through ambiguity or the creation of '... visual nuance, however slight, which gives alternative reactions to the same building or urban group.'¹⁶ After substantiating this belief with a sampling of empirical research findings, the paper goes on to refer to five of Cullen's descriptive headings (Combination, Multiple Use, Here & There, Projection and Recession) as intuitive interpretations of their more thoroughly researched hypothesis of complexity. More recently, Eduardo Lozano cites Cullen's call for visual variety within a pattern as "... substantially the essence of his hypothesis that there is a need for a combination of plurality of visual inputs..." to provide orientation and variety in the environment.¹⁷

Research only partially related to environment psychology has also mentioned the significance of Cullen. The main tenet of Jay Appleton's *Prospect Refuge* theory is that our physiological need for safety in its most basic sense can be expressed as the ability to see without being seen, and this primordial instinct has been sublimated to an aesthetic response. Appleton develops from this a symbolic language in which the presence of distant prospects and hiding places in a landscape scene or painting signals in us a

SCANNER AND NOTATION

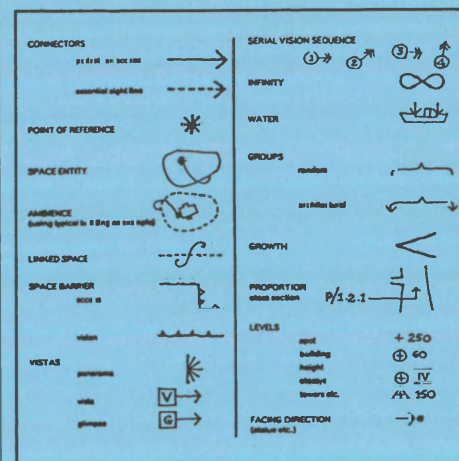
In the 1960s Alcan sponsored a series: A Town called Alcan with four circuit linear towns (1964):

The Scanner (1966), where human and physical factors were set out and interrelated:

Notation (1968) 'the observant layman's code for the environment'.

Right: 'Physical Factors' from The Scanner

Below: 'Indicators' from Notation



sense of well being and control of the environment. In transferring this symbolic code to analysis of architecture and urban design he refers to Cullen's description of enclaves. "... The enclave or the interior open to the exterior and having direct access to both... has the advantage of commanding the scene from a position of safety and strength..."¹⁸

This, contends Appleton, is the essence of the prospect refuge complement.

Certainly Jane Jacobs' call for diversity in cities is similar to Cullen's ideas about multi-use and precincts in the city, while Cullen's ideas about possession of public space and occupied territory are really the same thing that Oscar Newman is describing as creating zones of influence and defining public from private space as the principal argument of his defensible space ideas.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, summarising townscape as a philosophy of urban design, the following points can be made:

■ Townscape in terms of its visual image owes much of its success and/or failure to the cultural baggage of older environments.



COMMUNITY	SIZE Choice of climacteric sizes based on: Time cycle (e.g. weekly sufficiency) Growth of amenities Transport capacity	COMPOSITION Balance of imbalance of: Ages Occupation Wealth	LOCATION The art of siting Catchment area Dominant or dependent Economic viability Communications	REGION Regional characteristics Seasonal fluctuations	GROWTH Projected growth Change of composition Self limiting community
PATTERN	DENSITY LOW Peace, tranquillity, space, health, low land-use, random pattern, poor public transport, difficult for industrialized building, cash sale of houses, limited traffic segregation MEDIUM Degree of privacy and space, medium land-use, possibility of corporate visual groups, viable for public transport, viable for industrialized building, mortgage, horizontal segregation (Radburn etc.) HIGH Maximum need for amenity space, optimum land use, greater possibility of visual cohesion, public transport, optimum industrialized building, council rent, vertical traffic segregation	TRANSPORT TRAFFIC TO PEOPLE Transport flow: motorway, crossover, amenity of traffic Problem of proximity: nodes مساحه, تداخل, nodal points, parking PEOPLE TO TRAFFIC Essence Peace of mind Environment Commuting Ease of contact or segregation		GIVEN PATTERNS BY-LAWS Daylighting Road widths Sight angles Fire access TRENDS Snob designs and colours Pop-art Layouts and gimmicks INDUSTRIALIZED BUILDING Crane saving Unit weight Factory siting Production flow	
LANDSCAPE	CATEGORIES Wild nature National park Uplands Coastline, estuary Arable land Industrial land Parkland Green Belt Rough Green Belt Twilight land Suburb City CLIMATE Prevailing wind Local climate Artificial climate Population drift NATURE Wild life Nature reserves Ecology Air pollution Industrial waste AGRICULTURE & INDUSTRY New patterns of farming Factory farming Capex industry Automation Power/service grids				
OPTICS	SPACE CHAIN INTERNAL — MAZE FACTOR — EXTERNAL (BUILT) — MAZE FACTOR — EXTERNAL (NATURAL) INTERNAL: A room Sequence of rooms Flow of spaces Connection: stairs ramps EXTERNAL (BUILT): Courtyard Street Square Formal garden EXTERNAL (NATURAL): Avenue Park and lake Hills and sea Horizon and sky Panorama			LIGHT Cubism Geometry Silhouettes Texture Colour Artificial light Exploratory power of light	PERSPECTIVE Effects of foreshortening Division and organization of space Intrusion and exclusion by height The visual globe SERIAL VISION Seeing in movement Development Joining and separating Growth of apparent size
IDENTITY OF PLACE	AMBIENCE City Market town Suburb Quarter Village Genius loci SITE SYMPATHY OBJECTS Character of building Historical appraisal Vitality Significant position NATURE Levels Sky Water Trees and plants	COMBINATION HOMOGENEITY Conformity Manners Hierarchy Enclosure FOILS Scale Style Surprise Follies			

Reproducing the image is a hollow success when it is not an accurate reflection of the social and economic conditions which create it.

■ Townscape as a method of creating a stimulating physical environment is significant when it is seen as one aspect, perhaps through the production of a townscape plan, of providing a more accommodating environment.

■ The real value to be gained from reading *The Concise Townscape* or *The Scanner* is in being presented with good physical design applications of some aspects of human needs in the visual environment which are being identified by more scientific research in environmental psychology.

■ Townscape as a philosophy of urban design takes its examples of physical design from an era when time and motion scale was pedestrian and the majority of human contacts were face to face. It can be used an important counter-argument to advocates of an aesthetic based on a higher-speed, less-direct contact society. ■

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Townscape Revisited

Bob Jarvis re-reads 'Townscape' as a book and explores the devices of word and image and its language and construction. Townscape begins with a casebook in which 'serial vision', shown below, are the rewards of the moving eye, but an eye which is open and not lazy'.



There are only three urban design tests still in print after thirty three years. Jane Jacobs' *Death and Life of Great American Cities*¹ and Kevin Lynch's *Image of the City*² are two; the third, and the one I want to "re-read" here is Gordon Cullen's *Townscape*³ now truncated and published on plan paper in soft wrappers as *The Concise Townscape*⁴.

The other contributors to this tribute have written about Gordon Cullen's professional, practical and theoretical importance to urban design. My task is rather different. I want to examine why a book I bought as a first year student (admittedly - although perhaps significantly) alongside Tom Wolfe's *Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*⁵ and a primer on optical illusions in the visual⁶ is still in demand when the others on those yellowed reading lists have either disappeared (Chapin, Keeble, Abercrombie) or are now collectors items (Thomas Sharp's *The English Village, Design in Town and Village*).

I want to examine *Townscape* above all as a book, as a piece of literature, and briefly explore the devices of word and image, the language and construction of the work itself.

This approach is quite different from the way Cullen's work is usually placed in the context of urban design. Two substantial reviews of the subject emphasise Cullen's other work - either his practice and the reports associated with it⁷ or the ephemera (un-catalogued, unpriced and unobtainable) published by Alcan in the mid 1960s.⁸ This is understandable: David Gosling is a long time collaborator with Cullen as his piece here and his forthcoming edition of Cullen's work records; Broadbent's wider concern is to establish a theoretical perspective that is essentially picturesque and pluralist: so it's hardly surprising Broadbent concludes "that in comparison the Rationalists look more rigorous" rather than to point to the profundity of Cullen's Message.⁹

LITERATURE REFERENCES

But whatever the theoretical strengths of *The Scanner* et al and the practical demonstrations of *A Town Called Alcan* and *Maryculter* (*The Concise*) *Townscape* is all that most readers will ever have seen. What did its 9 pages of introduction, 185 pages of glossy photographs case studies, and (*deleted from the Concise Townscape*...) 117 pages of Town Studies and proposals, offer for the 56s. (£2.16s.od) I paid?

The Major difference between *Townscape* and everything that came before it is the authorial tone. *Townscape* is written from the heart, not the lectern. Though Sitte¹⁰ and Unwin¹¹ had allowed glimpses of their personality and instinct - Sitte perhaps in his opening chapter, Unwin where in 'Of the City Survey' he writes of the designer walking the ground to be planned,¹² Giedion¹³ no sooner offers glimpses of an irrational creative spirit than it is absorbed into a broader cultural *Zietgiest* that sweeps along everyone from Michelangelo to Jorn Utzon. The rest - even Thomas Sharp - are sets of lectures, instructions on what parts aspiring planners and designers should shape and place to create desired effects in villages, residential areas, towns and city centres.¹⁴ Only Thomas Sharp's *The Anatomy of the Village*, popularly rather than professionally published, written as a part of the Penguin populist wave of rebuilding Britain after the war communicates a sense of love of place.¹⁵

By contrast, all three of those books from that *annus mirabilis*, 1961, are centred in the individual, personal response, Kevin Lynch turns it into an area of scientific inquiry, Jane Jacobs stands as the street corner social observer. In *Townscape* we see the world through Cullen's eyes (mainly, it underplays the other senses). Only after those exercises for the senses, after those critical reflections and sketches are there any proposals.

Maybe it wasn't entirely chance that I bought it alongside *Kandy-Kolored*... like Wolfe, Cullen's work had matured out of journalism, albeit the *Architectural Review* rather than the *New York Herald Tribune*. *Townscape* in this analysis, stands like Wolfe's *New Journalism*¹⁶ against the diversion of 'objective' modernism and reasserts the reporting of experience.

METHOD AND APPROACH

Townscape is an important book not because of its content, still less because of its influence (which Cullen himself dismissed in the *Introduction to the 1971 Edition*) but precisely because of its method and its approach. Broadbent emphasises the overt rational charting of *The Scanner* and *Notation*.¹⁷

The structure of *Townscape* is suppressed. There are no obvious divisions: there are no chapter numbers, the headings to the parts are identified only by capital headings in slightly larger typeface within the flow of short

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paragraphs well spaced alongside photographs and drawings. The articulation of the parts on the title page is hard to discern in the book itself. The reader's attention is caught now by a photograph, now by a comment, now by a cartoon.

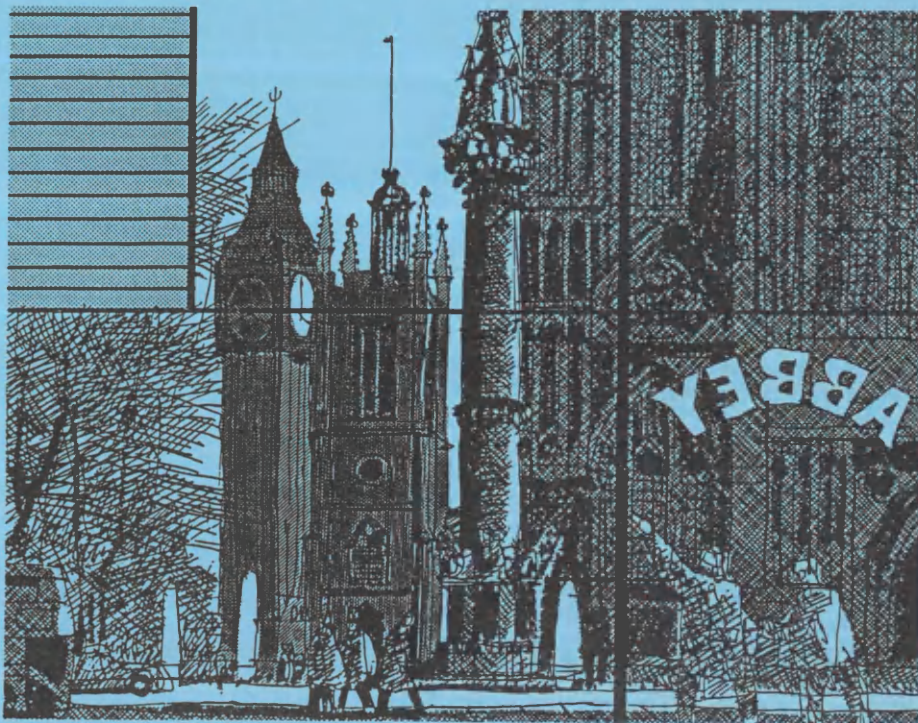
The text itself is fragmented. Outside the Introduction there is never more than a page without subdivision or heading. Most of it is alongside or sometimes written into illustrations. The content and language vary from theoretical and imperative categorization (at random 'The essential function of a town should be visible from a single glance at the plan' p. 111) through sequential and analytical description to poetic reverie and reflection. Abstract nouns are given precise concrete expression in experience of space though time; analogy, metaphor and neologism are all used in the heading captions.

Through this the author is always with the reader ('... arouse one's curiosity as to what scene will meet our eyes upon reaching...' p. 49), but there are paradoxically few authoritative *instructions* or *examples*. Now that *The Concise...* has deleted *Proposals* as well as *Town Studies* this is even more the case: we are left walking down the Via dei Servi towards the Duomo early one morning with just three and a half pages of the *Endpiece's* polemic to go.¹⁸

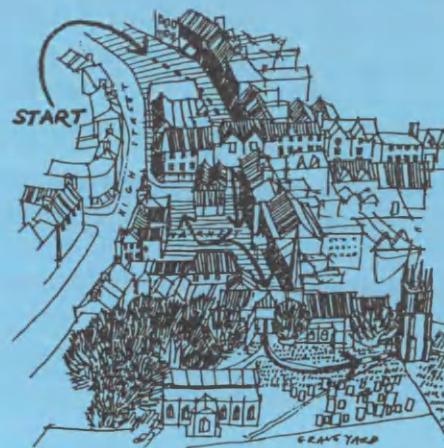
POST MODERN

It is precisely this transparency and yet withdrawal that makes *Townscape* not a reactionary book but a truly *post-modern* one; so called *architectural post-moderns* are still writing as author-dictacts, strutting and instructing, pointing to *their* projects, *their* rules, in just the same manner as Palladio or Pugin. *Townscape* has survived because it is an open work.¹⁹ The leader not only has to *make the work* with the author but there is no fixed order or combination of the parts and devices. Doubly so, as there is no single order in which the places created might themselves be experienced.

The closest parallel to *Townscape* lies not in the literature of urban design (though de Wolfe's *Italian Townscape* reinstated it²⁰) but in literacy theory. Not only does Roland Barthes *The Pleasure of the Text* use a similar fragmented sequence but Barthes, like Cullen before him, champions the senses. '(Pleasure)... does not depend on a logic of understanding... it is something both



Proposals for Westminster, shown above, and for Pimlico Gardens shown below. Town Studies for Evesham, right, and Shrewsbury, below.



Townscape Revisited



revolutionary and asocial, and it cannot be taken over by any collectivity, any mentality, any intellect.²¹ Enjoyment is too readily by 'the political policeman and the psycho-analytical policeman'.²² Barthes' texts, like Cullen's towns and spaces are to be savoured, as sequences, rhythms, fluctuations of attention. There is no single prescription.

Maybe we have been wrong, deceived by the publisher's imprint and the author's professional practice to read *Townscape* as a handbook for designers. Perhaps it too is a blueprint for topographical bliss, an English picturesque variant of the line that runs from Baudelaire through Andre Breton and Louis Aragon's surrealist promenades to the psychogeography of the *Situationiste* derive.²³

CONCLUSIONS

"Classics" easily become tokens, books to be cited but not quoted, let alone read or even used. *Townscape* repays re-reading, closer and more careful attention. It has survived over thirty years in print perhaps as much for its authorial tone and its use of language and illustration as for its message - which has been summarised, disputed and re-written often enough. Re-reading it after the critical and theoretical revolutions of recent years, it emerges enhanced rather than

diminished.

The essential reason for this is that *Townscape*, unlike so many urban design texts is not written with the arrogance of the author/architect, it is written from the heart of experience, to engage not subdue the reader who like Barthes, cruises its pages/spaces. The Italian edition is titled *passaggietti urbani*. ■

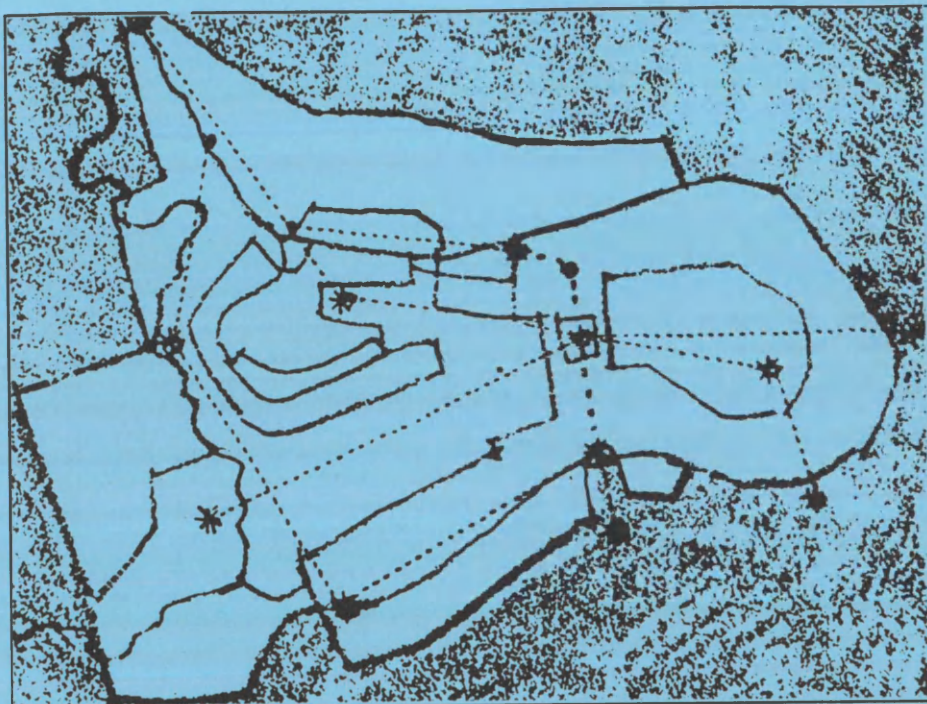
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22. Ibid, p. 57.
23. See Berman, M, *All that is solid melts into air*, Verso, London, 1983, (Part III), Benjamin, W, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, New Left Books, London, 1973; Irwin, A, 'Surrealist Paris', in *Places Vol 6:2*, Situationism pp. 56-57, 1990; Thomas, M J, *Urban Situationism in Planning Outlook*, Autumn, 1975, pp. 27-39, to trace this most radical re-reading.

Proposals to relieve Oxford by building a new road across the Cherwell and south of Broad Walk.



David Gosling collaborator with Gordon Cullen on a number of projects describes his experiences of working with Cullen. Though a great admirer of Gordon Cullen since his student days at Manchester University, the dream of working with him did not actually occur until the mid-1970s. It was during his halcyon days as art editor of the *Architectural Review* from 1946-56 that David found such enchantment in his drawings, as well as the lyricism of his words in his "Townscape" articles, commencing with the January 1950 special edition of the "Functional Tradition", which he wrote with Eric de Mare, the photographer. It was especially his concept of "serial vision" which was to have the greatest influence on him and was, in a sense, a prophesy of present-day computer animation systems in urban design.



After my return from the United States in 1959, I joined the Manchester City Architects Department and in 1962 was given the task of preparing the urban design plan for part of the City Centre (the so-called Processional Way). The scheme was sent to Kenneth Browne, who had succeeded Cullen as Townscape Editor at the *Architectural Review*, and he decided to publish it in August 1962. This led to my acquaintanceship with Ian Nairn, who together with Cullen had produced the seminal "Outrage" issue in June 1955.

It was perhaps ironical that I should finally meet Gordon Cullen when times had become very bad for him, both in medical and employment terms, and at the time when I was leaving my professional career as chief architect of Irvine New Town to start an academic career at Sheffield University.

MARYCULTER

In 1973, Christian Salvesen Ltd., the house builders, through its managing director Tom Baron, commissioned a masterplan for a privately financed new town outside Aberdeen, and Salvesen agreed to the appointment of Gordon Cullen and Kenneth Browne as consultants. Ian Nairn acted as self-appointed critic and Guinness drinker. The team, which included Salvesen's young chief architect, the late Dan Donohue, was a

magical combination and everybody truly believed at the time that the outcome would be the first major built work in Cullen's career. Geoffrey Broadbent, writing in his "Emerging Concepts in Urban Space Design" (Van Nostrand Reinhold 1990, pp. 223-225), said that "... Cullen is perfectly clear that any design study should start with a proper scientific survey and the Maryculter study was a model of its kind, taking into account as it did, location, land ownership, topography, landscape, existing development, services, geology and subsoil. David Gosling's team then worked out on that basis their proposals for the village's overall form, circulation, population, employment, density... (and so forth). It was within this framework that Cullen then presented his concept. He saw this in terms of a Habitat for Houses, a Townscape plan followed by the detailed treatment of four neighborhoods: East Park, Kaleyards, the Wynds and Burnside... more than any other scheme (Broadbent continued) Maryculter shows that far from being a product **only** of time, picturesque effect can be generated from response to a particular situation; a certain site with its contours, its climate and other local conditions; views out, views in and other visual clues; above all, a desire on the part of the designers to respond to a place rather than imposing sterile geometry."

Illustration shows overall layout proposed for Maryculter.

"A sense of Identity can also be generated by the use of landmarks or recognition points: a church steeple, a single tree at the end of a street, a flagpole or a red building in a white street. If these are linked together in a network then people quietly understand where they are in the general context. Ambiguity concedes to clarity."

David Gosling is Professor of Urban Design and Director of the Urban Design Centre at the University of Cincinnati

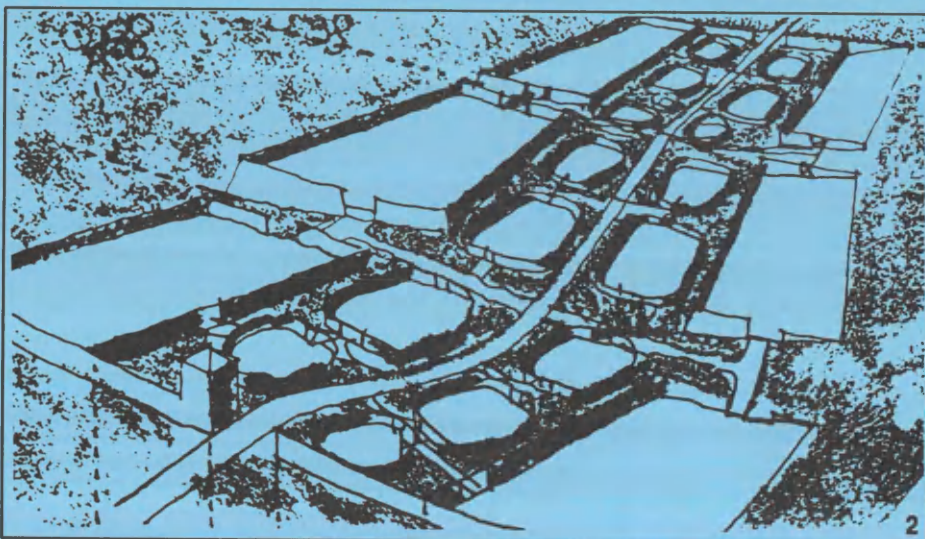
Working with Cullen

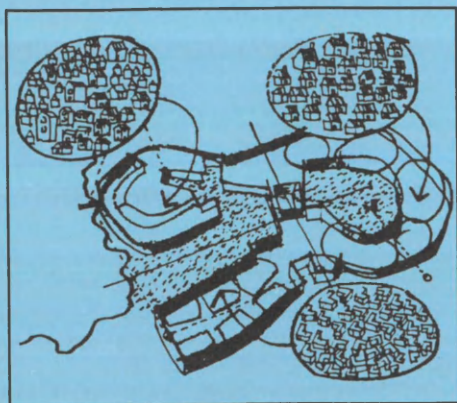
In his notes, Cullen introduced his own urban design concepts as a Habitat for Houses and said "People live in houses, but where do the houses live? If they are homeless, then all we are left with is the typical endless, featureless suburbia..." and he set out guiding principles for the urban design: fitting the development to the site snugly; creating a central nucleus and having the necessary authority, scale and incident; breaking down the housing programme into distinctive sections, each of which has its idiosyncrasy and individuality; articulating the various parts of the development, the one from the other by means of recognisable edges; providing a network of landmarks each of which acts as a rallying point for a particular zone. In this way recognition and navigation is considerably simplified; exploiting topography and planting to produce a memorable situation; using enclosure to provide a sense of locality and place (*I am here*); leading people from one experience to another so that unfolding drama or climax is achieved which sticks in the memory. If, as a result of these works, a sense of belonging and identity can be induced, then this is only to provide what is a birthright. No one should be asked to live in anonymity and ambiguity unless they so choose."

The centre of Maryculter is a carefully considered sequence of elements along a "causeway" link across a central bowl of green space and lakes defined by the terrain. The settlement is situated in a natural amphitheatre of land with the houses grouped around the enclosure and facing inwards to a central parkland. Urbanity builds up from the wild country outside the central street which links the north side of the amphitheatre to the south. Each village or housing cluster has its own corner shop usually located as part of the old farm steadings and associated with the local community centre. The centre itself, as Cullen said "although a single continuous street is made of a series of linked spaces and events... there is then the short release of compression and the substitution of water for brick and stone. Then the sudden release of the loch as it passes under the causeway - the real centre is presented over the water as a citadel."

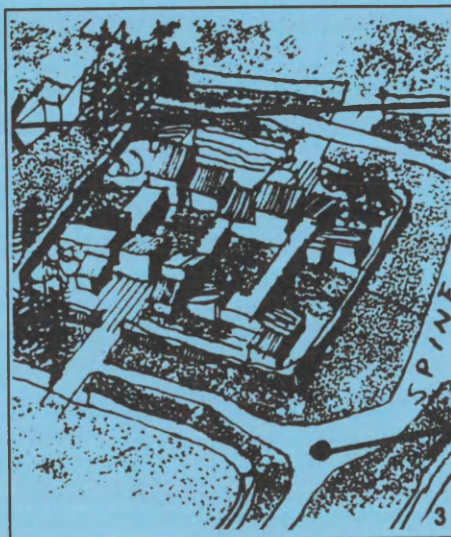
DESIGN APPROACH

Perhaps Cullen's greatest contribution to





'People live in houses but where do the houses live?' This sketch defines the overall landscape and strategy for Maryculter into which the houses move.



**1 Overall layout of Maryculter
2 Kaleyards village
3 Kaleyards - on either side of the spine road are small enclosures containing about six dwellings and enclosed by hedging or grassed banks.
Left: part of Porto Santo Competition entry 1975**

the urban design of Maryculter was his deep understanding of the ecology and topography. Each of the three villages had its own particular character in response to these two factors, but the southern village, Kaleyards, on a north facing moorland slope was the most lyrical. Cullen says, "In the Shetland Islands the weather is severe, and in order to secure a space where plants, including Kale, can grow, the crofters have built walled enclosures. Inside these the wind is tempered and what sun there is benefits the plants and flowers. Weather conditions here suggest a similar protection for houses. The provision of courtyards and enclosed gardens will encourage the growth of plants and do much to break down the barrier between interior and exterior that a severe climate dictates."

Maryculter was never built: it was defeated at public meetings by an unholy alliance of the landed aristocracy and Marxist action groups from Aberdeen University, many of whose members squatted in derelict farm buildings in the area. The landowners, having sold their land at a profit to Salvesen, had no wish to see their grouse moors invaded by development. Salvesen decided not to go to a public enquiry and abandoned the scheme. The final ironical outcome for both groups was that the entire site was turned into a gigantic stone quarry. There were funny moments of course, such as the Board presentation at the Christian Salvesen headquarters in Edinburgh, which resembled an embassy complete with the national consular flags of Scandinavia. At lunch, Cullen, who by that time had grown an enormous beard, said he had "had quite enough of the right-wing conversation" and disappeared downstairs and was discovered by the elegant receptionist fast asleep on the sofa. She reported to her bosses that "a vagrant had somehow wandered in". Gordon took similar action on numerous other occasions including a meeting at the Architectural Press offices in Queen Anne's Gate for a television programme to be produced by a Sheffield colleague, Peter Smith. Cullen got bored with the conversation and fell asleep on the floor.

Gordon Cullen went through incredibly difficult times during the 70s, with little work and the likelihood of losing his sight. He joined Sheffield University at my invitation to become a visiting critic had an immensely positive effect on urban design projects, such

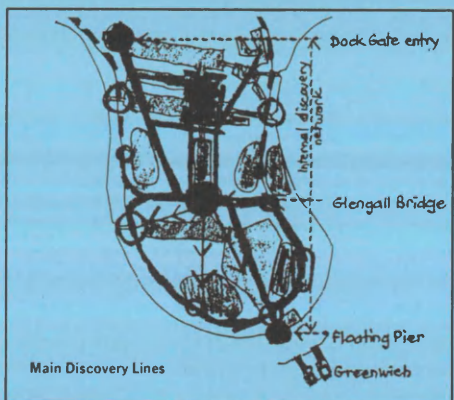
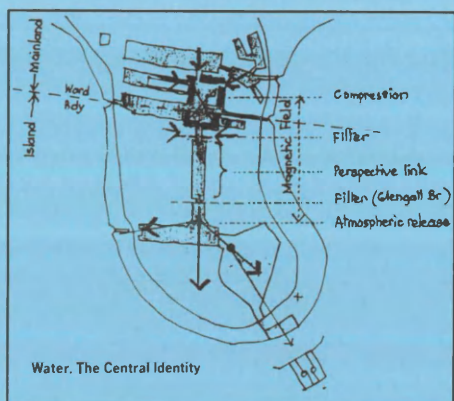
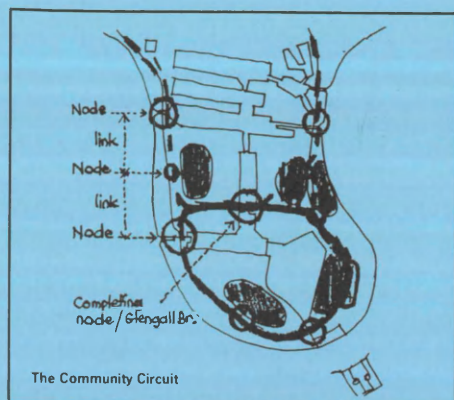
as the RIBA urban design prize-winning thesis by Macdonald & Lees which he tutored.

COMPETITIONS

During that time, Gordon and I worked on a number of schemes, including competitions, one of which was the 1975 international urban design competition for the Island of Porto Santo close to Madeira. Though it was unplaced, it was an attempt to relate the theories of serial vision to ecological and topographical issues. Though essentially barren because of lack of a water supply, the island provided an abundant supply of building limestone. The island had constant wind velocity and fierce tidal currents and, as the Portuguese government wanted to develop tourism, water and power supplies were essential. The plan suggested the creation of a tidal barrage between the main island and the smaller western isle to provide hydro-electric power, which in turn would support a narrow gauge electric railway along the southern coast, where solar stills would distil sea water for the water supply and windmills would pump water to the new vineyards as well as the linear villages for tourists. The narrow rail track provided a sequence of spatial events linking nuclei of development, illustrated left.

In a 1978 project for the Central Bank of Barbados and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation we produced an urban design plan for Church Village, Bridgetown in partnership with a former Sheffield student, John Ferguson. The government of Barbados required a new bank headquarters and as "planning gain" construct an open air performing arts centre and plaza to encourage the growth of dance which was a flourishing performing art on the island. The key elements of the plan were: the cathedral and cemetery which were retained as a green oasis in the southwest corner of the site; and a small plaza between the cathedral and the Central Bank as a busy, small-scale entrance plaza linking the Church Village development with Trafalgar Square and Broad Street. These pedestrian ways in themselves formed a sequence of spaces and Cullen suggested that a hotel should be built on the west side of the square to form an entrance gateway. The form of the bank itself was to have been a series of stepped terraces to allow the building form to be utilised as a series of solar collectors for cooling. The

Working with Cullen



Isle of Dogs

Above: Cullen's principles for structuring development.

Right: David Gosling Associates proposed Urban Design Plan (Option Three) and above this Cullen's aerial view of his own proposals.

scheme was completed by the mid-70s and though the celebrated Brazilian landscape designer, Roberto Burle Marx, produced a successful landscape scheme, the brutal design of the bank building itself by the local architect Mervyn Awon attracted much public criticism and bore little resemblance to the sensitive images of Cullen, but rather a regurgitation of the excesses of the Japanese Metabolists of the early 60s. Gordon Cullen's drawings were displayed at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in 1979.

LONDON DOCKLANDS

In 1981, a study was commissioned by the London Docklands Development Corporation and I was invited as consultant to form a small in-house design team to work with the chief planner, Edward Hollamby, in the preparation of a comprehensive urban design study for the Isle of Dogs, which included the Enterprise Zone. The team was established in mid-1981 and towards the end of the year I persuaded the corporation to also appoint Cullen as consultant. The final report was published in 1982. The execution of the study created unforeseen difficulties.

Working with John Ferguson from Sheffield, we produced alternative planning options to indicate a variety of design opportunities. The proposals were seen as an amalgam of the public and private realms. The public realm concerned the public spaces formed by new and existing buildings, public movement systems, including pedestrian routes and rapid transit systems and the squares, streets, arcades, parks, and open spaces which form the urban morphology or physical shape of the plan. The argument was that if the skeletal structure of the city - the public realm - is sufficiently strong in terms of visual identity and navigation - then greater freedom of architectural expression can be afforded in the private realm. Of the three options produced, option three (illustrated to the right) came closest to an authentic urban design plan.

In the whole of the peninsula, Island Gardens at the southern tip is the only major public area giving a dramatic view out towards Greenwich. The vista is breathtaking. The significance of this view is that there is a direct axis towards St. Anne's Church, Limehouse, designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor in 1714 on the northwest boundary of the Isle of Dogs. Because this axis crosses key points within the peninsula,

it provided an important key to the possible visual structure and could act as an urban generator. The Greenwich axis almost takes on the mystical form of a ley-line with a significance beyond the linking of two major monuments but provides a series of reference points which enhance the visual structure.

At first Gordon Cullen embraced the idea with enthusiasm. He wrote, "In this way we construct the internal water world of fantasy, scale, and amazement. It is the greatest soul - axis in London." But later in 1982, he reversed his position and produced his own visual appraisal and networks. It related studies of key areas of existing development around the perimeter of the peninsula to suggestions for environmental improvements and a study of the inner core for new development. Beautifully drawn, it nevertheless failed to provide a strong enough framework for developers. Now that the team had split into two factions, the corporation permanent team headed by Hollamby rejected both sets of proposals and produced its own pragmatic plan largely based on current ideas of all the developers involved as an amalgam of ideas. Basically, the corporation rejected the Cullen proposals and the Gosling alternatives as being too prescriptive and certainly did not follow the political ideology of the day. The irony was that when Olympia and York finally decided to develop Canary Wharf, they demanded an urban design framework to protect their own financial interests.

The outcome of the fragmentation of the team is interesting. Most of the original team were Sheffield graduates and one of them, David Price, joined Gordon Cullen as his partner in a new practice. It was perhaps the very best thing that happened to Cullen because it seemed that it gave him a new lease on life at the end of his career and for the next seven or eight years he produced some of his most beautiful work. Though I did not work with Price and Cullen apart from the Water Square Proposal for Canary Wharf in 1988 with Skidmore Owings & Merrill as master planners, I did work on subsequent projects in Docklands and followed their work with great interest.

Brian Edwards in his seminal study ("London Docklands: urban design in an age of deregulation", Oxford, Butterworth Architecture, 1992, p. 42, p. 48) of Docklands said, "The framework for the Isle of Dogs conceived in the first instance by

David Gosling and Gordon Cullen, proved too prescriptive and far-reaching for the LDDC in 1982. It sought to bring a measure of order to bear where political will and commercial pressure had tended rather to pull in the opposite direction... Gosling and Cullen's urban design study for the Isle of Dogs sought to establish a range of development options within a strong spatial and physical development... Gosling has subsequently stated that urban design frameworks are the best way to weld together existing communities instead of allowing their destruction and believes this to be the primary goal in the reconstruction of declining inner cities in the post-industrial age."

In an acerbic article of the 1984 LDDC Exhibition, Louis Hellman in the *Architects Journal* (AJ, 19 Sept. 1984, pp. 48-49) also noted "On my way home I read with pleasure Gordon Cullen and David Gosling's sensitive and intelligent analysis of the character of place, history and visual uniqueness of the Isle of Dogs and studied Cullen's perceptive drawings showing how this character could be echoed and enhanced by careful design and development. But of course we all know it never will be. It smacks too much of planning and that went out with flared trousers didn't it?"

CONCLUSIONS

If all this sounds a little cynical, then perhaps it is intended to be. Gordon Cullen was perhaps one of the greatest and most misunderstood urban designers of this century. He never really got to build anything. He has been a charming and humorous friend, with a wonderful family, an irascible and stubborn old man and a man who shared with me a passion for pubs in Wraybury and northwards. It is for these reasons that David Price and I want to prepare a sixty year anthology of his work from the 1930s onwards. ■

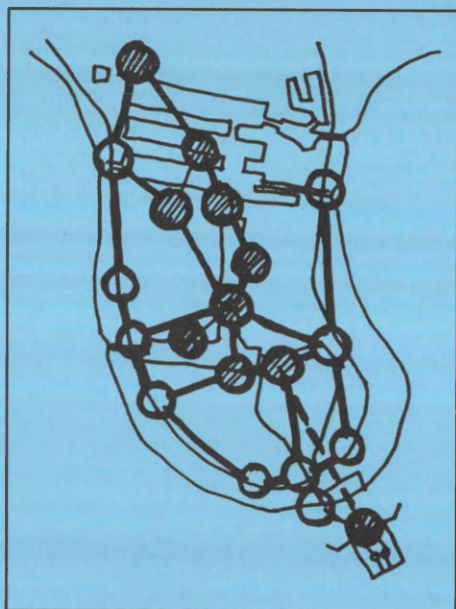
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Urban Design Projects in Practice 1981-1991

Gordon Cullen enjoyed a tremendous renaissance in activity for the ten years before illness forced his unwelcome retirement from practice. With his death on 11 August this year it is timely to remember his contribution to the real business of urban design and particularly introduce some of his last works to his world-wide audience. Little of this work has been published and it would be impossible in the limited space available to describe the projects in detail. However, as David Gosling has already mentioned, it is hoped that an anthology which does justice to him and his work will be available in the not-too-distant future.



Above: Precedent Network for Isle of Dogs identifying places critical to Cullen's proposed strategy.

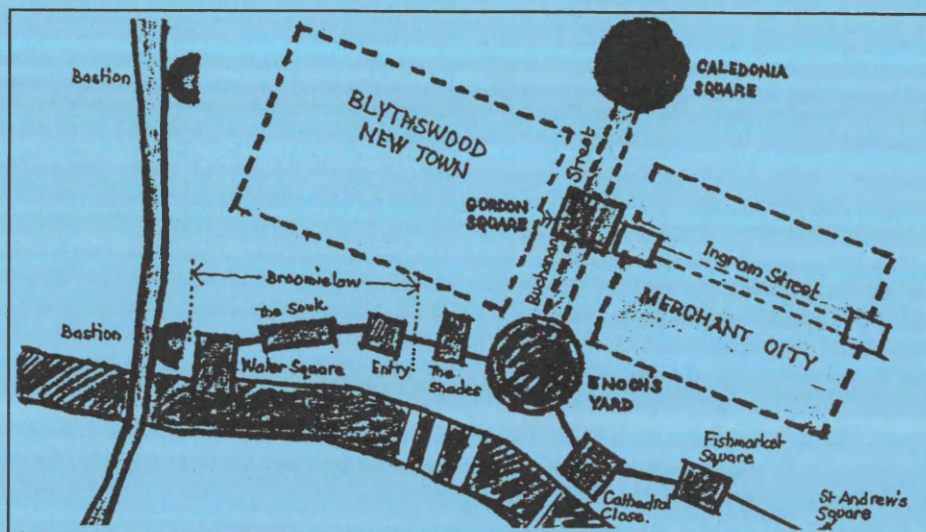
Top: Glasgow Study

Right hand page:

Top: View from Stirling Study

Middle: From Waverley Station Competition, Edinburgh

Bottom: From Aberdeen Study showing overall structure



ISLE OF DOGS

Readers will probably be familiar with the study of the Isle of Dogs commissioned in 1981 by the London Docklands Development Corporation and led by David Gosling. I have a little further commentary to add to David's recollections of this project.

Although many observers have criticised the product of the LDDC's regime and the lack of adherence to a strong urban design framework it should be remembered that the original aspirations of the Corporation were relatively modest. Gordon's solution to this dilemma was to produce a "precedent network" which identified the critical places which should, once developed according to his visual prescriptions, make three-dimensional sense with the sections between the nodes naturally respecting them as they became built up. Unfortunately such a sophisticated planning tool was beyond the comprehension of the "market" and the concept was never adopted. Large scale projects, such as Canary Wharf as we see it today, were inadmissible at the time and it would be interesting to observe how the visual structure Gordon invented might have changed with prior knowledge of such an intention in the study. He accepted it intellectually as development progressed but remained frustrated by the lack of urban cohesion in the Isle of Dogs context.

GLASGOW

The Study of Glasgow City Centre (1983-4), commissioned by the Scottish Development Agency, was the first of four major and several minor exercises we

undertook north of the border. As real-life projects they added significant new dimensions to "Townscape" theory applied to cities with both obvious and invisible problems. Gordon used to call the process "Urban Psychiatry" which is a very adequate description of the method used to reaching, and drawing, the conclusions of the studies.

The Glasgow project was originally conceived as a method of attracting investment into the city by demonstrating how its allure and reputation could be increased faced with the competition of Edinburgh, only forty miles away. The construction of the M8 motorway had divorced the western and northern districts from the centre and there was a fear that the city centre would be sacrificed to a sprawl of brown-field development. Gordon's solution was to devise a programme of "implosion" initiated by raising the visual and spatial magnetism of the centre to a point where it would become the only logical place to relocate and redevelop. Buchanan Street and the Clyde were singled out for special attention and a series of special projects, when linked together, formed two major urban systems which intersected at St Enoch's. This was later identified as the site for the "Glasgow Tower" competition although we ignored our own advice in our submission and placed it in the river instead!

ABERDEEN

The study of Aberdeen (1986) was prompted by an elderly road proposal which it was felt would ruin Union Terrace Gardens, the city centre's principle open

space. Gordon pointed out that this was not the only problem facing the city centre and so the brief was immediately expanded into an examination of the whole of the central area. Our two most radical suggestions were the extension of the railway station to provide a concourse directly on Union Street and the extension of the inner harbour to provide a site for the proposed Petrochemicals Museum. As with Glasgow, our ambition was to locate as many dispersed activities appropriate to the city centre within it rather than on "soft" sites on its periphery. Only in this way would the critical mass required for true regeneration be achieved.

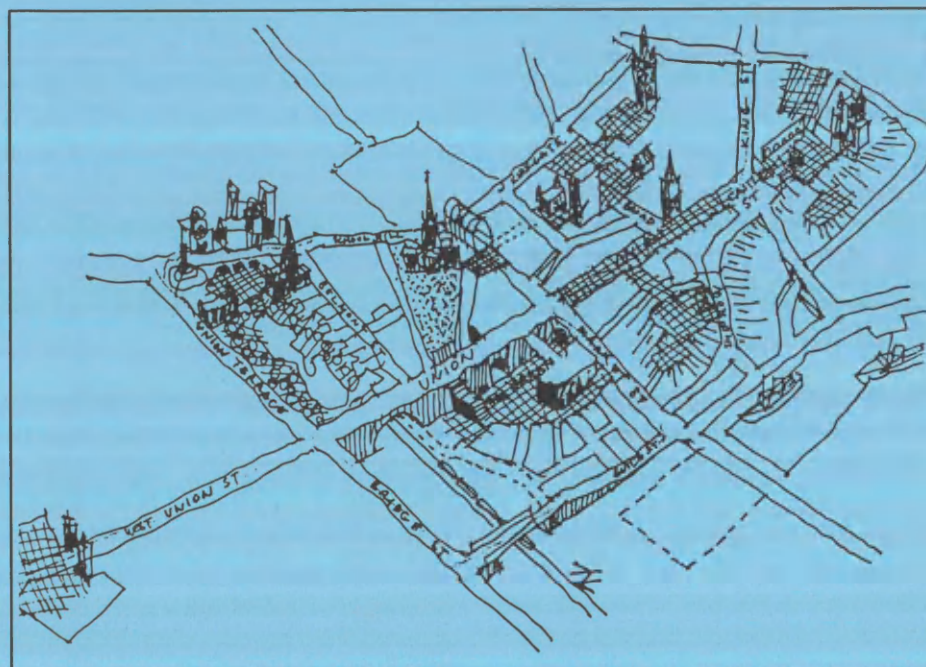
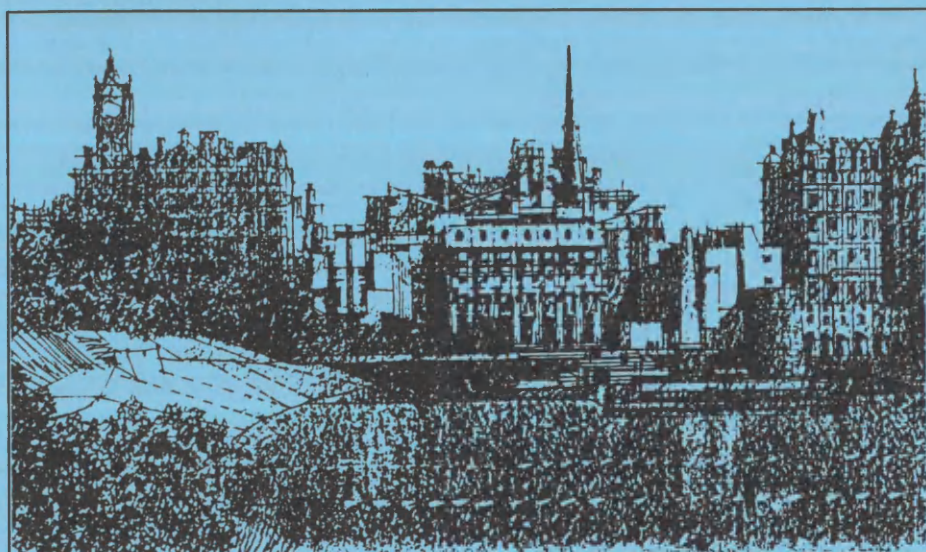
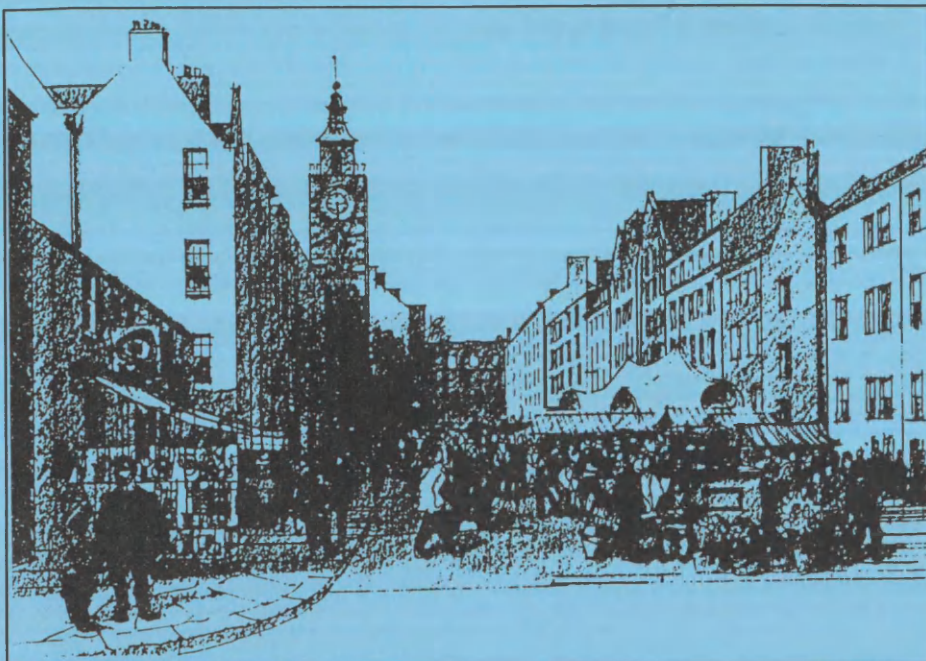
STIRLING AND EDINBURGH

The studies of Stirling and Edinburgh Old Town (1987-9) were both commissioned as part of larger projects examining the tourism potential of these historic locations. At Stirling we were principally concerned with creating a powerful route from the castle to the Forth, which is presently completely cut off from the town centre but has remarkable development potential. Traffic and transport were vital issues which had to be addressed in both circumstances and in Edinburgh the major subject of enquiry was the "Royal Mile", the spine of the Old Town. Although the street does lead from the castle to the palace it is really rather shabby and is choked with vehicles. Our task was to suggest improvements which would transform it into one of the great linear urban experiences of Europe.

With the benefit of the groundwork done for this study, we decided to develop the concepts further in order to enter the ideas competition for Waverley Station as a "long shot". Gordon's masterly argument caused him to win first prize and a degree of recognition in Scotland which had hardly been made public beforehand.

During the course of the major Scottish projects we also worked in Greenock, Aviemore, Gretna Green and Clydebank.

Gordon's enthusiasm for working in Scotland was immense. Born of parents from the Shetlands, his Celtic origins were unleashed in the course of the consultancies we undertook for the SDA with a passion and concern for the major cities of his native country. However, Gordon never ignored England or Wales, even though he was their adopted son.



Urban Design Projects in Practice - 1981-1991



LONDON, CARDIFF AND THE BLACK COUNTRY

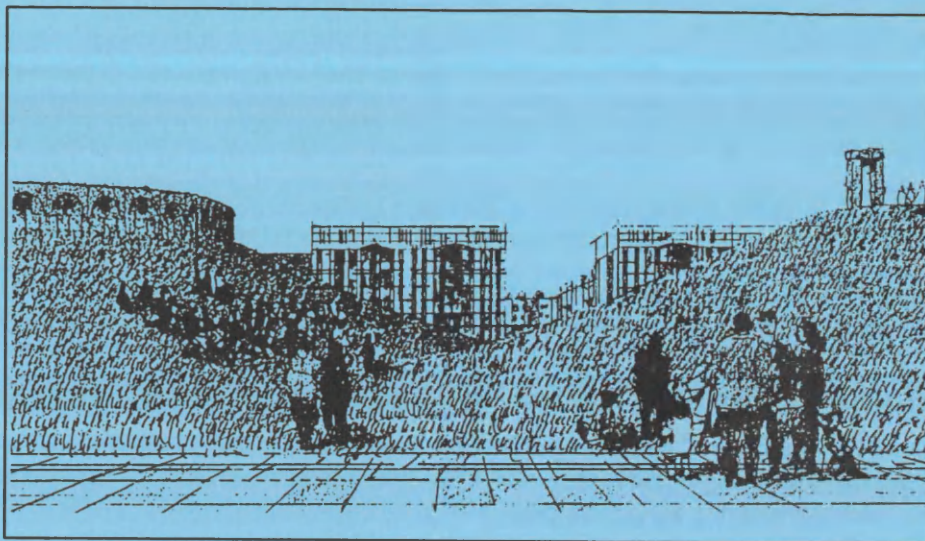
London Docklands, Cardiff Bay and the Black Country continued to be examined by his critical eye and his persuasive commentary and immaculate drawings.

Furthermore our major built projects in London allowed him to transform theory into practice. The two he felt most deeply about are **Swedish Quays** and **Helsinki Square**, both on the water's edge at Greenland Dock. The interaction of private and public space, the aspect and prospect of the dwellings and their wonderful location distilled these schemes into the essence of "Townscape" in new buildings.

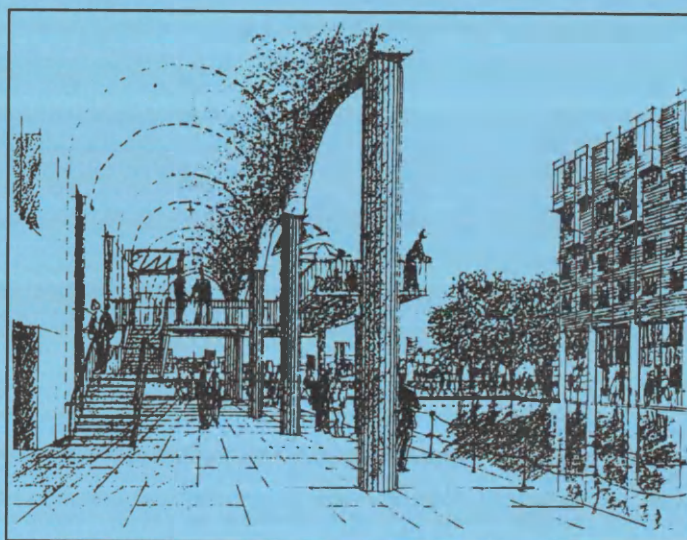
Having caught the attention of private clients with these projects in particular, Gordon and I were then asked to submit designs for many other urban design and architectural essays, including the site of **St Mary Abbot's Hospital** in Kensington and the masterplan for the **Greenwich Peninsula**. Gordon's talent for perception simply got better with every project we were asked to undertake.

CONCLUSIONS

Gordon adored the company of people who could educate and amuse him. They were often much younger than himself which says a great deal about his opinion of the profession in urban design - he was, and is, the pinnacle of the "peer group" and every one of those who had the fortune to cross his path personally will remember his ability to give kind and forceful encouragement simultaneously. Many people think of Gordon only as a superlative draughtsman and forget that he represents the most influential source of urban design that the twentieth century has produced in the United Kingdom. Having had the unique privilege of ten years of his education, I would remind readers that Gordon's influence is much greater than is confined to the pages of "Townscape". It is up to us to develop and refine his theories as he wished. ■



Above: part of a series of ideas for Cardiff
Right: Cuba Street, London Docklands
Bottom: Helsinki Square housing, London Docklands



English Post-War Planning: A Golden Age?

KEVIN
LYNCH
LECTURE

Sir Peter Shephard, partner of Shephard Epstein Hunter architects and erstwhile Dean of the Graduate School of Fine Arts at the University of Pennsylvania, presented an anecdotal and entertaining review of British post-war urban planning in his 1994 Kevin Lynch Memorial Lecture given in July. It is perhaps true to say that few if any "golden ages" withstand close scrutiny, even in the nostalgic hindsight of one so closely involved. But, at a time when physical planning at the metropolitan scale is showing signs of returning to the urban design and planning agenda, it is timely to share in the memories of the last real attempt to determine the overall form of our cities.

At the age of thirty, Shephard had joined the team of his godfather, Patrick Abercrombie, working on his plan for London. A good part of the talk focused on this pivotal figure in the post-war town planning movement. According to Shephard, Abercrombie had a real genius for simplifying complex problems so that they could be easily explained and addressed. In this he was able to draw on the considerable talents of the architects and planners in his team, developing various inventive techniques of "presentation for persuasion". Arthur Ling's depiction of London's living communities as organic "blobs" was a good example.

In the use of simple, but comprehensive analytical methods, the influence of Geddes was to the fore. Simple practical survey methods were used, including pacing out the physical edge of Greater London in a three week slog that left its imprint in the inner boundary of the subsequent Green Belt.

The post-war planning movement was portrayed in the historical context of a philosophical lineage from Geddes, through Unwin and Parker to Clough Williams-Ellis and Abercrombie, and in contrast to the low density zoning and relative "laissez faire" of the inter-war period. The resulting urban sprawl was the enemy of the new generation of planners, and the shift of perception that came with the Second World War, ensured that their time had come. The war shook up British social life, and profoundly changed attitudes towards social issues and towards the land, including inducing a strong awareness of the importance of agriculture.

1947 LEGISLATION

By the 1947 Town Planning Act, the major features of the new system - the provisions for Green Belts, New Towns and the nationalisation of development rights - were in place.

Of these, the advent of comprehensive development control was perhaps the most important measure. Prior to 1947, the preservation of green space relied on the limited potential of public purchase and low density zoning was the mechanism for attempting to control development. According to Shephard, even private developers found that the new system worked to their advantage, giving great definition to opportunities and ensuring that development areas were properly serviced by infrastructure. The Golden Age, such as it was, however, was short-lived. The subsequent failures appear to Shephard to have involved a combination of causes including the undermining of some of its main provisions by politicians and mistakes in vision by the planners themselves. One of the keystones of the 1947 Act, the Compensation and Betterment provision offering the possibility of taxing development, was rapidly knocked out by the Churchill government and the development of new towns and communities was slowed down by the new government.

PLANNING VISION

In terms of vision, many of the ideas of the architect-planners of the time, as exemplified in Abercrombie's Plan for London, were never embodied in legislation but, in some respects, as Peter Shephard admitted, nevertheless had major negative consequences for the urban environment. Proposals for the transport system, for example, relied too heavily on ring roads, presaging the M25, but failing to address the importance of the larger network and of public transport provision. The plan was based on forecasts that failed to predict both the post-war population boom and the vast increase in road traffic.

For Shephard, the major new public housing schemes brought good space and open space standards but the use of high rise for family accommodation was a "grotesque mistake" (for which architects like Gropius and Maxwell Fry bore a large share of the responsibility). High rise, in Shephard's view, is good for neither families or offices



with low rise offices offering greater potential for social contact in administrative functions.

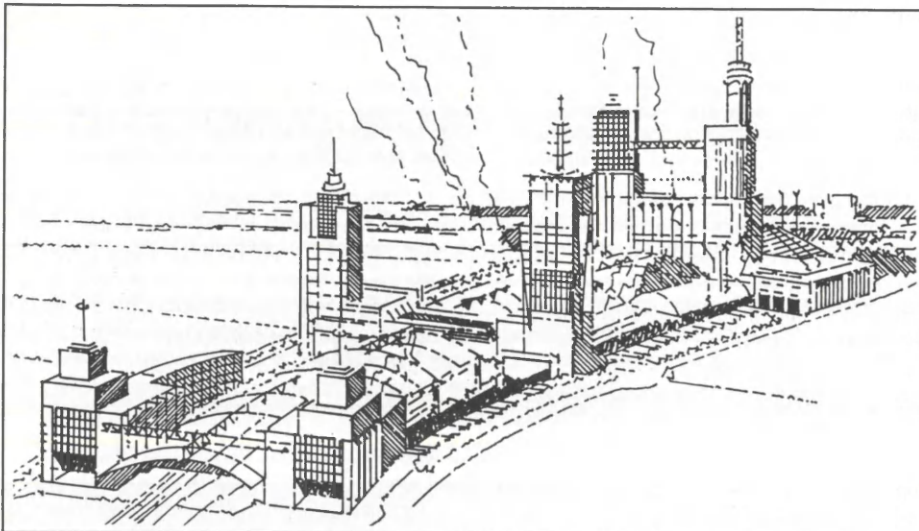
The "world's most comprehensive planning legislation" produced disappointing results that were a "tragedy". On the one hand the system was less effective in practice than in theory. There was, for example the failure to stem the intrusion of high rise buildings on London's skyline, due in part to the interference of the Government of the day, as in the approval of the Hyde Park Hilton.

On the other hand, as argued by Walter Bor and others in the discussion that followed, the British planning system has been perhaps far too comprehensive, aiming at "scrutinising everything". The British system was contrasted with that in the USA and there was some difference of view as to whether a system that relies almost totally on the effectiveness of public demand and participation and, by implication, the effectiveness of lawyers, is any better.

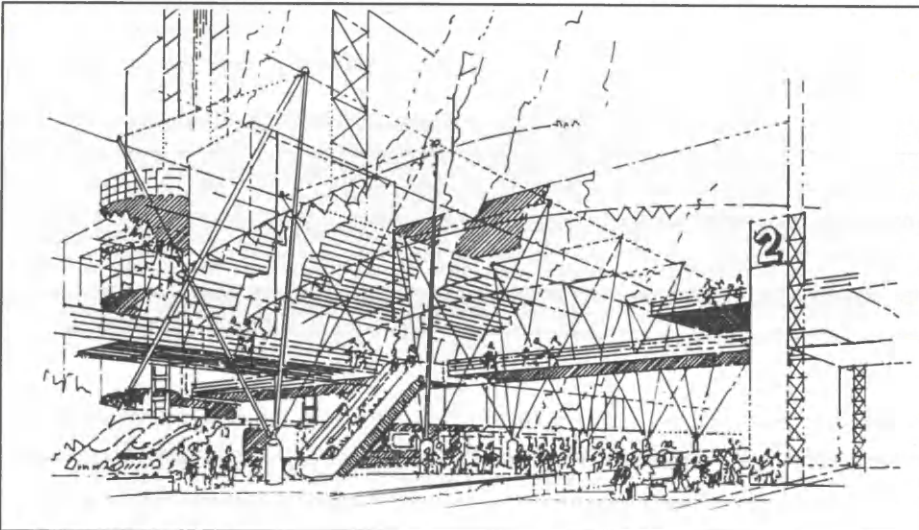
For Shephard, "seat of the pants" planning could only be effective with planners of stature, as seat of the pants flying in the Second World War was the preserve of ace pilots. This raised the question: where are the modern equivalents of Abercrombie and Williams-Ellis? By implication, the answer seems to be that there is no place for this type of integrated approach to planning in the emaciated "must-do" local government of today. As Jon Rowland pointed out, by comparison to the depth and scope of Abercrombie's plan for London, today's local authority UDPs are sad, two dimensional shadows. The Golden Age of British Town Planning may be largely a myth but in Sir Peter's words, "local government decline in planning is sinful". ■

Tony Lloyd-Jones

Colin Buchanan and Partners



Stratford above and below



Oxford High Street below



THE PRACTICE

Colin Buchanan and Partners is a leading multi-disciplinary planning and transport consultancy with more than twenty five years' experience in the UK and overseas. The practice was founded in 1964 by the team that produced the 'Traffic in Towns' study - still regarded as the fundamental work on the effects of the private car on our urban fabric and the need for improved public transport. Today the consultancy employs some seventy professional staff including town planners, urban designers, architects, market researchers and economists, as well as traffic and transport specialists.

Operating from UK offices in London, Edinburgh, Bristol and Manchester as well as overseas, the consultancy offers comprehensive analysis and specialist services on all aspects of master planning from initial assessments to policy implementation. Our wide range of in-house skills ensures an innovative approach to all aspects of the development process.

STRATFORD

This commission by the London Borough of Newham explored regeneration options for the Town Centre and adjacent railway lands associated with the potential siting of the Second Channel Tunnel Terminal at Stratford. Alternative scenarios were prepared to demonstrate the development potential of the Terminal hinterland with the aim of stimulating increased economic activity and associated social benefits.

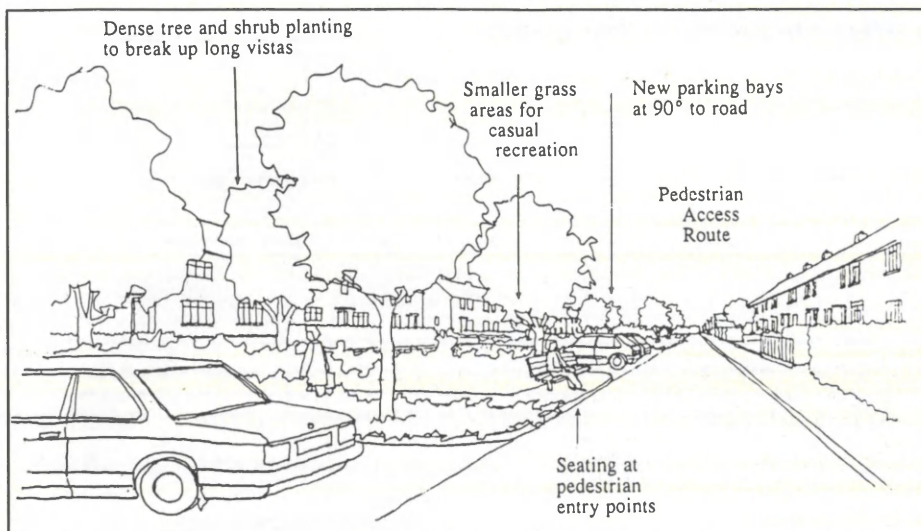
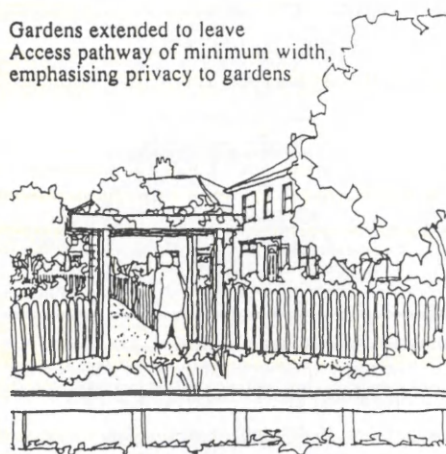
OXFORD

As part of a comprehensive Transport Feasibility Study for the City of Oxford, the urban design team worked closely with in-house traffic engineers to develop a series of proposals for permanent improvements in the pedestrian environment in the City Centre.

MIDDLESBOROUGH

A detailed regeneration strategy for East Middlesbrough was prepared following the Borough Council's successful bid for City Challenge funds. Based on local public consultation undertaken by the consultants, a series of physical upgrading packages was prepared and costed, leading to an implementation strategy which is now underway on site.

Gardens extended to leave
Access pathway of minimum width,
emphasising privacy to gardens



Middlesborough above and left

SAUDI ARABIA

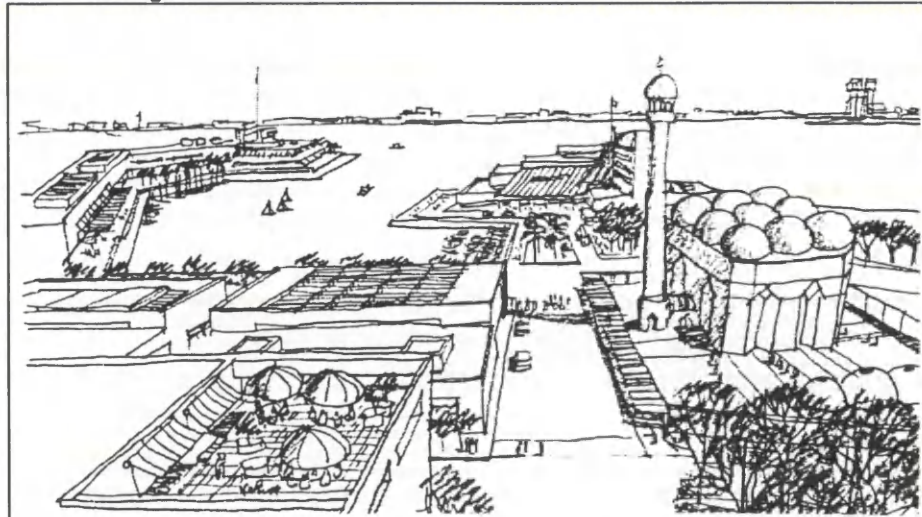
The twin 'Industrial Cities' of Jubail and Yanbu at each end of the trans-Saudi oil and gas pipelines were both the subject of major proposals, beginning with an initial site search (Jubail) thorough to a radical revision of the draft Master Plan (Yanbu). There have been few comparable opportunities since the British New Towns for fundamental master planning exercises on this scale that are then realised on site. The achievements at Jubail were recognised by a RS Reynolds Award for Architectural Excellence.

DUBAI

In association with consulting engineers Maunsell, a Master Plan was prepared for 700 hectares of undeveloped land on the eastern boundary of Dubai Emirate around the newly-dredged Al Mamzar Lagoon. The project began with a series of broad development options testing different densities and land uses and led to detailed urban design guidelines, landscape proposals for the regional-scale Lagoon Park and financial feasibility assessments. ■

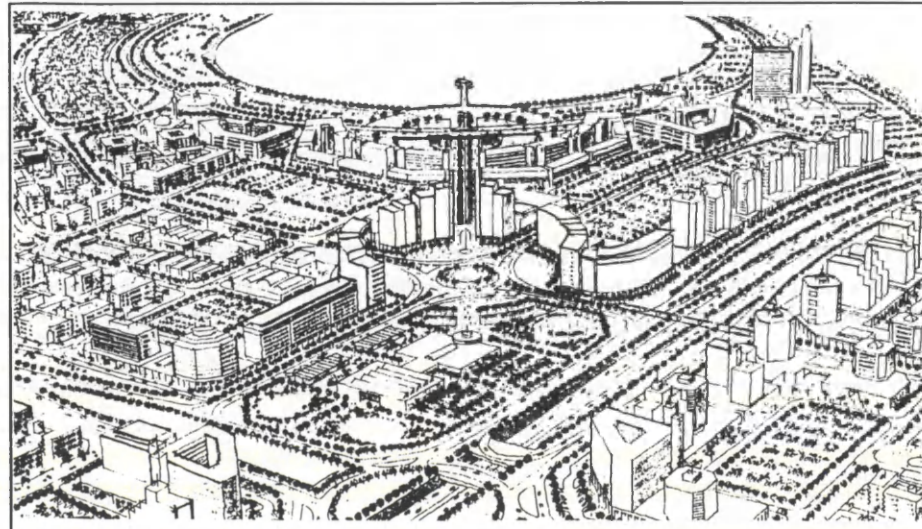
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Yanbar below

Al Mamzar above



ECD Architects and Energy Consultants

ECD was established in 1980 with the specific aim of combining energy research and consultancy with mainstream architectural practice. After completing a series of pioneering low energy housing schemes in the 1980s, our work is now concentrated in the fields of urban regeneration and environmental assessment. Currently the practice is forty strong with offices in London and Brussels.

Over the past five years ECD has built up a strong reputation in estate refurbishment, much of it involving resident participation in design and construction with residents in occupation. These projects have often involved us in the preparation and submission of bids for Estate Action or City Challenge funding.

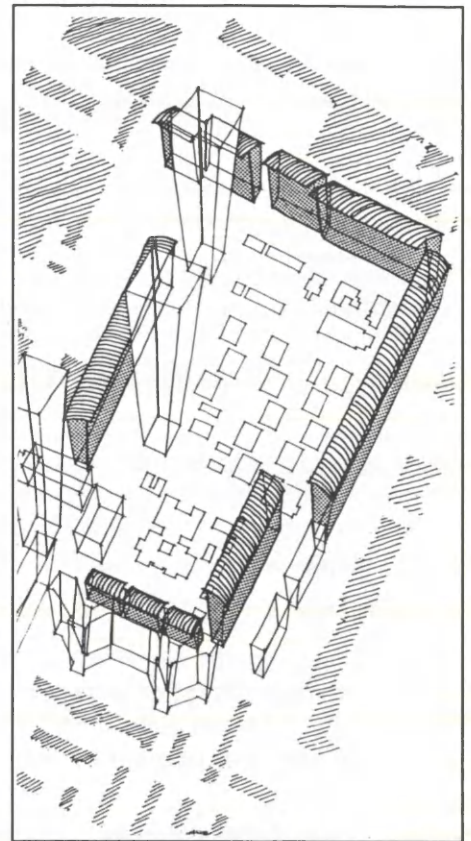
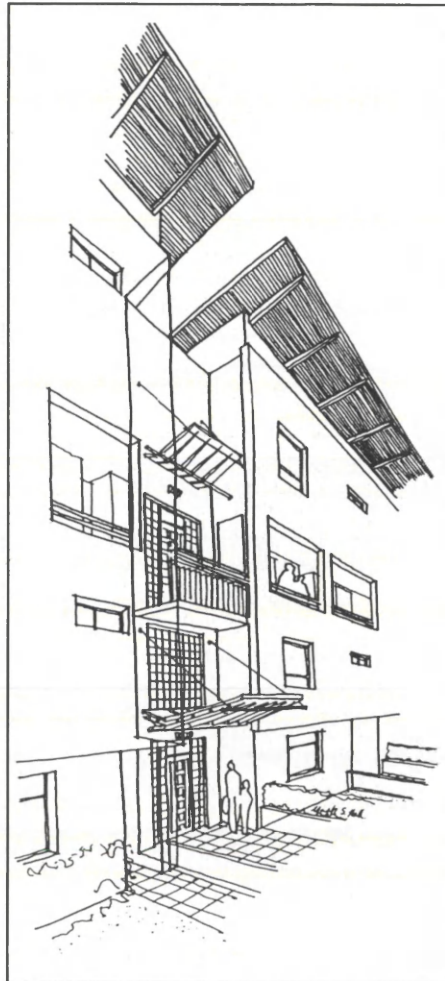
BARKANTINE ESTATE, ISLE OF DOGS - TOWER HAMLETS

One example is the Barkantine Estate on the Isle of Dogs in East London, an estate the size of a small town with over 1,000 dwellings in low, medium and high rise construction together with a school, shops, pub and community centre. Much of the estate was re-developed in the 1960s but there are in addition buildings dating from the 1930s, 40s and 50s and the result is a visual hotch-potch.

The physical problems however were fairly consistent; leaking roofs, rotten windows, inadequate heating and condensation. The solution has been to give the buildings a new suit of clothes to enter the 21st Century; new roofs and windows, insulated overcladding and affordable heating. This new architectural language is designed to reinforce the 'urban village' feel of the estate and to create a more unified and coherent visual environment. The first phase of work is now complete and illustrates the dramatic transformation from a grim '60s maisonette block into a clean crisp piece of modern architecture.

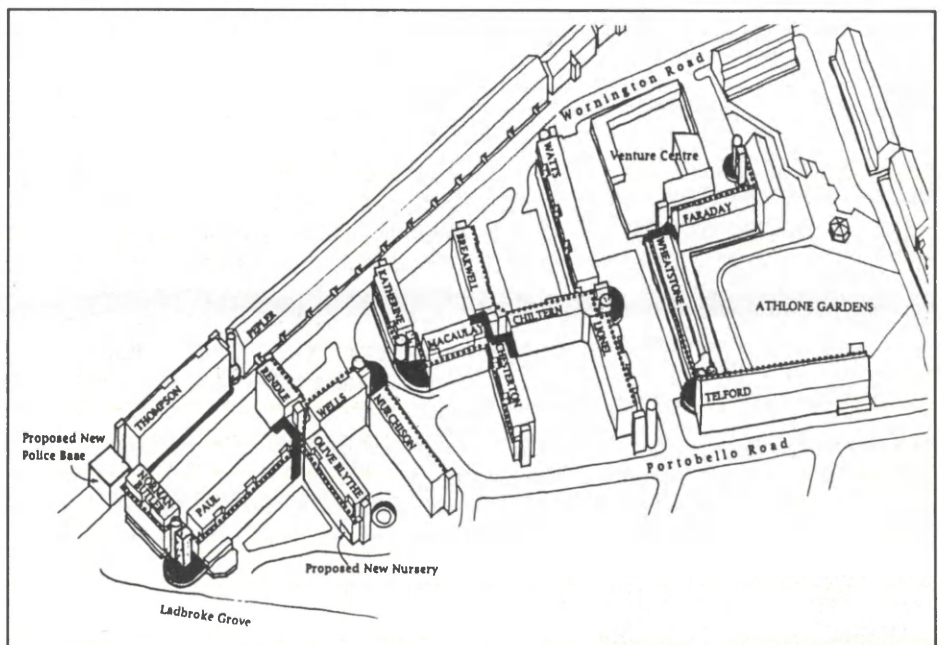
WORNINGTON GREEN ESTATE, NORTH KENSINGTON

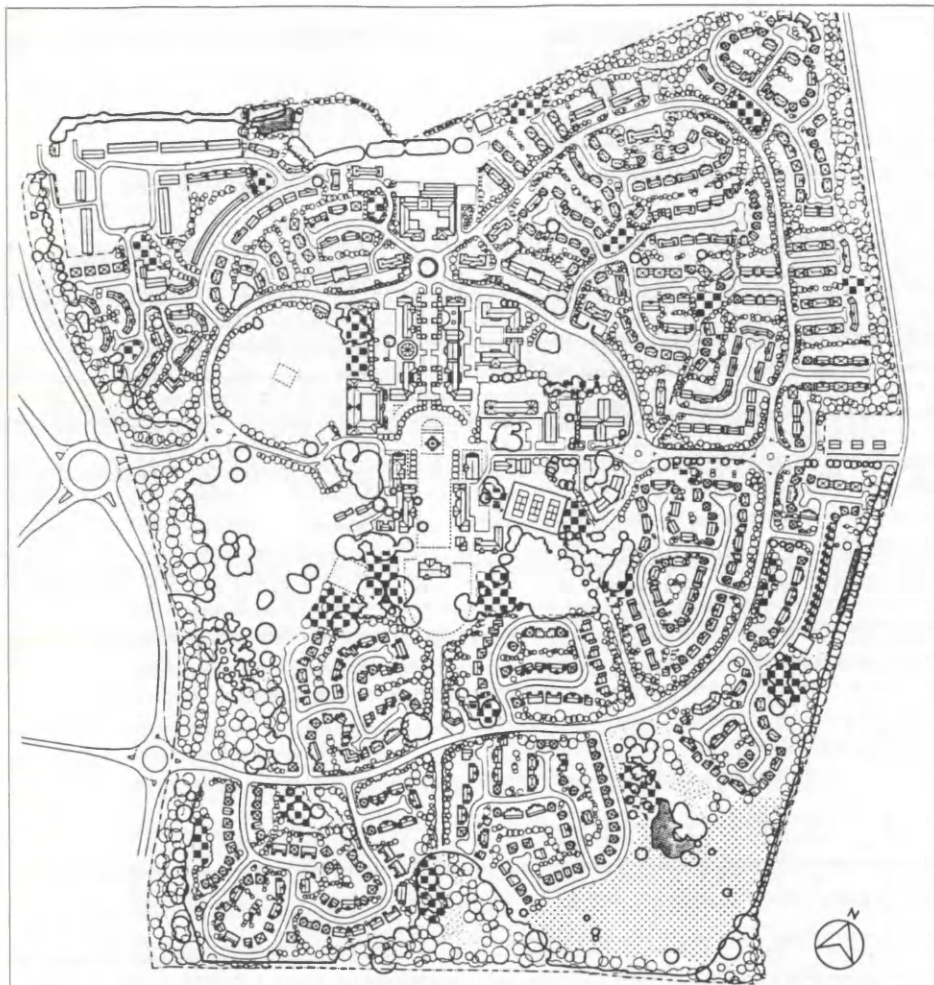
Another recent example of ECD's work in the fields of urban regeneration is the Wornington Green Estate within the North Kensington City Challenge area. Wornington Green is a 1970s medium rise deck access estate with serious crime and drug related



Above: Barkantine Estate showing new architectural language applied to buildings.

Below and to right: Wornington Green Estate showing new entrance structures.





BALDERTON VILLAGE, NEWARK

The 230 acre site, shown above, consists of predominantly mature parkland into which the new development has been sensitively inserted. In addition to the proposed 1150 new homes, some existing buildings are retained and re-used to provide business and retail space in the high density 'urban core'. A new primary school is also planned together with community and leisure facilities. The development preserves the natural amenity value of the site and provides a system of pedestrian and cycle routes connecting all residential areas with the centre. High standards of energy efficiency are anticipated in all new buildings together with an environmental code to ensure a model 'green' community.

problems typical of this inner city location. ECD's brief was to consult with the residents and the Metropolitan Police and develop proposals to improve access and security. The solution has been to create seven new entrance halls together with new lifts, entry phone installations and restricted access to individual walkways.

The entrances are located alongside existing staircase towers. Their curved forms are intended to create some drama and excitement in the streetscape. The entrance halls are built in a pattern of obscure and translucent glass blocks within a steel grid framework and are designed to be illuminated at night.

BALDERTON VILLAGE, NEWARK

For the past three years ECD has been working on the masterplan for a new community to be built on the site of a former mental hospital in Balderton, near Newark in Nottinghamshire, shown to the left.

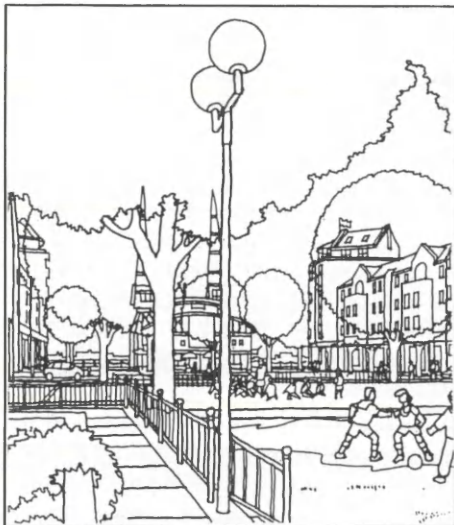
BREEAM

In collaboration with the building Research Establishment ECD have developed BREEAM, the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method. The original version, designed for new office developments has been immensely successful with over 200 assessments now completed. Subsequent versions now cover existing occupied offices, retail superstores, industrial buildings and new housing. The BREEAM system assesses the environmental impact of a building at three levels - Global, Local and Internal. Credits are awarded for measures which are better than normal practice and an overall rating is then given; Fair, Good, Very Good or Excellent.

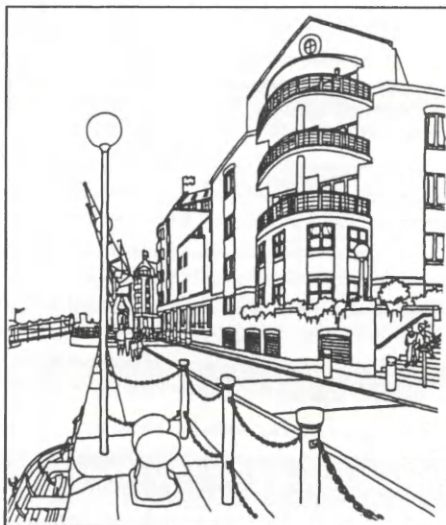
The BREEAM method provides a valuable yardstick against which developers and occupiers can measure that performance in this area, as well as giving design professionals a specific environmental agenda to work with.

ECD actively promotes the concept of sustainable development and advises a large number of clients on the energy and environmental aspects of their work. ■

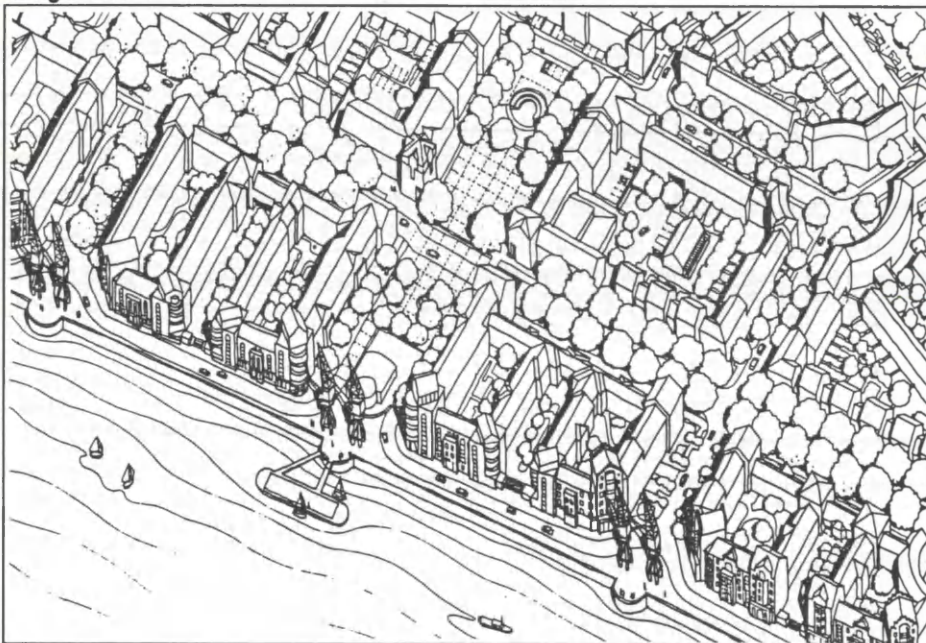
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Village Centre



Dockside



WEST SILVERTOWN

The pattern of development to the south of the spine road comprises terraces of mainly two storey houses arranged in loosely rectangular forms around private gardens in the centre. The corners are turned with small flat blocks two or three storeys high over group garages at ground level. The flats are set forward of the houses and provide a strong corner which can be used to control space, partly screen parked cars and define discrete areas of the Village.

This approach produced a comparatively smooth profile in section across the site

commencing in the south with two storey houses adjoining the North Woolwich Road and increasing up to six storeys alongside the Dock.

To the social facilities required in the brief, which included local shops, a village hall and a Medical Centre, were added a Nursery School and a Primary School. These facilities are located around a public square near the centre of the first phase would be mutually supportive in acting as a catalyst for social contact and assist in the early creation of a 'Village' spirit.

PRP Architects (formerly Phippen Randall and Parkes) see architecture and urban design as complementary. The design of successful urban places is as dependent on the way buildings are grouped together and the design of the spaces between them as it is on the design of individual buildings, a fact as true for towns and cities as for housing developments. What we recognise as urban space is generally characterised by (largely) continuous building forms which separate the public from the private realm. Two recent projects demonstrate these views.

WEST SILVERTOWN URBAN VILLAGE

The project for West Silvertown Urban Village was prepared for a consortium of three developers in response to a competition brief from the LDDC for a development of 1,000 houses forming the first, largely residential, phase of a new Urban Village in the Royal Victoria Docks.

The potential diversity of architectural design brought about by three developers each using their own architects to satisfy their perceived need to differentiate their products and satisfy a number of different market areas required both a comprehensive Master Plan and a foolproof Design Code if the overall coherence necessary to justify the use of the description 'Urban Village' was to be achieved.

PRP were clear that if this was to be achieved a Master Plan which firmly established a 3D urban design was essential. The Master Plan so produced would need to establish the position and height of all buildings thereby ensuring the size and scale of the spaces between them. This would ensure the creation of the particular urban character which would be synonymous with West Silvertown.

The proposed Design Code could thus have been limited to the detailed design of horizontal and vertical surfaces, namely to the design of hard and soft landscape and elevational treatments.

The Master Plan concept was constrained by an existing spine road. This was utilised to separate the higher density development, appropriate to the Dockside, to the north adjoining the Dock from the preponderance of lower density family houses to the south and so enable the maximum number of Village residents to have views over water.

CHALKHILL ESTATE, BRENT

Chalkhill in Brent is an extreme example of a high density system-built 1960s local authority housing estate of some 1,200 six to eight storey flats where traditional urban characteristics, from access and parking arrangements, road layout, architectural scale and detail through to spatial organisation and social values were ignored in the celebration of the economies of scale and the apparent logic of the industrialised production of structural building components.

The London Borough of Brent invited teams comprising housing association, contractor and professionals to put forward development and financial proposals.

The extent of the technical social and management problems were such that large scale demolition was the only answer. The strategy was to work with tenants to create a new community based on a new supportive built form of traditional streets and houses.

The existing single access to the estate would be replaced by a road network ensuring maximum permeability of vehicles and pedestrians, avoiding 'dead ends' and thereby providing strong and permanent links with the wider community and doing away with the isolation of residents.

There would be a gradation of scale from the western end of the site, where there is an existing estate of traditional houses and flats, to the eastern end where a new access would be created together with a new urban park opposite Brent Town Hall.

The variation in scale and detailed design of the proposed new buildings, their use to create a sequence of coherent spaces of crescents, circus's, squares and courts combined with a designed road hierarchy of avenues, streets, roads and mews would lead to the creation of a legible environment. It created the opportunity to form a series of housing areas each with a strong character with which people would be able to identify and make their own. ■

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East Molesey, Surrey
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Fax: 081 783 1671

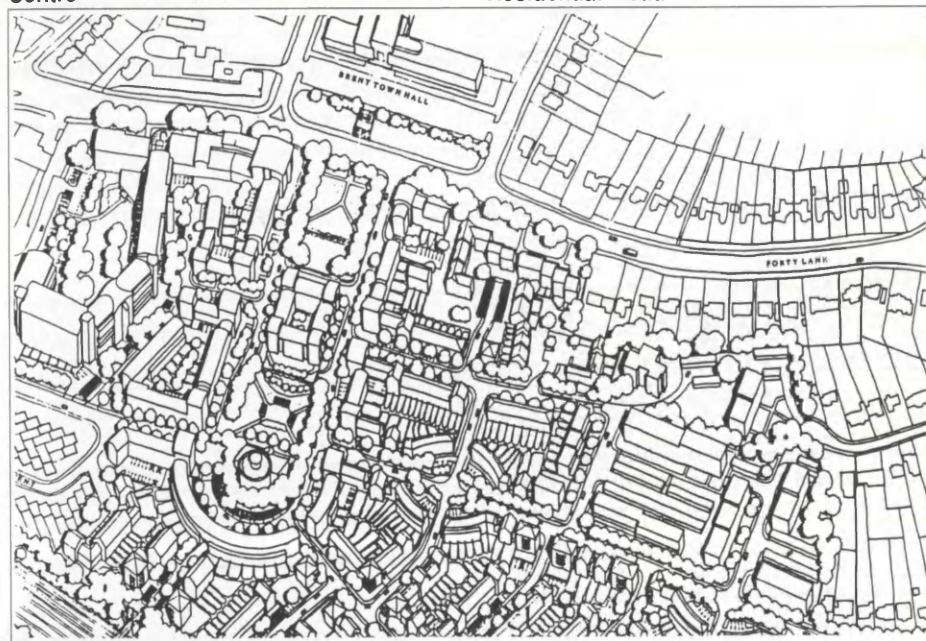
Contact: Peter Phippen OBE Dip Arch
(RWA) RIBA



Centre



Residential Road



CHALKHILL ESTATE, BRENT

The new urban park would act as a hub from which new major routes would radiate. Chalkhill Road the existing access road would become a tree lined Boulevard providing the main artery and linking the urban park in the west to the new and existing residential areas. Wherever practicable open space would be incorporated in private gardens at the front and rear of buildings in order to transfer maintenance responsibility from the Housing Association to the individual tenants and owners. The houses fronting onto Chalkhill Road

would create a sequence of distinctive urban forms. At junctions between major and minor roads flat blocks three and four storeys high would define and celebrate the corners. Dwellings around the urban park would be on a large scale with a four storey crescent on the principal axis of the Town Hall. Five storey towers formed gateways into the Park. In the area of existing traditional housing to the east existing public open space would be rationalised by the creation of private gardens for a high proportion of the existing dwellings and by further development where appropriate.

WML International was formed in 1990 as part of the Whinney Mackay-Lewis PLC Group of companies with offices in Cardiff and London. Architectural commissions are undertaken by the sister companies of Whinney Mackay-Lewis Partnership in London and Hoggett Lock-Necreus PLC in Cardiff with WML International providing an urban design, planning and development service to group clients.

Gordon Lewis has been the Managing Director of the company since its formation in 1990 and prior to that was the Managing Director of an American firm of landscape architects working in the UK. The directors of WML first "cut their teeth" on major planning and regeneration projects when they were selected by Cardiff Bay Development Corporation as one of the four consultancy groups to prepare a pre-development feasibility study for Cardiff Bay. Since then there has been a dramatic change in the way clients plan major developments and urban design has now become a foundation of good development practice.

Like many consultancy companies, WML International carries out a wide variety of commissions ranging from specialist planning studies to regeneration strategies and urban design proposals for individual sites.

The last ten years have seen a dramatic change in the way that society relates to the built environment. Urban regeneration has become part of our everyday vocabulary as a vital task in solving the problems of inner cities. Successful regeneration however, cannot be achieved overnight; it is a long term process that requires clear vision and committed action.

WML International is a multi-disciplinary company with architects, urban designers and planners working together to solve clients' problems. On many projects they work with a wider team of transport engineers, highway designers, chartered surveyors and economists. This holistic approach, with a wide variety of professional skills that creates a marketable and viable, three-dimensional, design solution. The planning profession has grasped the importance of urban design initiatives with many planning departments now preparing three-dimensional plans in addition to land use zoning policies.

Much of WML International's work has been undertaken in Wales working with local



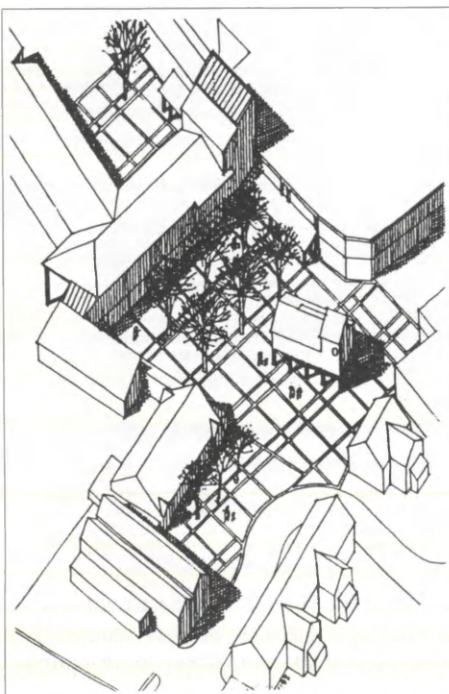
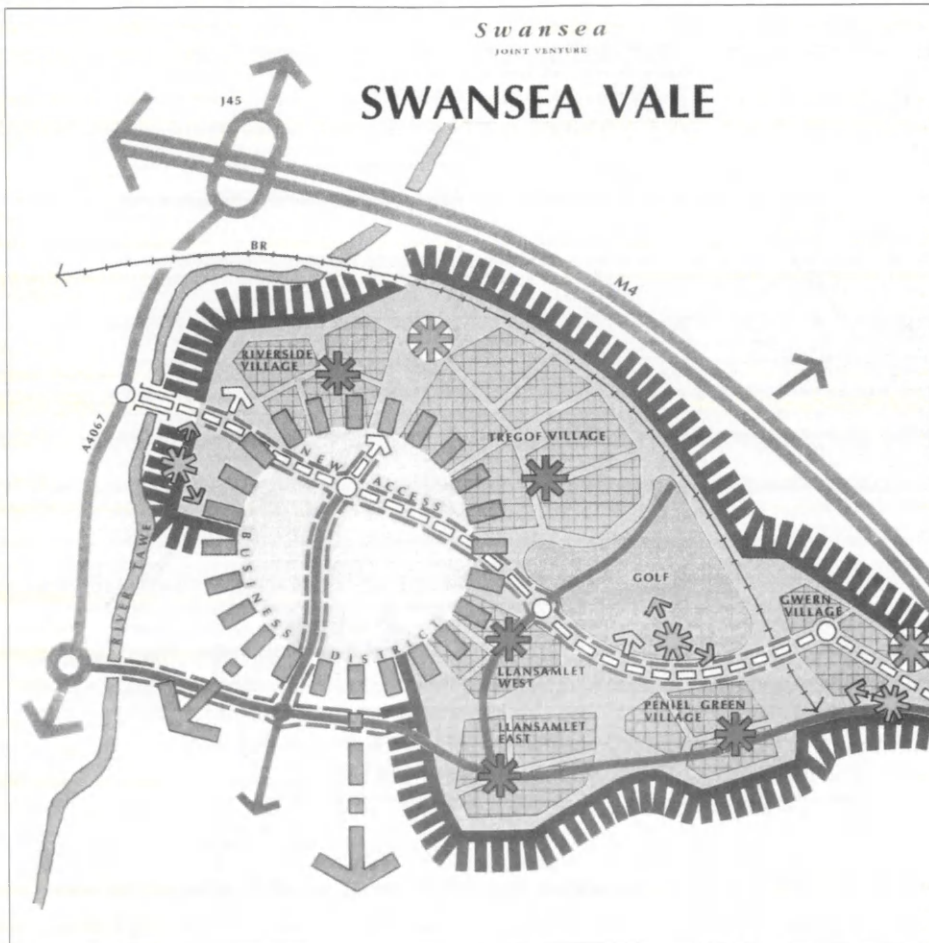
NEWPORT

This urban design strategy was part of an overall development strategy for the town, prepared jointly with Drivers Jonas who carried out the market analysis and W S Atkins the traffic studies.

The strategy identifies retail and commercial growth centres within the central area and enhancement initiatives for the public realm and highways to

enable the town to compete with other regional centres.

The study area extended to the River Usk where a dual carriageway separates the town centre from the riverbank. Major environmental enhancements are proposed and a new landmark pedestrian bridge, linking a new retail development across the dual carriageway to new public buildings on the waterfront.



SWANSEA VALE

The objectives are to create a new urban district comprising a mixed commercial, residential and recreational development on 470 acres adjacent to the M4. It is intended to regenerate East Swansea, provide high grade employment land, reduce housing pressure on West Swansea and provide a 'flagship' for regional growth.

The proposals include: 110 acres of industrial and commercial development generating 4,700 jobs; 132 acres of residential development creating 1,800 new homes; golf course development including driving range, golf school and golf course; office and hotel sites next to M4 intersections; improved road network for the north eastern section of the city.

AMMANFORD

Proposed new public square with new Market Hall shown on left.

authorities and the Urban Development Department of the Welsh Development Agency. The first commissions involved the preparation of development strategies and then progressed onto detailed regeneration strategies and urban design studies. A recent example of that work is the urban design strategy for Newport.

AMMANFORD

In West Wales WML International worked with Coopers & Lybrand to prepare a regeneration strategy for Ammanford. This was followed by a commission to prepare action plans setting out the priorities for development in the first five years. In addition, studies were carried out on the central area identifying how the new pedestrianised High Street could be linked to the Market and Car Park via a new Public Square with a reorganized road system. A New Market Hall building was created as a focal point at the end of the High Street next to the main retail stores. The Square is defined along two sides by the existing buildings and on the third and fourth edges by an archway and planted screen on the edge of the car park. The screen is planned to be replaced by new retail development forming a public square around the market hall, creating a meeting place for the town and a major entrance into the area from adjacent riverside land.

Over the years WML International has developed a strong corporate philosophy that is conveyed through a distinctive visual presentation conveyed through colourful concept sketches.

Gordon Lewis commented that, "the urban design profession has become established during the last decade. Where it goes now, will depend upon the integrity of its members and quality of the service it gives to clients. Planners, architects and engineers must recognize the value of urban design policies and promote their integration into development schemes to create well balanced environments". ■

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Contact: Terence O'Rourke DipArch
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EDUCATION INDEX

DIRECTORY OF COURSES PROVIDING URBAN DESIGN EDUCATION AND SUBSCRIBING TO THIS INDEX

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Faculty of the Built Environment
Frenchay Campus
Coldharbour Lane
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Fax: 0272 763895
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School of Architecture
Lauriston Place
Edinburgh EH3 9DF
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University of Liverpool
Dept of Civic Design
Abercromby Square
PO Box 147
Liverpool L69 3BX
Tel: 051 794 3119
Fax: 051 794 3125
Contact: Michael Biddulph
Diploma in Civic Design: 21 months full time or 33 months part time. Master in Civic Design: 2 years full-time / 3 years part time.

School of the Built Environment
Liverpool John Moores University
98 Mount Pleasant
Liverpool L3 5UZ
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Fax: 051 709 4957
Contact: Professor Chris Couch
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School of Urban Development and Planning
35 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5LS
Tel: 071 911 5000
Fax: 071 911 5171
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University of Newcastle upon Tyne
Department of Town and Country Planning, Claremont Tower
University of Newcastle
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU
Tel: 091 222 7802 Fax: 091 222 8811
Contact: Dr Ali Madani-Pour (Town & Country Planning) or Bill Tavernor (Architecture)
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Oxford Brookes University (formerly Oxford Polytechnic)
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Headington, Oxford OX3 0BP
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Fax: 0865 483298
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 Contact: Gordon Lewis BSc BArch RIBA

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University of Strathclyde
 Dept of Architecture and Building
 Science
 Urban Design Studies Unit
 131 Rottenrow Glasgow G4 0NG
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 Fax: 041 552 3997
 Contact: Dr Hildebrand W Frey, Director,
 Urban Design Studies Unit
 UDSU offers its Postgraduate Course in
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 balanced development to the design of
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This directory provides a service to potential clients when they are looking for specialist professional advice on projects involving urban design and related matters and to students and professionals considering taking an urban design course.

Those wishing to be included in future issues should contact John Billingham
 26 Park Road, Abingdon, Oxon OX14
 1DS. Tel 0235 526094.

1994 Study Tour

Alan Stones describes the UDG Study Tour which visited the Harz area of Germany in May 1994.

The Harz is the northernmost range of high, wooded mountains in Germany, whose scenery attracted and inspired nineteenth century romantic poets and writers. During the Middle Ages it was Europe's most important centre of mining and coin minting, which brought the area great prosperity, resulting in the building of many fine towns, the object of our visit.

Our outward journey took us along the old Hellweg, an ancient east-west trading route. What we had not appreciated beforehand was that, even before leaving the Westphalian plain, we were to encounter at Soest the first examples of the Saxon timber-framed building style that was to accompany us throughout the rest of the tour. Unlike the simple braced frame characteristic of so many other regions of Germany, the typical Saxon house is jettied and highly decorative, with rolls and swags under the jetty, and splayed feet to the upper storey posts incorporating sunburst motifs.



This makes for a distinctive townscape, particularly in a town such as Einbeck (shown above), on the edge of the Harz, where the inhabitants strive to outdo one another in the gaudiness with which they paint their houses. Most of these houses seem to date from the sixteenth century, as many towns had disastrous fires which destroyed the medieval building stock. The same kind of house can be found in the former East Germany, generally looking more drab and in need of maintenance. At Hannoversch Münden, a

medieval planned town on a remarkable site at the confluence of the Fulda and the Werra, it was strange to find these houses laid out on a regular grid street plan. Here, and in Paderborn, we encountered the elaborate Weser Renaissance style used for town halls in the region west of the Harz.



Without doubt, the finest towns we visited were Goslar and Quedlinburg (shown above), one in the former West, the other in the former East. In the eleventh century Goslar was the seat of the Holy Roman Emperors, but it was only later that the town started to prosper as a result of the mining of metals. The Emperors' Hall and the Cathedral became dilapidated and vanished at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but many substantial town houses testify to the former wealth of the mine-owners. We were able to visit that of the Siemens family, ancestors of the founder of the electrical engineering firm. The typical medieval Goslar house is arranged around a courtyard, to one side of which is a timber-framed hall, whilst on the street frontage is a stone-built element, called a 'kemenate', containing sleeping quarters and storage for valuables in case of fire.

Quedlinburg lies at the foot of a castle hill. Within the castle, seat during the eleventh century of the Kings of Saxony, lies the pre-Romanesque Cathedral of St. Servatius. We were already familiar with buildings of Carolingian date from seeing the Abbey of Corvey on the Weser a few days previously. The scale and elaboration of these churches contrasts with the humble English Saxon buildings of the same period. Various stages of growth of the town of Quedlinburg during the Middle Ages were detectable. Though

one of the tourist showpieces of the old German Democratic Republic, it was evident that many buildings were in need of repair, or vacant awaiting the return of owners or the arrival of new purchasers. Streets were being extensively re-surfaced, but fortunately the town had not suffered the effects of insensitive modern development.

The same cannot be said of those former East German towns which had the misfortune to suffer Allied bombing during the Second World War. In a city like Halberstadt, the cathedral close and main Romanesque churches remain, but expediency and lack of the commercial impetus present in the West resulted in the rest of the devastated city centre being rebuilt in the form of soul-less parallel blocks of flats which pay no heed to the historic street pattern. A priority for the assimilation of such towns into the new Germany is going to have to be the knitting back together of the original urban spaces in order to create a community focus. Otherwise the inhabitants will vote with their feet.

One of the benefits of the old East Germany was the low level of car ownership, which enabled an extensive rural railway network to survive. The element of this network which has the most assured future is the narrow-gauge Harz railway system, which reaches all parts of the area, including the Brocken, the highest mountain, and has steam traction every day of the year. This major 'plus' for tourism makes it possible to see all the sights of the Harz region without the use of a car.

To complete our overview of the historic towns of a region, we visited an early-twentieth-century attempt at recreating the ethos of the German small historic town, the Margarethenhohe development for housing Krupp workers at Essen. It adds up to a civilised and attractive living environment, but, we felt, did not contain sufficient continuous enclosed space to constitute a town as such. ■

URBAN DESIGN GROUP

forum for architects, town planners, engineers & landscape architects

The Urban Design Group, founded sixteen years ago, has been established to provide high standards of performance and inter-professional cooperation in planning, architecture, urban design, and other related disciplines; and to educate the relevant professions and the public in matters relating to urban design. Membership is made up of architects, planners, landscape architects, engineers, surveyors, historians, lawyers, photographers, in fact anyone interested in the quality of our built environment. Local authorities, practices, and universities are also members. The U.D.G. runs a series of public lectures, workshops and other events which are valid for C.P.D. The Kevin Lynch Memorial Lecture has attracted such speakers as Leon Krier, Peter Hall, Sir Roy Strong, and Sir Philip Dowson. Annual study tours are also organised. The U.D.G. publishes a quarterly magazine dealing with urban design issues and an Urban Design Source Book which identifies urban design practices, courses and members. The U.D.G. is working closely with the R.T.P.I.

to raise the profile of urban design. It has reciprocal membership with a number of complementary organisations including Vision for London, and the British Urban Regeneration Association (B.U.R.A.). The U.D.G. has set out an agenda aimed at explaining urban design and how, using urban design principles, the quality of the environment can be raised. These principles are encapsulated in the U.D.G.s "The Good City". The Urban Design Group continues to grow. Membership is national, and each region has its own convenor, who organises local events. The subscription is £25 per year with a concessionary rate for students of £14. If you would like more information on the U.D.G. please contact:

Susie Turnbull, Administrator:	tel. 0235 815907 fax. 0235 819606
Roger Evans, Regional coordinator:	tel. 0869 350096
Jon Rowland, Chairman:	tel. 071 637 0181

SPIRIT OF ABERCROMBIE

London in the 1990s & Beyond – Planning and Design

A one day conference will be held on Thursday 17 November from 9.30 a.m. at the RIBA 66 Portland Place, London W1N 4AD. This year's joint RTPI/RIBA conference, supported by the UDG, will focus on critical planning and design issues in the capital, carrying forward Professor Abercrombie's vision as the inspiration for London in the next fifty years.

The first session will introduce the 1944 Greater London Plan and identify its most significant elements. Subsequent speakers will follow the early chapter headings of the plan on subjects such as population, new towns, industry, communications and the Green Belt. Each will summarise briefly the Plan's context, outline its impact, and speculate on how Abercrombie would recast his vision now.

Speakers will include Sir Peter Shephard, Tony May, Frank Duffy, Ellis Hillman, Mervyn Miller, Cedric Price, Janice Morphet, Tom Turner, Richard Cole, Charles Knevitt and Paul Finch.

The Conference will be concluded by a personal view from Peter Hall who will aim to suggest an agenda for the next visionary plan.

Further details: contact Meta van der Steege on 071 580 5533.