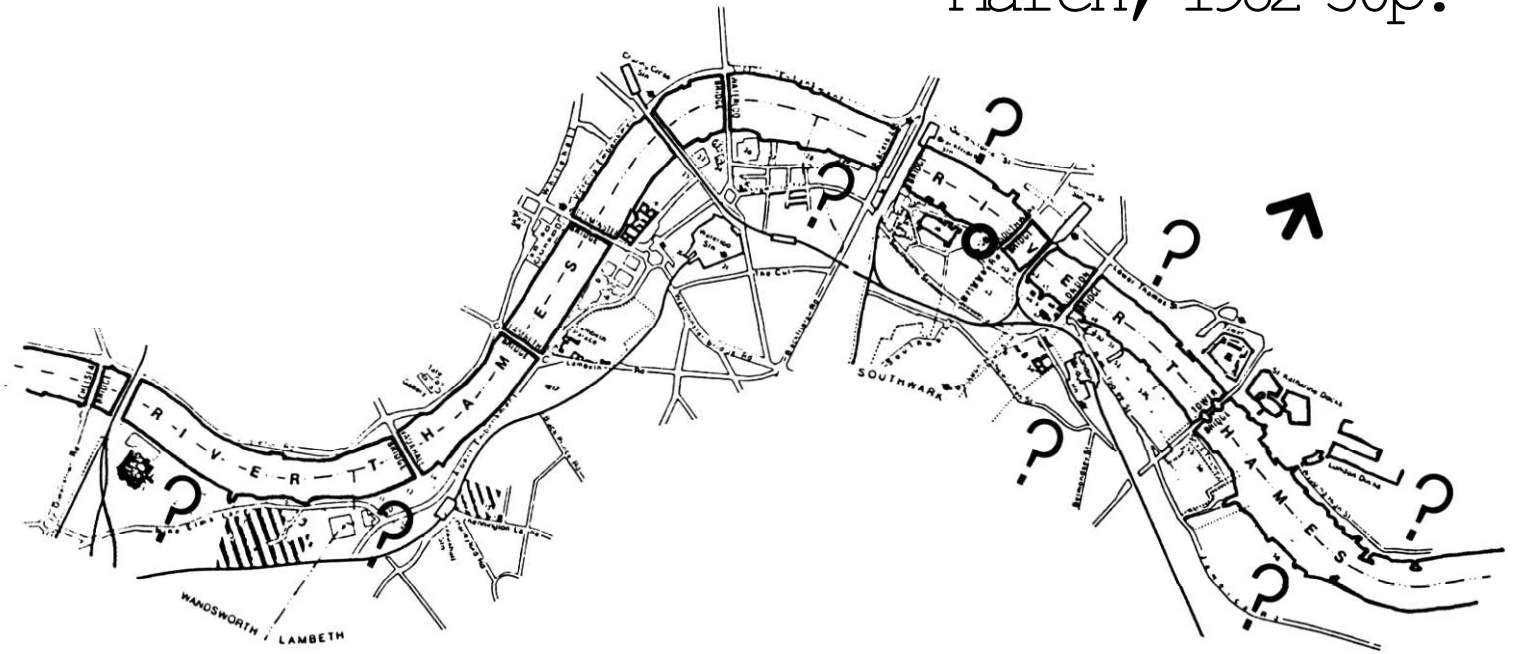


URBAN DESIGN GROUP QUARTERLY

March, 1982 50p.



Thameside Conference

LONDON'S THAMESIDE : BRIEF FOR THE FUTURE : 9TH JUNE, 1982

The UDG, together with the London Environment Group and the London Region Branch of the RTPI, is sponsoring a major one day conference on the future of London's riverside. The conference will be held on Thursday, 3rd June at the Glaziers' Hall, which is a magnificent early nineteenth century building, fronting the Thames by Southwark Cathedral.

The organisers hope that the conference will not only interest UDG members in London and the South East, but also others throughout the country, who are concerned about the future of this major national asset, particularly in the light of :

- ... Recent and proposed developments alongside the River
- ... Interest and concern in the subject shown by the Secretary of State for the Environment
- ... Recognition of the importance of Thameside to the capital, including the need to realise the considerable potential of the water itself
- ... Planning studies currently nearing completion.

The four keynotes of the Conference will be :

1. What should be done to achieve quality along the Riverside?

2. What new approaches can be adapted to achieve that quality? In particular, how can it be financed?
3. What is being done in similar circumstances abroad? For example, what can be learned from case studies of Baltimore, Boston and Rotterdam?
4. What is actually being done in London?

The organisers are anxious that the Conference is not just a "talking shop", but a forum for the exchange of new ideas and practical suggestions. Delegates must leave having learned something that will be of direct benefit to their life and work in particular, and to London in general.

Speakers and delegates are expected to include Government Ministers and politicians, civil servants, practicing professionals, journalists, academics and interested Londoners. The specific support of the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Presidents of the RIBA and RTPI, and the Secretary of the Royal Fine Art Commission is being sought.

Further information and booking forms will be available shortly. The organisers are currently seeking financial sponsorship for the Conference, and in this way hope to be able to keep the cost of tickets to an absolute minimum.

The day will end with a boat trip up the river, so altogether the Conference is by far the most ambitious venture that the UDG has been involved with so far. Members are urged to note the date in their diaries and give the Conference their full support.

News & Editorial

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

The Group is making steady progress in extending its activities beyond London. It is lending its support to the idea that an Urban Studies Centre should be established in Glasgow (we will report progress on this) and also considering holding its next residential Conference/Forum in Scotland in the 1982/1983 session. This issue also carries correspondence from the Secretary of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland and a major initiative taken jointly by the South West Branches of the RTPI and RIBA.

OVERSEAS LIAISON

Contact has been established with the Institute of Urban Design in the United States, to see whether there is scope for collaboration and/or reciprocal arrangements. We are not sure how viable this will prove to be, given the disparity between the administrative structure and financial base of our two organisations, but we will report on possibilities in future issues of the Quarterly.

CHARITABLE STATUS

The final stage in the application for charitable status was reached with the auditing of the Group's accounts in February 1982. We hope to receive advice of acceptance by the Charity Commission shortly.

Letters to UDGQ

Sir,

In the latest Design Group Quarterly, you asked for comments and suggestions. Speaking of course from Edinburgh, you will appreciate my view that most of what is discussed in the Quarterly relates only to England, and mostly the South East of England at that. Furthermore, when discussions of docklands etc are taking place, they seem to deal only with established patterns. It would certainly generate a great deal of interest were the Urban Design Group to hold a series of competitions for similar forms of remedial treatment as that proposed by Jo Holyoak for Birmingham as in the December 1981 issue. All Towns could benefit from it - particularly Edinburgh, and I feel that your aims would achieve much greater success were you to take the initiative in this respect.

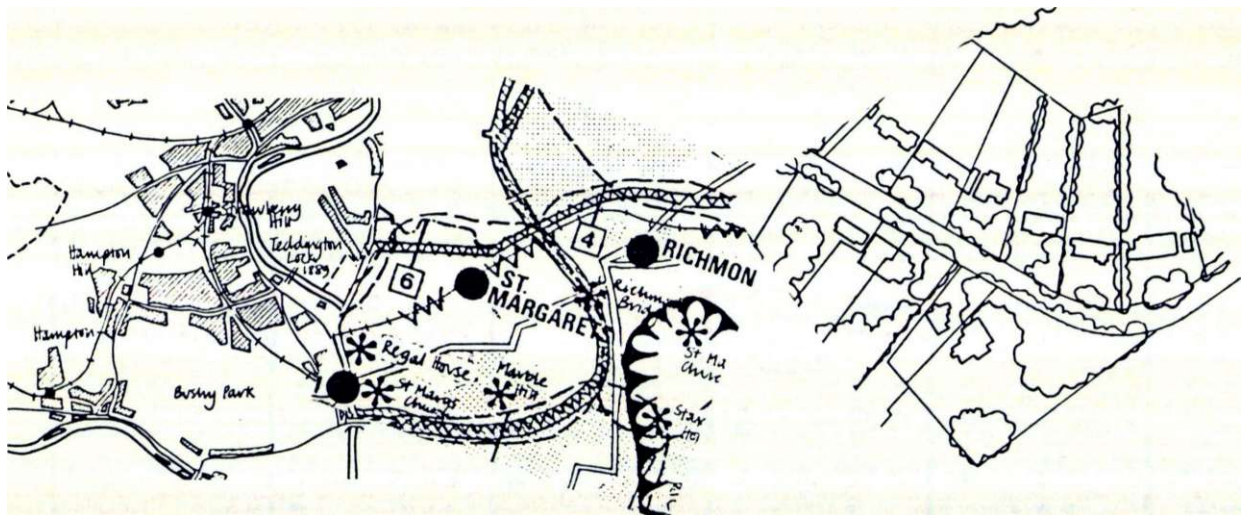
Yours sincerely,

Charles McKean, BA

Secretary & Treasurer

The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland.

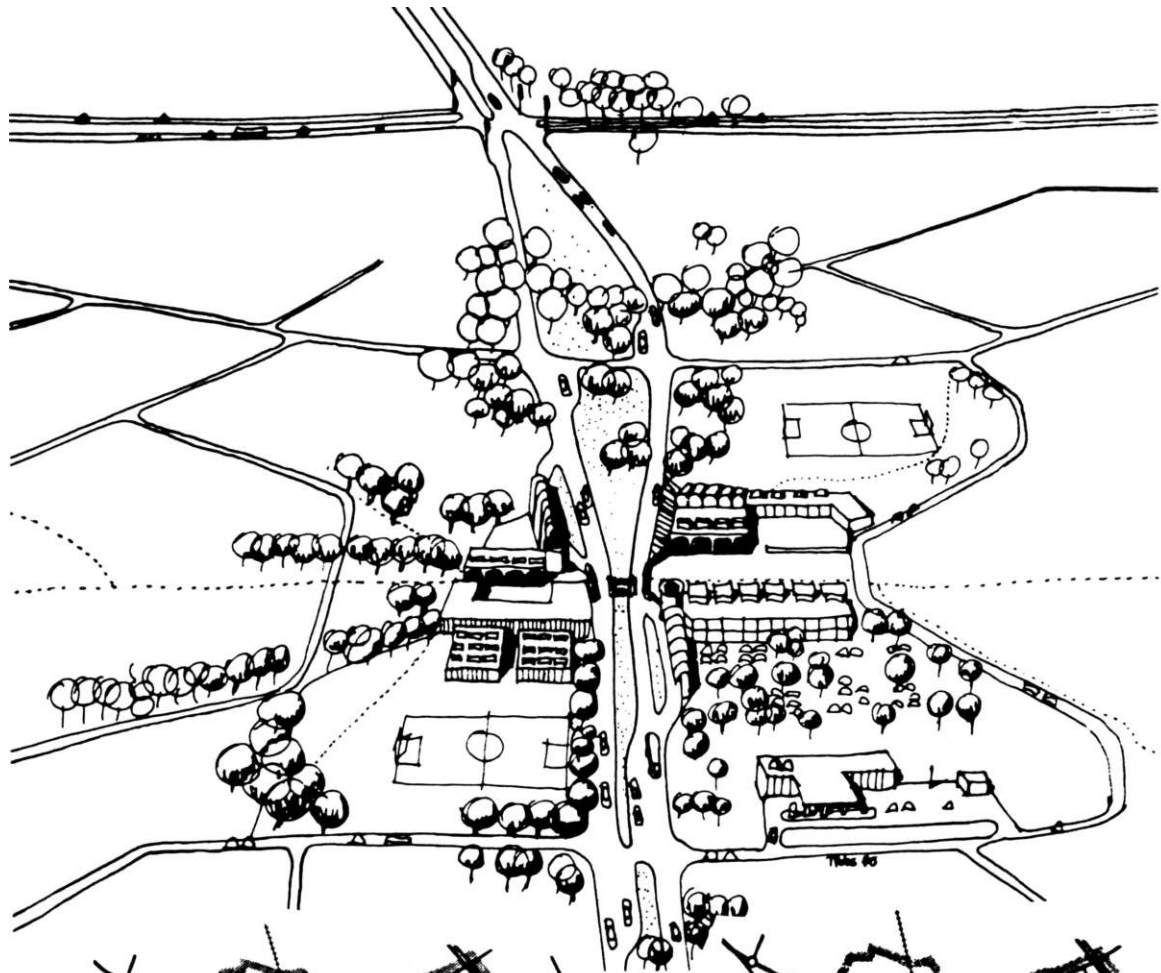
We have responded positively to Mr. McKean and advised that we hope to plan a residential conference in Scotland in the 1982/1983 session. In a subsequent letter, he advises us that the RIAS and Scottish RTPI HQ share the same premises in Edinburgh, unlike the RIBA and RTPI in London, noting that "we regard this as a major step forward" - Editors.



At the time of going to press, we have received a copy of the "Environmental Character Topic Study Report" which forms part of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Draft District Plan. Although space does not permit a full review, it is fair to say that this is an attractive and commendably thorough and interesting design document.

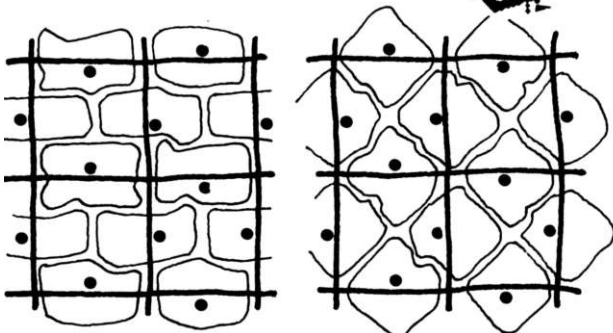
If other local planning authorities are so minded, we should be pleased to receive review copies of publications with a design content, in order to consider introducing a Review Section into the Quarterly in a future issue.

The Editors

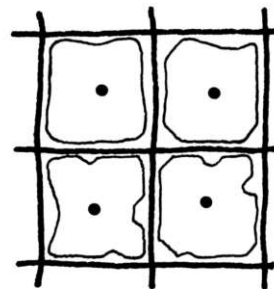


The proposed location of
local activity centres at
Milton Keynes

The implemented locations



The manner in which housing
parcels should have been
developed around local
activity centres and across
the grid roads



Instead, whole grid squares
were developed as single
housing parcels with local
activity centres shifted to
the centre

Come Back Street: Part Two

On November 24th, 1981, a "right of reply" was given to Walter Bor in a follow up seminar to the lively and provocative talk given by Hugh Cannings to the UDG on 8th April (see Quarterly, August/September 1981) in which, amongst other things, Cannings criticised the ordered sterility of the road networks at Washington and Milton Keynes.

Walter Bor took issue with the street being considered as a separate phenomenon: it was the "sense of place generally" which mattered. It was also a mistake to compare suburban, single purpose, residential roads with old High Streets which invariably contained a rich mixture of different uses and activities. Much of his talk concentrated on Milton Keynes. He conceded that there had been a gap between the design intentions of the Master Plan and the implementation activities of the Development Corporation: neat traffic-signalled intersections had become land-consuming roundabouts; local activity centres had been generally wrongly located in the centre of grid squares instead of as 'connectors' between adjoining squares; development had become inward-looking within grid squares instead of spanning grid roads as a continuous, rich, urban fabric; and so on.

Twelve years on the Development Corporation was realising its errors in departing from the design principles of the 1970 Master Plan, for which Llewelyn-Davies Frestier-Walker & Bor were the main consultants. The buildings should have been closer to the primary roads: it wasn't necessary to have a "landscape desert". Housing areas were to have been served by interconnecting pedestrian routes - "the City's streets" - and in the city centre it had been intended to develop not a single architectural monolith but an intricate urban form of interlinked squares "recreating the best in traditional cities, but without congestion". There was a lack of visual and functional cohesion.

Hugh Cannings opened a stimulating and good-humoured debate by developing some of his earlier themes. The street, he argued, had many functions - as a carrier, as the location of activities, as a space, as a shelter, as a piece of townscape. He didn't like the separation of footpaths and roads, and preferred what he called the "Bath Road concept" of streets lined with development, of greater use of main roads and the concentration of development at intersections (rather than the mid-points of the Milton Keynes 1 km lengths of primary roads). He described how these ideas formed the basis of current thinking in a sector of Warrington New Town, and drew a lot of comment and questioning from Brian Richards and others who were basically worried by the incompatibility between the needs of pedestrians and those of vehicles.

There was actually a great deal of common ground between the various participants in terms of intent and objectives. What remained at issue was just how to do it. The test will be the results on the ground, whether at Warrington or Milton Keynes, and the UDG will continue to promote discussions of what is a fundamental area of urban design of high visibility to professionals, residents and visitors alike.

Footnote : Readers interested in a fuller account of the gap between the Plan and the reality at Milton Keynes are referred to Walter Bor's article "Milton Keynes New City - ten years on" in Ekistics 277, July/August 1979.

RTPI & RIBA Regional Initiative on UD

The second of December 1981 marked the first event of the newly formed Southern Branch of the R.T.P.I. In association with the R.I.B.A. Southern Region Town Planning and Environment Group, the new branch met at the Tower Centre, Winchester and were addressed by five speakers on the subject of "Urban Design - A Personal View".

The meeting was arranged by Philip Turner (Assistant County Planning Officer, Hampshire County) and Lee Newlyn, primarily to ensure that the new branch would get off to a lively start.

The speakers were John Billingham, Oxford City Architect and Planning Officer; Jack Thompson, Director of Planning, Winchester; Colin Stansfield-Smith, Hampshire County Architect; Francis Tibbalds, Chairman of the Urban Design Group; and Arnold Linden, Course Leader, Polytechnic of Central London, Postgraduate Diploma on Urban Design.

John Billingham drew mainly on two examples of urban design practice which demonstrated the different scales at which the discipline operates. Referring to his work on Irvine New Town, John said that he had found it imperative to think through the various levels of design opportunities that were explored at the strategic level and the implications that these had at the local, community level. Sites that were to be sold to the private sector for housing development were disposed of on the basis of carefully prepared development briefs. Sometimes, these briefs contained sketch layout schemes and performance criteria as guidance to private developers.

Turning to an urban design problem at the local level, John described the background to the proposed development of a prestige site on the banks of the River Thames at Folly Bridge, Oxford. In order to give proper advice to intending applicants, the planning authority prepared a three dimensional model to test various development proposals, and from these tests certain urban design requirements were established and an environmental performance specification prepared. The process of achieving an acceptable design solution was one of repeated trial and analysis. Not unexpectedly, the presentation raised much discussion on the role of the local planning authority in briefing the architect.

Jack Thompson's very personal view of urban design and the designer's role was inspired by looking out of his office window at some of the 'places', or perhaps lack of places, that have been made by man in Winchester Town Centre. His presentation cannot easily be summarised. His message was one of feeling rather than mere words. The following extracts from his speech were chosen to capture at least part of the spirit of his message....

"I am not a religious person, but I can understand why people pursue religion and other exercises of the mind. I don't believe that I have any special intellectual powers or creative ability. But, I know that within the scope of my career, I have at times been able to penetrate beyond the foreground of my mind, which is full of the hurly-burly of everyday thoughts and pressing matters, to an area of repose where I am capable of having thoughts that transcend the normal level of my daily and continuing mental superficialities.

I cannot command entry to this area of mind at will. I wonder how many of you

have the same feeling deep within yourselves, and whether like me you find yourself no longer an active member of a design team; no longer responsible directly for creating buildings and places, but of administering, organising and programming and pricing and managing and corporating and enquiring and appealing and defending and attacking and reporting and minuting and worrying and fretting.

I have designed dozens of buildings, dozens and dozens of details. I have written reams of reports and have talked forever on the contemporary matters of the moment. In this I have played and continue to play my part in the running of my Council's affairs. And apart from the feeling of active involvement, which is enjoyable in itself, I feel no deep sense of fulfillment. Indeed, as time passes I become more frustrated at my inability to produce designs for buildings and places, which is what I feel my career is supposed to be about."

Colin Stansfield-Smith emphasised the need for architects and planners to realise the opportunity that the development of new public buildings presents as a means of stimulating and enriching the local environment. He frowned upon those architects who continued to produce public buildings as one-off, 'cathedrals in their own right', and asked that more consideration be given to using new public buildings to create a 'wholeness' rather than separate identity.

Colin felt that it would be wrong to identify urban design as a specialism. Solutions to urban design problems required intuitive thinking and inspirational action. At all times, the context of new buildings should be foremost in the designer's mind. The urban designer, Colin thought of primarily as a person with design skills, working on the drawing board. He insisted that there were no magic formula's, just 'the right chap, right level of skill and plenty of hard work'.

As Chairman of the Urban Design Group, it was perhaps fitting that Francis Tibbalds should be the first speaker brave enough to attempt a few personal definitions of urban design. He suggested that urban design was that discipline 'occupying the central ground between the existing environmental professions (architecture, landscape, planning, town planning, engineering, etc) it is a vital bridge, giving structure to the Planning Brief before it becomes architecture'.

Most of Francis' speech was taken from a paper he presented to the R.I.B.A. urban design diploma review group. He quickly tried to dispel the idea that an urban designer must first and foremost be an architect. Design skills are only one part of his repertoire, sensitive management skills are also vital. Frequently, urban designers will need to work in teams and then the right mix of committed professionals is necessary, but often major achievement in design comes back to a passionately devoted individual - today a "Mr. Guildford", a "Mr. Bath" or a "Mr. Milton Keynes".

In concluding, Francis re-emphasised the fact that Urban Design is not just for architects. It is also for town planners and others. Accordingly, any such Diploma should be jointly recognised by the R.I.B.A. and R.T.P.I.

Arnold Linden started his presentation, as any good course leader would, with a course recognised definition of urban design :

... "the creative activity by which the form and character of the urban environment at the local scale may be devised, modified and controlled in circumstances of social, economic, technological and or political change".

Arnold then continued by outlining the contents, context and aims of the urban design course at P.C.L. (These were published in the August 1980 issue of Urban Design Group Quarterly.)

The ensuing discussion centred on five main issues :

1. Should energy be channelled into a new subject area which seeks to occupy the middle ground between architecture and planning, or should efforts be directed towards extending the links between the R.I.B.A. and R.T.P.I.?
2. There were fears that urban design would become yet another specialism.
3. Concern was expressed about the use of the title 'Urban Designer'. Some members of the audience felt that this title implied some kind of 'superior being', a situation which would give rise to a defensive attitude from other disciplines.
4. The thorny issue of 'how far should a planning authority go in briefing an architect' was raised. Some members of the audience rejected the idea that environmental performance criteria should be set for important development sites. By far the majority, however, seemed to agree that the sensitive approach taken by John Billingham was more than justified.
5. Views were expressed as to where in the design system the urban designer can best fit. Views included :
 - ... he should take the place of the development controller.
 - ... he should not be attached to any particular section or department.
 - ... he can only effectively operate at Chief Officer level.
 - ... he should be the leader of an interdisciplinary team.

The subject matter and speakers were well received. Planners and architects from many authorities in the south and south-west region now know of the existence of the urban design movement. The movement may not yet be strong enough to command support for a multitude of independent regional activities. It is, therefore, essential that the UDG should concentrate on fostering this kind of local initiative, using well recognised and established forums, like the R.T.P.I. branches, in order to strengthen support throughout the regions.

LEE NEWLYN

ILA: Trees in the City

"London's Parks - take Hyde Park - may be flourishing, but trees are disappearing from its streets at an ever increasing rate". Stimulated by a recent article by Robert Lamb in the Observer Colour Supplement, entitled "How Green is our City?", the South East Chapter of the Landscape Institute is considering organising a whole day workshop this coming Autumn, on the plight of London's trees. This would aim to bring together interested parties from local authorities, professional offices and local amenity groups.

Initially, the Chapter is writing a letter to be circulated to local authorities etc., to gauge whether to pursue the idea any further. The Urban Design Group is intending to join with the South East Chapter Landscape Institute in the sponsorship of this meeting, and would also welcome further ideas on this subject, and what aspects of the urban tree problem could be incorporated in the day meeting. Further details may be obtained from the Events Organiser of the South East Chapter of the Landscape Institute, Catherine Bickmore on 01 379 3477.

Edinburgh UD Course

As part of our continuing review of Urban Design education in the UK, we are pleased to print the following account by John Thomson on the Urban Design Diploma course, currently offered by the University of Edinburgh.

This course, initially entitled "Civic Design" began in October 1960, and was established in the Department of Architecture, University of Edinburgh, by Percy Johnson-Marshall. The Department of Urban Design and Regional Planning was established in its own right in 1965 and shortly thereafter the university approved an M.Sc. degree which, in 1973, was replaced by an M.Phil. degree. The one year diploma course in Civic Design was re-named at that time and took the title of the new department, viz. Urban Design. This diploma has been approved by the R.I.B.A.

Unlike other courses in urban design, the Edinburgh diploma is offered by a department of planning. Although close links are retained with the Department of Architecture and several of the staff have architectural qualifications, the urban design diploma is one of a series of options available within a range of courses offered to students with a wide variety of academic qualifications and from an equally wide range of nationalities.

The department considers that there are many advantages in studying urban design within the context of urban and regional planning. A familiarity with planning policies and strategies enables the architect to understand the urban design discipline within a context which often acts as a term of reference for an urban designer. In addition, a familiarity with the wider context of urban and regional planning makes it easier for the urban designer to contribute to the formulation of the broad policies which so often form part of the planner's task and have ultimately three-dimensional urban design implications.

A student in urban design, when he arrives in Edinburgh, is able to select, from a wide range of courses, a programme of study to suit his particular aspirations. A core of theory and practice and an introduction to the fundamental principles of urban design is mandatory. Thereafter the student can broaden his interests into a variety of fields, such as rapid urbanisation in developing countries, the use of computers and other techniques, social and economic considerations etc. This kind of scope appeals to present day students, particularly those who either originate from Third World countries or those who see their future careers in a Third World context. The department deliberately fosters an international approach and strongly believes in associating architects with the skills offered by other disciplines. Within the planning school, graduates in economics, ecology, sociology and geography, among others, share courses and projects with the urban designers. Synthesising analytical organisational skills of the different disciplines and relating these to urban design is a challenging and invigorating experience for the architect.

The department employs a variety of teaching and study methods, including lecture courses, seminars, tutorials, projects, workshops and field trips.

Emphasis is given to practical studies and experience has convinced the department that the preparation of practical projects is one of the most satisfactory means of developing skills in the application of most of the material taught in the department. Practical studies normally commence with an introductory project which concentrates on evaluating environmental policies already formulated by a local authority. This may often involve role playing by the students, in which they will act out a particular issue e.g. conducting a planning enquiry. This type of exercise introduces the student to many aspects of current practice related to urban design. The aim is exploration and discovery to provide a foundation of knowledge for subsequent projects which are primarily concerned with creativity. The department benefits considerably from its location in Edinburgh, which provides a unique laboratory for the urban designer. All around us there are examples of good quality urban design. Our location in Scotland's capital also provides access to government departments, and over the years strong links have been fostered with agencies, such as the Scottish Development Department and local authorities. Several staff from such agencies act as tutors in the department, and all this provides a good balance to the academic services provided by colleagues from other departments normally found within a Faculty of Social Sciences.

The focus of this course is the major practical study which, in recent years, has engaged with a problem in a Third World context. This can partly be explained by the reduction in the number of British students registering for postgraduate courses in urban design, and an increase in students from Third World countries where the popularity and need for urban design is an encouraging development. The department's links with the Third World are formalised in a special programme provided for students from developing countries. The potential urban designer gains considerable benefit from colleagues and resources available within such a programme, and over the years, all departmental staff have developed knowledge and understanding of environmental problems, typical of Third World countries. Recently the 1st International Conference for Human Settlements Planning (Mexico) 1981 was organised by former students of our department in Edinburgh University, and reflected the opportunities (sadly lacking at present in the UK context) available to the younger generation in the Third World, for getting to grips with fundamental environmental problems. It is gratifying to realise that experience of the British approach to environmental issues is helpful and relevant to these young men and women, who will, without doubt, become leaders of the next generation of environmental designers in their own countries.

For a department to remain vital and interesting for its students, members of staff should be developing and reinforcing their research interests. In the present economic climate, this can be very difficult but nevertheless, sponsored research has been made available by the Scottish Development Department, and at present two members of staff are actively engaged in evaluating recent innovations in road layout in some Scottish New Towns.

Along with other courses in this field, the department views the future with some trepidation. Particularly in the last few years, there has been a decline in student numbers, especially among British graduates. Fortunately, this has been alleviated by the continued interest of overseas students, most of whom at present are not eligible for the R.I.B.A. diploma. Our experience is that students originally registering for the Diploma in Urban Design find a further year of study, which leads to our M.Phil, degree, a very attractive possibility and many of our candidates complete two years of study having acquired the M.Phil, degree rather than their original intention of only undertaking one year of study for the diploma.

Details on entry requirements and course content can be obtained from :
Mr. J. C. Thomson, Senior Lecturer, Department of Urban Design and Regional Planning, University of Edinburgh, 20 Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1JZ.

Urban Design Values

THE RHETORIC SHIELD AND THE CONFIDENCE BARRIER : CHANGING VALUES IN URBAN DESIGN

Of all designers, the urban designer is the one least in touch with the users of the product of their work. In almost every other field, traditions and techniques of user studies, fieldwork, ergonomics, market research and phototype tests are regularly used. A combination of complexity, uniqueness and ubiquity in both their working contexts and the products - places of urban design, offers a shield of rhetoric and isolation which can be a masquerade of professionalism. How rarely do urban designers attempt to see the world as those who use it do?

In a one day course, organised by the R.T.P.I. North Region and Newcastle University Planning School, David Canter, Reader in the Theory of Place at Surrey University and one of the stalwarts in this country of making environmental psychology useful to the design professions, made some steps to breaking through this shield, to re-orientating a few urban designers' attitudes, by introducing a few simple techniques of reading places from the users' point of view.

The Key to the course was David Canter's '2nd Law of Environmental Psychology'¹ - that for any given place, and the people who use it, there will be as great a number of ideas of what that place is, does and means. In his research, Canter had uncovered that there was a very large difference between the ideas of a place held by its designers and managers, and those held by its everyday users. So the notion of the urban designer being able to make objective assessments of places on his own was nonsense; the effect of his professional training was to make him, in this sense, less a member of the public than anyone else.

But the urban designer's responsibilities make it essential for him to make reliable, publicly accountable - in use - assessments and proposals of places. How could this reality gap be bridged? Given the cost and permanence of urban design, was not some small investment in better research before design warranted? What sources of information might be tapped to improve professional understanding of ordinary experience and use of place?

Words - what people say about places; activities - what people do in places; traces - the clues that people's activities leave behind; the performance of tasks - whether drawing a map, giving directions, or carrying out a specific journey, can all provide the designer with useful information. Some rely on passive, unobtrusive observation - and so are open to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. In others - when the user is asked to make statements about the place in question, however natural it is to talk about places and express opinions about them, problems of communication, of asking the right questions, get in the way.

But how might such findings be related to urban design? Do such techniques offer scope for other practical transition of urban design from a visual art to a social function that has been noted in theoretical and experimental studies? Certainly they helped to break down the resilience that professionals have to collecting information that might undermine their case and their prejudices. They introduced new ideas of how places are used, and experienced new perspectives in design method, and were the first steps in a process that could discover a rounded view of place. Fundamental to this is a willingness to collect information from, to observe, and to interact with the man in the street. Whether such one day introductions as this course are, along, sufficient to achieve such a re-orientation of urban design practise is unlikely, but they may and should sow seeds of doubt in the minds of those desk, drawing and committee bound designers who prefer to keep every day life out of reach and so keep themselves out of place.

Planners in the Future

In the midst of the train drivers' strikes and arctic weather conditions, an Important Conference was held at the Royal Town Planning Institute on 16th January 1982, under the title "Planners in the Future". Speakers included Andrew Thorburn, President RTPI; Professor John Stewart, INLOGOV; Owen Luder, President RIBA; Robin Grove-White, Director CPRE; Councillor Walter Stranz, Hereford and Worcester County Council and TCPA Council; Francis Tibbalds, UDG Chairman and RTPI Council Member; Robin Thompson, Chairman RTPI Education Board; and Professor Michael Bruton, UWIST.

Owen Luder's contribution was singularly inept. Under the guise of urging closer links between architects and planners, he launched into a gratuitous and tiresome attack upon the planning profession, thereby setting back his professed cause a good many years. The RIBA's publicity machine appeared to perform better than the RTPI's, to ensure that Luder's remarks got suitably sensational coverage in both the lay and professional press.

By way of redressing the balance, we reproduce below selected extracts from Francis Tibbalds' paper to the Conference. (The full text of this and several of the other papers may be obtained from the RTPI.)

"The quality of the future will be profoundly influenced by the quality of the people entering Town Planning. It has been said that "one of the greatest advantages of a civilised culture is that it can select and train people to study a problem, and see it as a whole" (the late Professor Lord Holford). In planning, problems are too often seen exclusively as mathematical or statistical or economic or architectural or social. Apart from frequently encouraging narrow over-simplifications of the real world, the failure to take a synoptic view makes it really rather difficult for planners to talk to each other. We must take more seriously the need to close the gaps that exist between planners of different ages and backgrounds and between planners and related professions.

"The interest and the challenge of the future has perhaps less to do with the lure of "the year 2000" or the romance of space exploration, than with society's commitment to raising the standard of living, choices, opportunities and interests of all its people by planning and directing environmental change in its widest aspects.

¹¹..... None of us can realistically predict what the future holds for planners, but it is often in the academic and/or consultancy world that the new directions start to show themselves and demand innovative approaches and techniques. Let me cite three such areas :

Urban Development

The world urban context is one of rapid change and growing problems. In many of the more affluent countries, these problems are characterised by deteriorating physical infrastructure combined with effectively diminishing revenues. Poorer countries are experiencing tremendous rates of population growth, at very low per capita income levels in cities, where little infrastructure has ever been developed.

Traditional planning, with its emphasis on economically unrealistic standards and total provision by the State is largely inappropriate to these contemporary problems. Quite different approaches are now required in order to cover new forms of urban management, incorporating community participation and self-help; resource and energy conservation; alternatives to obsolete legislation demanding unaffordable standards; environmental protection; the need for small enterprise promotion and its inter-

relationship with residential location, transportation and zoning policies.

Environmental and Energy Planning

The increasing concern with protection of the natural and historic man-made environments is creating new challenges for planners the world over. The need to reconcile development with such protection demands a combination of planning skills and, frequently, the incorporation of highly specialised knowledge.

Studies of the impact of development may require analysis of :

- ... noise, water and atmospheric pollution
- ... compatibility with the existing built environment
- ... effect on social welfare and health
- ... impact on the local economy and employment
- ... demands for energy
- ... changes in land use
- ... effect on wildlife and the natural environment.

Urban Design

There is increasing recognition that society judges urban planning largely by the quality of what it sees around it and the judgement is not always a very favourable one. This is due in part to the separation between the various professions concerned with the built environment - architects, engineers, planners, landscape architects and so on, - and also to the general absence of imaginative design flair in most planning proposals. The activity of urban design aims to correct these deficiencies.

".....Rightly or wrongly, planning has a rather grey and boring image and many criticisms are laid at the planner's doorstep that may not be about mistakes or problems of his making. We really do need to exude more liveliness responsiveness and sparkle in a world where to children, the marvels of long distance communication, lasers, micro-processors or even the Rubik Cube are commonplace.

"The prerequisites of the planner of the future seem to me to be the following

1. To be 'Top Level'¹ - a force to be reckoned with by the Civil Service, Government Ministers, Chief Executives, industrialists, developers and so on.
2. To have greater concern with achievability - the relentless dedication to putting design ideas to practical effect, which has characterised all the really good historic examples of city building.
3. To be outward-looking towards other professionals - in the practice of planning, the richness of the mix of people from different backgrounds is important. As a general rule, it is rare to find all the necessary qualities in individual 'Renaissance type' men; although when these do anerge, they should be carefully looked after.
4. To be able to argue strongly for the necessary resources of finance, land and manpower to see through his ideas - reports, coloured plans, advocacy, persuasion and vicarious dealings are only part of the story. What actually matters is what is achieved on the ground.
5. To have greater financial awareness - particularly of the mechanism of public finance. Too great a sacrifice should not be expected by present

generations to finance the improved conditions of future generations.

6. To be idealistic - spotting those of like minds and making friends with the future; and realistic - recognising why intentions go wrong (eg lack of clear aims and objectives; long time scales; changing political or economic climate; land acquisition difficulties; swings of public opinion; inflexibility; over complexity, and so on).
7. To be honest - to recognise when the techniques of persuasion are being used and to avoid 'self-realising expectations'.
8. To have a receptive, breadth of mind, seeking innovative, sensible solutions to problems presented.
9. To have a greater concern with the physical product of planning - planning has for the last decade or so sheltered behind social science, computer science and the law; yet it is primarily by what it sees around it that the public judges us.
10. Finally, to have greater imagination, creativity and a consistent and passionate commitment to quality and to getting the job finished. (My son's headmaster talks of 'ability' and 'stickability' both being of importance and if the planner has both, he is the more likely to be a good planner!).

"If I have a fear for the future, it is that the professional Institutes concerned with the environment (and the RTPI and RIBA must be singled out for special mention here) will continue to be polarised in their outlook, and too remote from the community that their members serve. In particular, in recent years, planners have become too involved in systems and processes as ends in their own right. Architects have been equally at fault in 'going it alone' and breaking free from aesthetic and other planning controls.

"The sad fact of the matter is that while the Institutes are so inwardly preoccupied, others are having a significant impact on what is going on outside - surveyors, funding institutions, estate agents, builders and all sorts of package-dealers who appear more outward-looking, synoptic in attitude and au fait with the real world.

"I was taught that there are two ways of achieving what you believe to be right. One is by head-on confrontation. . . . it sometimes works, but is usually rather crude and messy! The other, more subtle, less pugilistic, judo-style approach is to wait patiently until things start vaguely in the right direction, and then by a push, nudge, trip or other gentle deflection, to make use of the existing momentum to gain even more ground. The latter approach, - well tried, after all in domestic situations - is the more likely to reap success.

"We've seen the failure of the pugilistic approach. I firmly believe there are now enough sympathetic personalities in senior places in the key Institutes - architecture, planning, landscape and engineering - to use the other subtler technique to secure a more collaborative and productive approach in the eighties and nineties. We do actually all need each other and we should all be more or less on the same side.

"As an easy first step at building bridges and finding common ground, I would urge this Institute to reconsider its position on the Urban Design Diploma now being reviewed by the RIBA, and positively to collaborate with the RIBA to support it, recognise it and promote it.

"Town planners and their professional colleagues need to feel 'at home' with a concept of the future as a range of co-existing, alternative possibilities. Thus, the ability of a planner to plan will be governed by his confidence, his enthusiasm and his ability to conceive of images of possible futures, and the

quality of his planning will be governed by the quality, power and validity of the images which he holds. I am a great admirer of the late Dr. Jacob Bronowski and, with due humility, I would like to leave you with a quotation from 'The Ascent of Man'¹ :

"We are all afraid - for our confidence, for the future, for the world. That is the nature of the human imagination. Yet every man, every civilisation, has gone forward because of its engagement with what it has set itself to do. The personal commitment of a man to his skill, the intellectual commitment and the emotional commitment working together as one, has made the Ascent of Man."

Those same attributes, properly recognised, will enable our top-notch planners to cope with the challenge of the changing and uncertain future."

Diary

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, 2nd March 1982 TALK BY DR. PETER SMITH, SENIOR LECTURER AT University of Sheffield, on :
"CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC NORMS"
Dr. Smith asks whether it is possible to measure current architecture and urban design against historic yardsticks of beauty. Can we identify the golden section in the work of Lucien Kröll as well as in the Parthenon?

Tuesday, 20th April 1982 UDG ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING followed by TALK by ROY WORSKETT, Architect and Planner, Consultant to the Cities of Bath and Salisbury, on the following topic :
"NEW BUILDINGS IN OLD SETTINGS : THE PEOPLE LIKE WALT DISNEY!"

The above meetings will, as usual, be at 6.15 pm in the Polytechnic of Central London, 35 Marylebone Road, London, NW1. Details and reminders will be published in the professional press when practicable, but cannot be guaranteed.

Thursday, 3rd June 1982 Joint RIBA LONDON ENVIRONMENT GROUP/URBAN DESIGN GROUP DAY CONFERENCE on :
"LONDON'S THAMESIDE ENVIRONMENT".
See separate details in this issue.

AGM

TAKE NOTICE THAT the third Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday, 20th April 1982, at 6.15 pm in Roan 604/605 at the Polytechnic of Central London, 35 Marylebone Road, London, NW1.

- AGENDA :
1. Apologies for absence
 2. Chairman's Report
 3. Treasurer's Report
 4. Election of Committee and Officers
 5. Any other business.

Notice of other matters to be raised and nominations of people wishing to serve on the Committee as Ordinary Members or in the position of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer, for the 1982/1983 session, should be sent to the present Chairman, prior to the Meeting (c/o Tibbalds Partnership, 39 Charing Cross Road, London, WC2H 0AW).

Following the A.G.M., Roy Worskett will give a talk entitled "New Buildings in Old Settings : the People like Walt Disney!"

UDG COMMITTEE MEMBERS 1981 - 1982

John Billingham	Regional Activities	Robert Meadows	Education
Richard Ellis	Member	Tony Meats	Assistant Treasurer
John Evans	Editorial	John Peverley	Treasurer
Keith Ingham	Events	Peter Studdert	Editorial
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John Peverley,
Hon. Treasurer : UDG,
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LONDON, N10

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