Urban morphology as a framework programme for research

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Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development are funding instruments created by the European Commission to support and strengthen research in the European Research Area. The latest framework programme, FP8, also named ‘Horizon 2020’, aims to interrelate international experience and knowledge, with special emphasis on making scientific knowledge applicable in practice. Researchers and practitioners, including architects and urban planners, are invited to submit relevant projects in the company of partner institutions.

There are several headings under which urban morphologists might fit, for example: Energy, Environment and Climate Action; ICT Research and Innovation; Social Sciences and Humanities; Society and Transport (http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/). However, there is no direct connection with architecture, urban planning and urban form. Furthermore, in the particular calls for applications, there are none that deal directly with cities and the quality of life in them in a comprehensive and systematic way. The physical structure of the city is not recognized as a spatial framework that corresponds to the complex demands and needs of contemporary life and is a visible result of all the processes that take place within this framework. Within the scope of the topic ‘Smart urban future’, one would expect results that have spatial implications. But can we expect ‘smart’ results if just one spatial aspect is considered – for example, climate, energy, transport – without considering them in relation to other aspects of the built environment?

The problem of a partial approach in facing complex urban phenomena has been recognized in contributions to this journal. The need to take a comprehensive approach in which a sound morphological dimension is crucial, has been pointed out (Oliveira, 2011; Oliveira and Silva, 2013). However, judging by the proposed topics of Horizon 2020 the desired breakthrough can hardly be expected. We are still in the position of choosing between different approaches instead of dealing with the issue of how to combine and coordinate them (Kropf, 2009). Discussions at the latest ISUF conference in Porto on linking research and practice (Morley, 2014, p. 152) re-emphasized the need to promote recognition of the cultural and environmental significance of urban form and the importance of its contribution to social and economic well-being as specified in ISUF’s new Porto Charter.

Perhaps it is an opportunity for urban morphology to prove its wider relevance and be proposed as a real ‘framework’ for framework scientific programmes of the European Commission that have goals related to improving aspects of the built environment. Few other fields of social science have both developed such an active discussion of the need to integrate theory and practice and prompted such a vigorous debate on the benefits of interdisciplinary and international cross-connections (Samuels, 2008; Whitehand, 2013), while realizing the challenges to which such aspirations lead (Whitehand, 2012). The approach
to investigating urban form as a key concept and complex urban phenomenon enables consideration of a wide range of topics, including ‘grand challenges’ (the term used in Horizon 2020), of which healthy environments, climatic change and energy consumption are but a few examples. Professionals engaged with the urban environment, and supposed to solve the problems of today’s and tomorrow’s cities, have various ‘profiles’ but those most relevant to the visible results of these activities are those of architects and urban planners. If we assume that they have different starting points, which is usually the case, with the same aims of producing new forms of urban and physical structures, one wonders how long they would wander about until they reach the point where urban morphology has already been?

Reading about ‘our common scientific future’ in Horizon 2020 (http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/news/76212/Any-questions-A-guide-to-Horizon-2020), it is hard to resist posing the question of why architects and urban planners cannot deal directly with urban form in all its complexity instead of putting themselves into the roles of luminaries on climate change, energy consumption, sustainable development and the like just for the sake of surviving in the latest era of ‘scientific’ funding.

References


The recent economic downturn and fringe-belt creation in Reykjavík, Iceland

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The recent global financial turmoil has left its mark on cities practically worldwide (Reinhart and Rogoff, 2009). The sharp slowdown in economic activity has moved in tandem with a housebuilding slump (Nicholas and Scherbina, 2013). Whitehand (1972a; 1972b) argued that economic slowdowns were major factors generating housebuilding slumps and in turn created conditions conducive of fringe-belt formation. This fits the evidence from a number of cities for much earlier periods (see, for example, Barke, 1974, 1976; Conzen, 1960; Louis, 1936; Whitehand, 1972a, 1972b) argued that economic slowdowns were major factors generating housebuilding slumps and in turn created conditions conducive of fringe-belt formation. This fits the evidence from a number of cities for much earlier periods (see, for example, Barke, 1974, 1976; Conzen, 1960; Louis, 1936; Whitehand, 1972a, 1972b, 1974, 1977). In Iceland the formation of fringe belts has principally been influenced by physical hindrances to growth, a topic also addressed in studies of fringe belts in other countries. However, at least until now, economic conditions have not played as important a part in fringe-belt formation in Reykjavik as they have elsewhere. The question arises as to whether the recent economic downturn and housebuilding slump will prove to be sufficiently severe and prolonged to generate a new fringe belt at the current urban fringe of Reykjavik.

Housebuilding slumps and fringe-belt formation

Fringe belts originate at the temporarily stationary or very slowly advancing fringe of a town and are composed of a characteristic mixture of land uses initially seeking peripheral location (Conzen, 1969, p. 125). During a prolonged halt in the outward advance of the built-up area a varied assortment of land uses normally seeking large, cheap peripheral sites have tended to occupy land immediately beyond the urban fringe, forming a fringe belt. This belt, which tends to include considerable amounts of land occupied by institutions, has become embedded in the urban area during a subsequent resurgence of residential growth (Whitehand, 1988, p. 51).

Whitehand (1972a, pp. 52-3; 1972b) applied the
concept of bid rent to explain why the demand for land for different purposes at the urban fringe varied over time and with distance from the edge of the built-up area. During a boom in housing construction there was a high probability of new housing being located within a broad zone around the edge of the built-up area and for institutions taking up new sites to locate farther out. During a slump in housing construction there was a high probability of institutions acquiring sites close to the built-up area. Over very long periods of alternating booms and slumps, this caused a series of zones characterized by different proportions of housing and institutions to be created (Whitehand 1972a, 1972b).

The recent housebuilding slump

Many Western countries experienced a boom in their residential housing markets during the period from 1997 to 2007. The subsequent slump has, in many cases, been severe. The turning point in this building cycle, experienced at much the same time in many countries, is related to the major financial recession that started in 2007.

Following many years of rapid growth, the economic output in Iceland fell by more than 10 per cent over the 2-year period, 2009-2010. The housebuilding boom started somewhat later in Iceland than in most Western countries, but from 2003 the number of houses constructed grew remarkably rapidly. The subsequent slump in housebuilding was also severe, particularly between 2009 and 2011 (Statistics Iceland, 2013). During the housebuilding boom between 2003 and 2007 the urban fringe was characterized by a forest of building cranes. As building stopped, abandoned and half-built suburbs marked the city’s edge. It is interesting to consider whether this sharp turn-around in economic activity, particularly in the housing sector, has laid the foundations for the formation of a new fringe belt. If so, this would be the first time that a fringe belt formed in Reykjavik owing primarily to economic conditions.

The growth of Reykjavik is guided by its master plan which is intended to apply for roughly 2 decades, although subject to reviews. Since the 1960s the city has grown by the addition of new satellite neighbourhoods, and more were planned and being built during the recent boom. These latest additions to the city fabric were left at various stages of completion as development came to a standstill in late 2008. These abandoned neighbourhoods are monuments to better times, built according to local plans reflecting the state of the economy, tradition and culture.

It will take some time before it becomes evident whether this housebuilding slump will result in the formation of a new fringe belt. For now it must suffice to consider some short-term indices. The most recent neighbourhoods at the city edge were designed as separate units beyond the previous edge of the city, surrounded by green areas (Kristjánssdóttir, 2007). Housebuilding has resumed in the past couple of years at a significantly slower pace than during the boom. In several cases adjustments have been made to plans, allowing for plots and apartments smaller than originally planned (Kristjánssdóttir and Sveinsson, forthcoming). The focus has shifted to ‘densifying’ the city, notably with an emphasis on increasing the number of apartment buildings in more centrally located older areas. In some cases institutional and industrial operations are moving to planned areas, industrial satellite neighbourhoods, even farther beyond the city edge.

Reflections

The newest neighbourhoods in Reykjavik, which were beginning to be constructed shortly before the 2007 crisis and were still under construction when the crisis occurred, were planned as complete neighbourhoods, and they were located outside the previously built-up area of the city. Building of virtually all types came to a halt in the years following the crash. Subsequently, there has been a tendency to build at higher densities, with green areas and other uses in older neighbourhoods being replaced by apartment buildings. At the same time industries and institutions are moving beyond the city edge, to new areas planned entirely for uses other than residential. The economy has started to show signs of renewed growth and residential building is being revived in the newest neighbourhoods. The plans, however, are being adapted, allowing for buildings and apartments smaller than previously intended.

It is difficult to apply conventional fringe-belt analysis to a city surrounded by ample land and where new neighbourhoods are being planned that are separate from the main built-area of the city. It appears, however, that the forces identified in the formation of fringe belts are working, albeit at a larger scale, as institutions are moving to dedicated satellite areas separate from the residential neighbourhoods, and even farther from the city edge than the latest of those neighbourhoods.
Further thoughts on research and practice in urban morphology: a British perspective

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An ambiguous attitude prevails in the UK with respect to academics. On the one hand, they are often sought out as experts on particular matters. On the other hand, in the planning and urban development field in particular, they are also considered as managerially incompetent and politically potentially dangerous (Healey, 2008, p. 873).

This observation draws attention to one of several dilemmas facing the closer integration of academic study in the field of urban development (including urban morphology) in the UK. In relation to urban design, Marshall and Çalışkan (2011) argue that there are three ‘applications’ of urban morphology:
- As an investigitive or exploratory technique to find out ‘what happened’ within an area and where change in form is studied to better understand urban change more generally;
- As a diagnostic or evaluative tool – a way of studying ‘successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’ kinds of urban fabric;
- As a means of identifying examples, types or elements of urban form that could be used as units of design.

Leaving aside the issue of in whose terms ‘successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’ may be defined, some of these applications – especially the last – resonate with the ISUF Task Force (Samuels, 2013) conviction that a lack of morphological understanding can lead to poor design. But urban design and the management of change in existing built environments are rather different things. In conceptual terms (if not always in practice, see McCormack, 2013), the relationship between urban morphology and urban design is a close and potentially creative one (Ding, 2013; Scheer, 2013). The relationship between urban morphology and

References

conservation and planning practice, in the sense of a continuous ‘day-to-day’ management activity, is not so immediate and it is the latter that is the concern of this Viewpoint.

The complexity of urban morphology itself is an issue. Kropf (2009) has demonstrated the range of different phenomena that can be objects of urban morphological enquiry. Whilst this range is inherent to understanding built forms, it may be problematic in the application of morphological principles in practice. The many components of urban morphology are related to each other in a hierarchical manner (Kropf, 2014). A wide range of phenomena, including architectural style, building materials, streets, street blocks, plots, and land use, are involved, and different types of analysis, including town-plan analysis and typological form analysis, may be used. Different component forms such as fringe belts, plot series and character areas may be recognized. The range of issues to which any detailed consideration of these aspects gives rise is liable to be problematic in practical ‘day-to-day’ applications.

In relation to a particular problem in practice, an important question concerns the point at which communication between researcher and practitioner should begin. Ideally it would be from the beginning. But in the vast majority of cases this is impracticable. For example, of the 8000 plus conservation areas within England (English Heritage, 2014), a high proportion have existed for a number of years. In other words, in most cases urban morphologists would be joining an activity that has been in progress for some time. This presents a challenge for any intervention – the ‘secular’ processes within any area will be well under way, as will the policies and practices of the planners/conservation officers attempting to respond to them. And the relationship between these two is likely to vary in numerous ways in different conservation areas. In such circumstances, what is the appropriate role for the urban morphologist to play? Should it be as a ‘critical friend’ commenting and advising on management practice, or as a consultant, attempting to create an overall management strategy based on morphological principles? Alternatively, the urban morphologist may play the role of ‘expert witness’, responding to specific issues and providing specialist advice on particular aspects or cases. Yet another rather different role could be that of partner, where any management strategy is devised in collaboration with the relevant planners.

Most of these issues might be seen as ‘practical’ or procedural problems. But the interest in exploring the links between research and practice in urban morphology stems from a concern that academics and practitioners have been moving further apart in a broader sense. Although stereotypical, the problem may be summarized as academics reproaching practitioners for short-term, conceptually shallow ‘solutions’ to immediate problems whilst practitioners criticize academics for over theorizing and failing to engage with the ‘real world’. Although reducing what is essentially a continuum to somewhat artificial categories, three key elements for any research enterprise may be recognized – practical relevance, methodological rigour and conceptual sophistication (Anderson et al., 2001). Practitioners are likely to have greatest interest in the first of these, whilst researchers are more likely to focus on the third. Both will be interested in methodological rigour but, as they are starting from different poles, ‘rigour’ is likely to be perceived differently. Practitioners need to be convinced that the ‘rigour’ of the researcher has some meaning and application beyond the printed page. Thus, for the urban morphologist to have significant impact upon practice, communication is a key issue. Many practitioners would argue that academics talk ‘in code’ to each other (Cohen, 2007) and this functions as an exclusionary mechanism for others. The usefulness of research to practitioners is a function of the extent to which they can interpret results and apply them. If the language in which these results are expressed is inaccessible, this is unlikely to take place.

Table 1 attempts to isolate some of the issues relating to the requirements of someone doing a ‘practical job’ on the one hand and the very different, essentially intellectual role of the academic on the other.

Whilst the practitioner is usually legally bound to operate within an established legal framework which creates the parameters for the role performed, especially if a government employee, the academic can operate within a very different agenda; one that is much more personal in character or, possibly defined in terms of the role played by a larger research group or research peers. The practitioner’s role is frequently one of attempting to reconcile the perspectives of a variety of interested parties in any development or policy whilst the role and training of the academic is to recognize the established orthodoxy, but then, frequently, to challenge it. In carrying out their role, practitioners inevitably have to operate within an established consensus, whereas the ‘job’ of the social science academic is, arguably, to challenge existing paradigms.
Table 1. Contrasting professional contexts of government practitioners and academic urban morphologists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practitioners ↔</th>
<th>Mutual Interest ↔</th>
<th>Academic urban morphologists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban form/townscape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operate within legislative frameworks</td>
<td>Operate within personal/research group and peers’ agenda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconcile perspectives of developers, protagonists and public</td>
<td>Recognize established knowledge: but challenge it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operate within established consensual paradigm</td>
<td>Probe the horizons of knowledge: seek new paradigms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answerable to a local political bureaucracy</td>
<td>Answerable to self/own intellectual integrity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible outputs – implementation of a plan/strategy</td>
<td>‘Ideas’ main output – academic publications</td>
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Impact agenda?

The cultural background of the two groups also varies in other ways. Whilst the government practitioner is directly a public servant, answerable to local communities but also to a local and national political bureaucracy, the academic retains a considerable degree of freedom of thought and action, despite significant recent attempts to curtail this. The role of the practitioner may frequently be to seek a consensus whilst that of the academic is to challenge established perspectives. Finally, whilst the practitioner is essentially concerned with tangible outputs – with the preparation or implementation of a specific plan or strategy – the main “output” of the academic is frequently considerably less tangible, being concerned with ideas in the abstract (although they may of course subsequently have practical application).

In the UK recent changes within the economic and political environment are likely to significantly affect the nature of the academic/practitioner relationship. Universities have increasingly to look beyond government sources for financial support and those providing such resources are likely to demand outputs that meet their agendas and needs (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997). Furthermore, recent changes in the academic assessment of research quality within the UK are relevant, as a significant criterion for judging this ‘quality’ is the ‘impact’ of research on wider society.

Whilst the longer term influence of this new criterion for ‘measuring’ research ‘quality’ remains to be seen, universities are increasingly likely to place emphasis on impact-based research in their own research strategies. One outcome of such pressures may well be a greater degree of convergence in the dichotomies between practitioners and academics identified in Table 1, as academics rethink their roles in relation to new strategic and financial pressures.

References


English Heritage (2014) Conservation areas (http://
An urban morphological bible? A view from China

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With the rapid spread of interest in urban morphology, the monograph on Alnwick has become the most important medium by which scholars have come to know the morphogenetic ideas of M. R. G. Conzen. It has recently been translated into Chinese and Italian. In this monograph, the concept of the urban landscape or townscape was enunciated as a tripartite division: town plan, building fabric and land utilization (Conzen, 1960, p. 3). Alnwick has had a major influence on a subsequent generation of researchers (Whitehand, 2001).

Curiously, however, in light of Conzen’s great contribution to the study of urban form, the study of Alnwick was concerned only with the town plan. His envisaged eventual treatment of other aspects of the urban form of Alnwick never materialized. Yet this detailed research on the town plan (Conzen, 1960, 1969) has for newcomers to the Conzenian approach, especially for researchers outside Britain, become almost a guide book. It has been cited far more than any of Conzen’s other publications (Table 1).

However, the majority of interest in Conzen’s work has arisen since the 1980s, much of it since his death in 2000. A major factor accounting for this long-delayed influence was undoubtedly the relatively small amount of research undertaken on urban morphology in the decades of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Now, in contrast, urban morphology is undergoing unprecedented popularity, including in China (Lu, 2014). But new key works of comparable influence to Alnwick have as yet not been forthcoming. This would not have been such a significant problem if Conzen’s widely scattered publications on aspects of urban morphology other than plan analysis had become better known. Unfortunately, his integrative work on ‘Urban morphology: its nature and development’ was never completed. An outline of it, prepared between 1992 and 1999, is all that reached publication (Conzen, 2004, pp. 269-83).

With the major expansion of ISUF in recent years, Alnwick has for some become a kind of urban morphological bible. Enthusiasm for Conzen’s approach has been forthcoming from researchers in various countries: fringe belts, plot cycles and plan units are among the phenomena that have been explored, often in environments remote from Alnwick. But this needs to be complemented by greater knowledge of his other publications as a basis for building securely on the foundations that he has provided. Unpublished documents in the University of Birmingham’s Conzen Collection have potential to give a more complete picture of Conzen’s conception of urban morphology. Completing the task left unfinished by his demise is a major challenge.
### Table 1. Citations of M. R. G. Conzen’s major works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of publication</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Number of Citations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td><em>The growth and character of Whitby</em></td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Alnwick, Northumberland: a study in town-plan analysis</em> (reprinted 1969)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td><em>Alnwick, Northumberland: a study in town-plan analysis</em> (reprinted 1969)</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td><em>Historical townscapes in Britain: a problem in applied geography</em> (reprinted 1981)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td><em>Geography and townscape conservation</em> (reprinted 1981)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td><em>The morphology of towns in Britain during the industrial era</em> (originally in German: in English translation 1981)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td><em>Morphogenesis, morphogenetic regions and secular human agency in the historic townscape, as exemplified by Ludlow</em> (revised and reprinted 2004)</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Google Scholar (accessed 25 November 2014)

**References**


The relationship between research and practice has recently attracted a good deal of attention from urban morphologists, particularly from those in America and Western Europe. However, conditions vary so much geographically that perhaps a perspective, or more accurately a retrospective, from Europe’s northern fringe is appropriate.

In an ideal world, planning is preceded by research focusing on a subject useful for the next planning challenge. Research and planning should reciprocate. But the world is seldom ideal. And the Finnish ‘world’ and my own place in it have fallen well short of ideal over a lengthy period.

My own experience is indicative. Starting with my graduate thesis, my research focused on historical grid plans, whereas my practical work was mainly within master planning – and mostly in a city lacking a historical grid plan.

During my time in the university in the 1960s architects did not work within research and they were not supposed to. Only a few architects in Finland were interested in research, and there was little or no history of such interest.

The background of both urban morphology and landscape morphology in Finland is unusual in a number of respects. In the early-twentieth century the first master plans were made by Eliel Saarinen. The most important was that for Helsinki. It was based on thorough research, which, strictly speaking, was not academic research. Saarinen appointed a young architect Otto-I. Meurman on the condition that he would specialize in urban planning and design. Meurman agreed, and after Saarinen had emigrated to the USA continued to work in the tradition that Saarinen had established. The most important was that for Helsinki. It was based on thorough research, which, strictly speaking, was not academic research. Saarinen appointed a young architect Otto-I. Meurman on the condition that he would specialize in urban planning and design. Meurman agreed, and after Saarinen had emigrated to the USA continued to work in the tradition that Saarinen had established. In the 1920s and the 1930s Meurman was a practising planner, simultaneously developing his ideas for an ideal urban environment. In 1937 he was appointed as a professor of urban planning and design – the first such position in any Scandinavian country. After the Second World War the results of Meurman’s research and thinking were published as a book for students of architecture and urban planning entitled Asemakaavaoppi (How to plan cities) (Meurman, 1947). The application in practice was Tapiola Garden City, which was started soon after the book was published.

In landscape morphology, J. G. Granö’s book Reine geografie (Pure geography) (Granö, 1929) (Finnish edition 1930) was a notable contribution. He later made a classification of the different landscape regions in Finland. This classification subsequently found its way into school geography. Thus schoolchildren, including myself, were taught the differences between maisemamaakunnat (the nearest term in English being ‘landscape regions’) even though they did not know about the research on which they were based. The method of delimiting landscape regions was similar in principle, though different in scale and in its results, to that employed by Conzen (1975) within urban areas, but awareness of Conzen’s work remains very limited among Finnish architects.

Very rapid urbanization in Finland made master plans necessary for growing cities. They were a new type of plan in the 1950s and 1960s. Most master plans included – besides the actual plan drawing – a ‘study book’ containing various types of maps and drawings explaining, for inhabitants and decision makers, what was planned for the future of the city. Looking back now, 50-60 years later, it is obvious that the maps and drawings can be classified as ‘urban morphology’, though at that time the term ‘urban structure’ was used rather than ‘urban morphology’.

Urban growth led decision makers to start considering the old grid plans occupied by low wooden houses. In many cities the street network remained as it had been, but instead of 1-storey wooden houses new multi-storey so-called ‘stone houses’ (actually made of brick and later of concrete) were built.

In 1960 Olli Kivinen (a disciple of Meurman) completed his PhD thesis on the process of development in old grid cities (Kivinen, 1960). Among other things, he demonstrated that it was not necessary to construct 6-storey houses in small, slow-growing towns. This research was a starting point for the renewal of building ordinances in numerous towns in the 1960s.

Kivinen became an extremely active planner, but his personal research developed little beyond his PhD thesis. However, in later years as a professor of urban planning, first in a department of architecture and later in a centre for urban and regional studies, he started several multidisciplinary urban studies, spoke warmly about research, and encouraged his students to develop research interests. The fields of urban planning and urban
development had heretofore remained largely unexplored, and the research topics pursued ranged widely, though they might be broadly referred to as ‘morphology’.

The available resources in Finland are limited, and were limited even before the present economic conditions. Architecture and urban planning are taught in three universities and arguably five or fewer professors have been interested in research. The rest concentrate on teaching planning and design. Consequently the development of knowledge is slow. At Tampere University of Technology during the time of Terttu Pakarinen a morphological tradition was starting to form – several younger researchers focused on space syntax. It was a great loss when Pakarinen died suddenly at a point when she had finally freed herself from administrative duties and could dedicate her time fully to research.

As a master planning practitioner, I was not able to use the actual results of my research, but research was useful in another way. Working with research I learned to write various kinds of reports, which in my time at university was not a skill taught to students of architecture. And master planning entails a great deal of writing.

Conversely, planning practice gave me a viewpoint different from that of historians and art historians in studying building and planning legislation and interpreting historical plan drawings.

References


ISUF 2015: City as organism: new visions for urban life

The Twenty-Second International Seminar on Urban Form (ISUF 2015), hosted by the Faculty of Architecture of Sapienza, University of Rome, will take place in Rome, Italy, from 22 to 26 September 2015. The theme of the conference is ‘City as organism: new visions for urban life’. Topics to be covered include:

- New and historical landscapes
- Infrastructural networks
- Modern constructions and Mediterranean identity
- Urban growth and fringe belts
- Contemporary design for historical cities
- Urban aesthetics and new developments in urban design
- Eco-cities
- Urban morphology and urban regeneration
- Reading and designing urban fabric
- Urban form and meaning
- Urban knots
- Architectural heritage preservation methods

Post-conference excursions will take place in Rome (E42-EUR), Hadrian’s Villa (Tivoli) and to the historical town of Todi.

The Conference Scientific Committee comprises: Giancarlo Cataldi (University of Florence, Italy), Michael Conzen (University of Chicago, USA), Kai Gu (University of Auckland, New Zealand), Ivor Samuels (University of Birmingham, UK), Jean-Francois Lejeune (University of Miami, USA), Vítor Oliveira (University of Porto, Portugal), Piero Ostilio Rossi (‘Sapienza’ University of Rome, Italy), Jeremy Whitehand (University of Birmingham, UK).

More information is available on the conference website (http://rome2015.isufitaly.com).