contents

Study tour of sociable streets
Oxford - the first solar city?
Oxfordshire Food Group celebrates
Pacific Rim annual conference
Problems in project management
WELCOME

**Introduction**

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The JCUD is internationally renowned, among other things, for the work of its team led by Emeritus Professor Ian Bentley on pioneering the ‘responsive environments’ paradigm. The team continues to work on the fresh challenges which have arrived with the 21st century, and with the global problems of dense, and sustainable, urban environments and rapid urbanisation. Three new, agenda setting books have either been recently, or are about to be published by Professors Bentley, Butina-Watson and their colleagues.

In addition to this, our Oxford Centre for Sustainable Development has currently over £3M of research contracts on sustainable urban development and inclusive design. If you would like further information on urban design at Oxford Brookes please contact Jon Cooper (jcooper@brookes.ac.uk), or Professor Mike Jenks (mjjenks@brookes.ac.uk), or Professor Georgia Butina-Watson and their colleagues.

**What’s on**

**Conferences**

8–10 September 2003

Wadham College, Oxford

**Building the Link**

An international conference on integrating teaching with research and practice in the built environment. See www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/planning/LTRC/conference/home.htm

To book contact Mark Beesley on 01865 488602 or email cce@brookes.ac.uk

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**Short courses**

**Introduction to Strategic Environmental Assessment for Development Plans**

Wednesday 8 October 2003 (Oxford)

Thursday 16 October 2003 (Norwich)

**Design and the Planning Process**

Wednesday 12 November 2003

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**School of the Built Environment Senior Management Structure**

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**Six Times tables multiply our success**

The season of league tables is once more upon us, and the School of the Built Environment, as well as Oxford Brookes collectively, has done particularly well in the prestigious Good University Guide published by The Times during May 2003.

Oxford Brookes is placed in the top twenty UK universities for ten subject tables, no less than four of which are within the School of the Built Environment. We are rated third in Land and Property Management, sixth in Town and Country Planning, eleventh in Building and sixteenth in Architecture.

The Best for Jobs table ranked Oxford Brookes eighth in the percentage of graduates who leave for graduate-type employment. This is especially significant for today’s students, who increasingly see the cost of taking a degree as an investment in their future careers.

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Launch of THRU

A shared interest in all issues concerning townscape and heritage has led to the formation of a new research group. The Townscape and Heritage Research Unit (THRU) was formed at the beginning of the year by staff from the Department of Planning and the JCUD. It was founded out of a number of important externally funded research projects; these included a townscape evaluation of the Jubilee Line Extension for Transport for London; and an ongoing ten year evaluation of the Townscape Heritage Initiative of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Both projects have allowed staff to develop their expertise in applied research and consultancy, and to create new ways of evaluating the impacts of major investment programmes on the physical, social, community and economic well-being of local environments.

THRU is co-directed by Philip Grover who specialises in conservation-led urban regeneration work, and Alan Reeve, whose expertise is in the field of urban design. For more information and a brochure of THRU’s work and the consultancy service it offers, email Alan Reeve on amreeve@brookes.ac.uk or phone 01865 483435.

Introduction

Hi, and welcome to the Joint Centre for Urban Design (JCUD). I’m sure most of you will know of the JCUD but you might not know exactly what we get up to inside this tower on the sixth floor of the Lloyd Building. So we jumped at the chance to appear in be and let you in on a few of our secrets.

It’s pleasing to see how the JCUD has developed in the last year. Our student numbers have increased, and with our continued international reputation we are attracting large numbers of overseas applications.

In recent years a number of our established members have taken retirement or moved on to new opportunities, but that doesn’t mean they have left the JCUD. We are pleased that Emeritus Professor Ian Bentley is still active in all JCUD areas, Ivor Samuel brings us both practice experience and a wealth of knowledge regarding urban morphology and coding. Emeritus Professor Brian Goodey is still providing his expertise, particularly in research.

In addition, a number of associate JCUD members provide us with up-to-date practice input. Tom Medcalf, Juliet Matthews, Geertje Kreuziger, Tobias Gevert and Anwar Punekar all bring skills in architecture, landscape architecture and research as well as urban design. We have also had some valuable input this year from Helena Webster, of the Department of Architecture.

Our refurbishment of the JCUD studio space continues and, with the support of our two parent Departments, we have new studio equipment to provide a working atmosphere more suited to the production of highly professional work.

The JCUD is now in a great position from which to grow. Urban design as an approach is getting unprecedented international coverage. With the JCUD’s established international reputation as the leader in the field, its continued access to established academic input, growing links with practice, continued consultancy activity and injection of new young designers, the future is looking good.

Jon Cooper
Chair of the Joint Centre for Urban Design

News in brief

The Beacon Council Scheme

At present, one of the JCUD’s key projects is a linked education/consultancy programme intended to build urban design expertise within West Dorset District Council. The Centre is now two years into the programme and already four council officers have successfully gained the JCUD’s Certificate, and four others are nearing the end of their Diploma studies. The programme’s work has focused around five projects in Bridport, West Bay and Dorchester. The innovative nature of this local authority/university link has been recognised with the prestigious central government Beacon Status award.

Jon Cooper, Alan Reeve and Tom Medcalf, together with JCUD associates Juliet Matthews and Geertje Kreuziger, have been working with Milton Keynes Council, developers Wilson Connolly and JJ Gallaghers, planning consultants Wood Frampton and David Lock Associates to prepare a development brief for Broughton Manor Farm in Milton Keynes. This is a 54ha site that forms part of the Eastern Expansion Area of Milton Keynes. The JCUD worked as design consultants and facilitators running a two-day collaborative workshop with Milton Keynes Council, the developers, local councillors and residents to identify design principles and site parameters that will now guide future development of the site.

With the successful completion of the Broughton Manor Farm workshops the JCUD has been invited to organise and run a series of collaborative design workshops for the Milton Keynes Western Expansion Area (WEA). The area will eventually house a population similar to the town of Buckingham. Working with the council, developers Genesis and Corran-Wakefield, English Partnerships and consultants RPS and David Lock Associates, Jon, Alan and Tom will be acting as facilitators, aiming to help identify design principles that will form the basis of the development framework for the WEA.

In addition to actively working as consultants with developers and well known design and planning practices this has been a good year for the JCUD in terms of its aim of continuing to develop its links with urban practice and getting students in touch with practitioners. Associate studio staff are providing practice links with the Civic Trust, Townscape, Gillespies, Anthony PRP Architects bringing up-to-the minute practice techniques straight in to the JCUD studios.

Spreading the urban design word has really taken off this year with the JCUD being asked to provide design training for a large number of local authorities - Harrow, Sandwell MBC, Surrey County Council, the 11 district councils contained in Surrey, South Northamptonshire DC, North Hertfordshire DC, East Hertfordshire DC, Ampleforth County Council, Wychavon DC, Waltham Forest LBC, South Somerset DC and Maidstone DC.

Study tour of sociable streets

The Joint Centre for Urban Design’s part-time course study tour provides an opportunity for students and professionals to come together. The tour helps those on it to learn and understand other approaches to urban living, mixed-use developments and ‘integrated transport experiments’ in Germany and the Netherlands.

This ‘environmental traffic management’ installation in the regeneration area of Bonn’s Innere-Nordstadt is one of a number in the area, designed in the 1980s, to produce a calm environment. Driving is one of a number in the area, designed in the 1980s, to produce a calm environment. Driving is one of a number in the area, designed in the 1980s, to produce a calm environment.

This kind of ‘shared surface area’ has recently become possible in the UK with the ‘Homezone’ legislation; in Germany and the Netherlands the law changed as much as 25 years ago.

JCUD regularly organises study tours focusing on the urban design and highways interface and has contributed to national thinking and the development of legislation in these areas.

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Reviews, revalidations, people and prizes

It would be hard to imagine a busier year. Our courses have been revalidated by both the University and the RIBA/ARB, and a pending visitation from the government in the form of the Quality Assurance Agency is set to review all our activities. But these are opportunities to show the Department at its best. An exhibition organised for the RIBA/ARB visit placed the Department on display and showed work of the highest standards. Students have won many important prizes for their designs, with awards from the RIBA, Corus, Royal Academy, Archiix International and the AIA (the USA’s RIBA). The excellence of our staff has also been recognised through a number of awards and we have seen notable successes in research.

We have had to say farewell to Professor Murray Fraser who is taking up a Professorship at the University of Westminster and to Jacqui Glass who is leaving to become a Lecturer in Architectural Engineering at Loughborough University - our best wishes go to them both in their new roles - and to John Stevenson, back after a period away. We have also welcomed colleagues from South Korea, Kuwait, Israel and Japan, adding to the dynamic of the School.

The months ahead promise to be exciting ones. The University has contracted international space planners DEGW to review all our accommodation and they will propose innovative designs in consultation with us. We can expect 21st-century spaces to match our forward-looking teaching and leading edge research.

We are pleased to announce the following staff successes. Paul Oliver has received the MBE, Michael Humphreys and Professor Fergus Nicol have had professorships conferred on them from the University of North London, and Richard Rose-Casemore, Peter Barber and Guy Greenfield have all produced competition and prize-winning buildings.

In the last year we have organised four major international conferences: Sustainable Cities in South East Asia held in Bangkok, Thailand; Creating Sustainable Urban Environments - the 5th International Urban Planning and Environment Association Symposium, held in Ghent Church, Oxford; Teachers in Architecture and Rajat Gupta from Oxford Brookes and members of Oxford City Council, completed a feasibility study of 700 houses. The results showed that 80% of householders were keen to put in more energy efficiency measures and a stunning 67% would like to include solar technologies in their renovation package. A £400,000 project to implement the OSI project has been put to the

Washington - Alexandria Architecture Center

What do architecture departments from Texas, California, Louisiana, Argentina, Japan, Estonia, the Bauhaus and Oxford Brookes University have in common? They all share studio space at Virginia Tech’s centre in Alexandria. The centre offers excellent resources, comfortable studios and stylish pooled spaces. Residential accommodation just 300 metres away contributes to an intense, accessible experience for students and visiting staff.

Students on the Graduate Diploma course at Oxford Brookes have been benefiting from this experience since 1985. Typically, their time is spent working in the mornings - a work visa allows up to twenty hours a week - while teaching takes place in the afternoons and evenings. Some 85 graduate students and 75 master’s and PhD students make up the complement in this metropolitan outpost of the Virginia State University. The centre is ideally situated in the 18th-century Old Town of Alexandria, across the Potomac and six miles from Washington DC, giving access to the resources of the lively national and international design/development/planning community of the Washington/Baltimore metropolitan region.

Solar city

A team of experts from Oxford Brookes University are set to help the UK meet its Kyoto targets of 12.5% reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 2010. How? By turning Oxford into the first solar city in the UK.

The aims of the Oxford Solar Initiative (OSI) are to have 10% of all houses in Oxford using solar hot water systems by 2010. In February the OSI team, consisting of Professor Sue Roaf, Manuel Fuentes and Rajat Gupta from Oxford Brookes and members of Oxford City Council, completed a feasibility study of 700 houses. The results showed that 80% of householders were keen to put in more energy efficiency measures and a stunning 67% would like to include solar technologies in their renovation package. A £400,000 project to implement the OSI project has been put to the

Architecture people

Architecture alumnus Gus Grundt, who studied at Oxford Brookes between 1964 and 1969, returned to his alma mater this year from Oslo, Norway, where he is the Chief Architect and Communications Officer for the city. Gus is responsible for organising the European Sustainable City Award for 2003. He is seen in the photo enjoying the view from the late Reginald Cave’s memorial bench at Headington Hill Hall.
Oxfordshire food group celebrates

The Oxfordshire Food Group will shortly be celebrating its first year as the guest of the Department of Planning. The Department offered to host the group, which is involved with local and sustainable food issues across the county. Projects include supporting farmers’ markets and small-scale food producers as well promoting sustainable agricultural practices. The Group is part of a growing local food network, which works in areas as diverse as health and education, farm diversification, rural regeneration and sustainability within the food chain.

Agenda 21 and rural economic development were major factors in bringing a number of partners including Oxford Brookes together to provide funding and support for this local food initiative. All five of Oxfordshire’s district councils, the County Council and South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) are involved. To find out more, visit: www.oxfordshirelocalfood.info or contact Jacquie Mansfield, Local Food Projects Manager, on 01865 484116, email localfood@brookes.ac.uk

Jacquie Mansfield at Oxford’s monthly farmers’ market

Oxford City Council new housing residents survey

The Land Use and Transport Research Group, in collaboration with Oxford City Council, has recently completed a study of new housing developments in Oxford. The study was part of a continuing programme of research into the relationship between development location, housing choice and travel behaviour. An underlying objective of the research is the contribution that land use planning can make to reducing car-based travel.

Surveys were conducted during summer 2002 using face-to-face household interviews at a sample of properties on two new estates - The Slade off Horspath Driftway, near to the city’s eastern bypass, and Revely Road near to the rail station on the edge of the city centre.

Early results have shown that the main concern of residents on the new housing estates is the availability of children’s play-space. Residents at The Slade development also expressed concern about the quality of their local bus service. Although opinion is finely balanced across all estates, residents are marginally against the issue of building on green belt land to increase the supply of housing. A small, but nonetheless significant, minority of people is interested in the option of a car-club and there is particular interest from those people living in social housing and flats. Differences in travel behaviour for the two estates are currently being analysed.

For more information of this project contact Peter Headicar (pheadicar@brookes.ac.uk) or Tim Jones (tjones@brookes.ac.uk) at the Department of Planning.

News in brief

Jake Piper has been undertaking an analysis of a consultation exercise carried out by the Environment Agency on the Water Framework Directive. The Directive is a major piece of European legislation to protect and enhance water resources, and is currently the object of an array of studies across the EU.

Short courses activity (both in Oxford and, increasingly, in-house in local authorities) goes from strength to strength. We have recently provided a continuing professional development programme with English Heritage, and will be undertaking training for the Planning Inspectorate.

We are pleased to welcome new staff and higher degree students. Lucy Nichol has joined the staff as a Lecturer/Research Associate in Rural Futures, Robert Brown has joined as a Lecturer in Housing, and we have eight new PhD students, including an ODPM/ESRC funded studentship in Transport Planning. We are also pleased to have been chosen by the planning consultancy, RPS, to be the recipient of two major studentships annually.

At Christmas, we celebrated the contributions of a number of staff taking retirement from the Department, including Marie Barnett, Bob Bixby, and Jenny Franklin, plus those moving onto pastures new - Martyn Pearl and Giles Darke.

The relationship between teaching and research is a key issue in higher education and the department’s Link project shows that the built environment is a fertile subject area in which to explore this complex relationship. An international conference exploring these ideas takes place in September 2003 (see page 2). For further information on the project visit www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/planning/LTRC/conference/home.html
A focus for our future

Oliver Wendell Holmes observed that it is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving that is important. In the case of the Department of Real Estate Management that has rarely been more relevant than it is today. It would be wrong to say that we have been still standing over the last couple of years: our revalidated and expanded undergraduate programmes and our MSc programme attest to that. But it is from where we stand now that we must see our direction for the next few years. We are constantly researching markets and changes in those markets so that we can meet the needs of an increasingly diverse professional vision. This is not easy in times of economic and political uncertainty. But in such a climate there are opportunities which, with our own particular experience and knowledge as a department, can provide a focus for our future.

The nature of the work undertaken by the chartered general practice surveyor and the building surveyor has become much less compartmentalised - no longer is it restricted to one specific activity, or even country. Our professions are becoming multi-functional and international in their activities, facilitating a holistic property service to clients. Graduates leave our programmes well-equipped to participate in the demanding advisory and decision-making roles of today's property professional. The Department's development reflects the changes taking place in the external environment. We believe that the direction in which we are moving in both our teaching and our research and consultancy work is one which continues to meet the needs of the market place.

Peter Dent
Head of Department

Real estate in the Pacific Rim

The Pacific Rim Real Estate Society's 9th annual conference embraced a wide ranging programme which covered, among other topics, urban and rural property markets, valuation, investment, education, theory and behavioural studies. Pacific Rim markets appear on the surface to be similar in this era of mass global exposure. However it did not take long for fascinating differences to appear. The emergence of native title law in Australia, for example, has exposed major discrepancies in the current models for compensation, based on market value and economic loss, when applied to the value of traditional land title and traditional landholders.

Ann Boon, Sally Sims and Henry Chin from the Department of Real Estate Management attended the conference and presented papers on: 'The Real Estate Implications of the Changing Rural Economy', 'The Effects of Electricity Distribution Equipment on the UK Residential Property Market' and 'Macro-economic Factors affecting Office Rental Values in Southeast Asian Cities', respectively.

The case study visit was to a riverside urban renewal scheme. Formerly a colonial sugar refining enterprise, this 4.3ha site is being redeveloped for residential and business use, by a private developer. The refurbished heritage listed building and forms the centrepiece of the development. The unexpected visual impact, to the eye finely tuned by the UK's restrictive planning policies, is that the attempt has been made to recreate the new with the architectural qualities of the old. But it seems to work for Brisbane.

Followling on from the conference, the Department is expecting visits from Professor Terry Boyd (Queensland University of Technology), Peter Elliot (University of Queensland) and Richard Reed (University of Melbourne). We expect these to generate useful information exchanges for the Department's International Land Markets Research Group.

MSc update

It is hard to believe that we are nearly half way through the first year of the MSc in Real Estate Management. On the learning front, students have completed modules in planning and development and law. To assist them to develop the practical knowledge and skills that they will soon be using in professional practice, students have undertaken work including a property market assessment and property development feasibility studies, and have presented evidence to a mock Royal Commission on urban regeneration.

Students were recently taken on a field trip to Manchester to investigate the property market, concentrating on some urban regeneration schemes. In particular, visiting speakers from our sponsoring firms have provided a further dimension to their studies.

Recruitment continues to go well, with most students having already secured graduate positions, mostly in large UK surveying practices, despite being only just half way through the course.

Edinburgh's car-free urbanism

Mike Stubbs has just completed work on the relationship between car parking policy and urban sustainability. This study, to emerge from a research programme funded by the Berkeley Homes Research Foundation, examined the recent evolution of parking policy including 'car-free urbanism' as pioneered by Edinburgh City Council. This foresees housing developments without parking provision in appropriate locations. The study sought opinion from residential occupiers on their desire for parking provision (as opposed to car ownership). Not surprisingly people perceive a strong relationship between car parking ownership and property value. Local Planning policy, the study concluded, requires a serious re-appraisal if the aspirations of government policy are to be achieved. Innovative policy regimes as currently being implemented in Edinburgh are worth future monitoring to assess their implications for achieving greater sustainability as a consequence of planning policy.

Mike Stubbs and Miles Keeping have published a study examining course content in vocational property-based degree qualifications. Their work involved an appraisal of the way in which professional practice-based projects can be incorporated into undergraduate education. The work is timely as bodies such as the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) re-praise their educational strategies and policy. The study is published in Planning Practice and Research.

This year the Singapore programme anticipates its largest group of graduates. 25 students are completing their final series of modules, including the dissertation and assessment of professional competence in the Professional Practice Unit. In January 2003 Wiennie Spurge visited Singapore to orientate the students for their forthcoming PPT assessment in June. This will involve their attending three different interviews at which they will need to defend their opinions on matters of legal principles and ethical conduct applied to local property-based scenarios.
Problems in project management

‘A house builder experienced in traditional construction decides to switch to timber frame building. Analyse the financial and technological implications of this move and propose how the change in the business and organisation should be managed.’

This is the type of problem which might face incoming students on a new MSc course in project management. It is being developed along problem-based learning principles by the Department of Civil Engineering and Construction Management. Other examples might involve introducing congestion charging, tackling a problem of business law, or determining why a new e-procurement system is producing disappointing results. Students will be offered a choice in the problems they tackle, allowing them to specialise in a particular context such as construction.

In some disciplines, medicine for example, established courses in which all learning takes place through the study of a carefully structured series of problems already exist. Evidence shows that students on this type of course learn nearly as much factual knowledge as they would on conventional courses, but they remember far more, are better able to apply what they have learned and develop a range of invaluable skills in the process.

The course will be for students with first degrees other than construction-related ones. With declining applications onto undergraduate construction courses, employers are already turning to such graduates for small structures, such as these brick arches which are part of a final year student’s project. Materials suitable for testing in the lab include concrete, steel, timber, masonry, soil and rock. The lab can also be used to test the air-tightness of building cladding units.

A crucial area for us now is working out suitable problems and background briefings, and we intend to seek help from employers in developing these. Demand for able individuals in the industry is so strong at present that we also expect to find employers willing to offer scholarships.

Structures Lab

The University’s Structures Laboratory has facilities for the structural testing of building materials and small structures, such as these brick arches which are part of a final year student’s project. Materials suitable for testing in the lab include concrete, steel, timber, masonry, soil and rock. The lab can also be used to test the air-tightness of building cladding units.

The rig is available for performance testing and certification of proprietary and bespoke cladding systems.

For further information please contact Ray Ogden, email rogden@brookes.ac.uk

Plans to go places

Following on from a successful revalidation of our Construction Management degree programmes we are launching a number of new initiatives. Input from the construction industry has always informed our teaching and research. The rig is available for performance testing and certification of proprietary and bespoke cladding systems.

We have embarked therefore upon building closer partnerships with a number of participating companies. Could you be one? We are looking for firms that will sponsor students, support our international exchange programme, provide prizes and scholarships, send staff on degree and postgraduate professional development programmes, help us design and deliver our programmes, look to us for advice and help to move forward. We hope you will want to work with us in such an exciting and rewarding venture.

For further information contact Brian Wood, bwwood@brookes.ac.uk

CECM People

Mu’tasime Abdel-Jaber has been working as a postgraduate in the Department for the past four years investigating the behaviour of semi-rigid connections in light steel frames. He successfully defended his research at a recent examination and will be awarded a PhD in the Autumn. He is the second member of his family to undertake research in the Department; his brother, Mu’en, completed research on strengthening reinforced concrete structures some two years ago.

Bob Branch continues his excellent work as Admissions Tutor, welcoming potential recruits to our courses, while also developing a new foundation programme designed to attract and enable students from varied backgrounds to study with us.

Michael Hill is the contact point for employers offering career opportunities to students for an ‘year-out’ industrial placement and/or a position on graduation.

Paul Jenkins becomes Field Chair for our undergraduate programmes in Civil Engineering, Environmental Geotechnology, Geotechnics and Water Resources.

Nick Spencer-Chapman is taking the lead in creating a new postgraduate programme designed to help people move into professional careers in construction management (see Problems in project management on this page). This builds on our successful Project Management courses which have been meeting the needs of industry for over a decade now, leading to professional qualifications.
The Joint Centre for Urban Design is updating Responsive Environments: A Manual for Designers, to address both eighteen years’ experience of using it since its first publication, and the multiplicity of new issues which have arisen during that period. Both these factors have strongly reinforced our conviction about the validity of the book’s approach.

**Emeritus Professor Ian Bentley’s book**

Urban Transformations: Power, People, and Urban Design has finally been brought out as an affordable paperback, and reviewers have seen it as giving a still stronger theoretical underpinning to the Joint Centre for Urban Design’s Responsive Environments approach.

**Professor Georgia Butina Watson and Emeritus Professor Ian Bentley** are putting the finishing touches to their new book Identity by Design, to be published by Architectural Press, in time for the next academic year. There has been enthusiastic student response to the seminars through which the book has been developed, so we hope it will help focus designers’ thinking about place-identity - one of the most deeply felt but perhaps least understood urban design issues of our time.

**Emeritus Professor Ian Bentley and Graham Smith** are now well into production of the manuscript for their Modernist Urban Design, to be published by Architectural Press next year. They say they are bringing this out to show how the Joint Centre for Urban Design’s approach draws its roots from the modernist design tradition, and to dispute the view that Responsive Environments itself is somehow a nostalgic anti-modernist enterprise.


Brian Wood’s first book, Building Care, examines a range of alternative approaches to building maintenance and facilities management.

A new book by Miles Keeping and David Shiers, dealing with the relationship between property and the environment is to be published in summer 2003 by Blackwell Science. Whilst there are now a great many excellent sources of information focusing on specific aspects of property-related environmental issues, for those coming to the subject for the first time such material can be hard to follow. This basic ‘primer’ makes no such demands upon the reader - all that is required is an interest in learning more about this increasingly important field of study.

**PUBLICATIONS**

The last government Research Assessment Exercise placed us as the top new university in the built environment subject area, and over the last six months we have been busy building on the 4 rating we achieved. As well as the important work of writing papers and books, supporting research students and undertaking consultancy and research projects, we have had some major successes in funding for new research.

**Members of the Oxford Centre for Sustainable Development** (OCSD) have recently secured funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) to participate in three new research consortia comprising academic institutions and industry partners. They are undertaking research in: Sustainable Urban Environments (led by Oxford Brooks University, total funding £1.75 million); Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors (£503k); and Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in the Urban Environment (with colleagues in the Department of Planning, £390k). OCSD’s Technology group has also won funding from the Department of Trade and Industry, with new projects supported through the Partners in Innovation Programme (P2I) looking into levels of compliance in building regulations (£50k) and thin-joint glued brickwork (554k). OCSD had also been collaborating with the Department of Civil Engineering and Construction Management, using its pressure test rig to investigate the air-tightness of cladding systems developed by Corus (see page 7).

**In addition to their work with OCSD on Climate Change and the Urban Environment the Department of Planning’s research activities continue to flourish,** including new contracts with Thames Water on the Socio-Economic Impacts of the Decommissioning of Nuclear Power Stations, with the Environment Agency, Sport England, Coweside Agency, ODPM and several more.

Securing this funding means that our research teams will be leading and undertaking internationally significant studies in these subject areas for years to come.

Together with the Joint Centre for Urban Design, the Department has launched a new research group, the Townscape and Heritage Research Unit (THRU). For further information see page 3.

On 24 March 2003, a major research report Enteringpr Oxford: the growth of the Oxfordshire high-tech economy was launched at the Royal Society in London, in the presence of Lord Sainsbury, Minister for Science and Innovation. The report was produced by the Oxfordshire Economic Observatory (OEO), established in 2001 as an independent research centre dedicated to undertaking world class research into the knowledge economy of advanced regions. The OEO is a joint venture between the School of Geography and Environment at the University of Oxford, and the Department of Planning at Oxford Brookes. Key Brookes staff, and co-authors of the report are Professor John Glasson, Professor James Simmie, and Andrew Chadwick.

Why is the report called Enteringpr Oxford? The answer relates to Oxfordshire’s creative and successful economy. It is now one of Europe’s leading centres of enterprise, innovation and knowledge. At the end of 2001, there were over 1,400 high-tech firms in the county, employing some 37,000 people (approximately 12% of all employees in the county). Between 1991 and 2000, Oxfordshire experienced a faster rate of growth in high-tech employment than any other English county. The report explains the key elements in this virtuous circle of activity. A sister volume, Enteringpr Oxford: the anatomy of the Oxfordshire high-tech economy documents the nature, growth and distribution of the high-tech sectors, including biotechnology, motor sports, medical instrumentation, computing, software and computer services, publishing and other R+D activities.

**RESEARCH ROUNDUP**

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