

be

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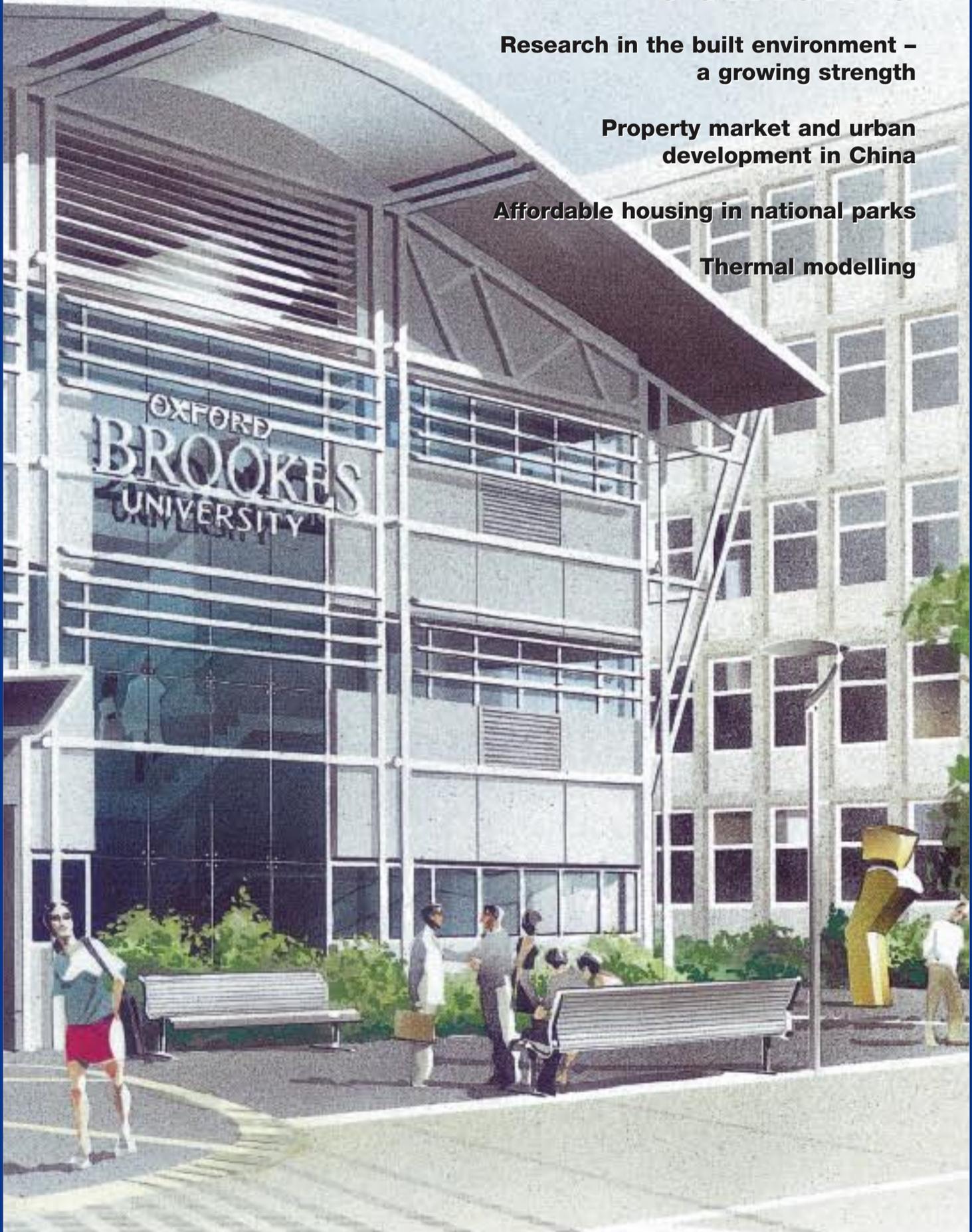
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OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

School of the **Built Environment**



Introduction

The quality of the environment is a major influence on people's lives. In both the developed and the developing world we face challenges in the rural and urban environments. How can we achieve sustainable development in a rapidly urbanising world? Why are there such major disparities in the quality of the built environment? How should we respond to challenges on equity, health and social justice which flow from migration, wars and political and social upheavals?

This issue of our newsletter has a special focus on the research and consultancy work carried out in the School. Last year we took on around £1M worth of new projects, and there were 80 PhD students in the School. Alumni and partners may be interested to know that we continue also to do applied research and consultancy. We do not aim to compete with 'high street' consultants; we are interested in particular in non-routine consultancy work. This is one of the ways in which we ensure that we continue to be research informed but professionally relevant.

Our guiding ideas

We are committed to:

achieving the highest quality 'places for people'

furthering the understanding and production of sustainable environments

investing in the development of our students, staff and stakeholders

involving and engaging staff, students and stakeholders in the future of our subjects and our School

transparency and accountability

positive interaction with the local community and wider society

continual quality enhancement

If you would like further information on any of the projects in this issue, please use the contact details on the back page to get in touch.

Professor John Raftery
Dean, School of the Built Environment

about be

be is the newsletter of the School of the Built Environment which encompasses three departments:

Department of Architecture

Department of Planning

Department of Real Estate and Construction

Research groups within these departments are:

Environmental Assessment and Spatial Planning Group

Urban Policy and International Development Group

Architecture, Culture and Technology Group

Sustainable Urban Environments Group

Urban Design Group

International Land Markets Group

Research in the School of the Built Environment



From strength to strength

The strength of our research base has been a defining feature for many years, and the interactions between teaching and research brings many benefits. Benchmarks are provided by our best new university performances in Research Assessment Exercises (RAEs), by our high profile research sponsors and supporters and by our throughput of high quality research contracts, publications and PhD activity. The School now has almost 25% of the doctoral students at Oxford Brookes; it has annual research income of over £1.5m (new projects and HEFCE funding); it carries out research for major clients – not only the research councils but also the UK government and agencies, the EU, major industry sectors, local and regional bodies, and the voluntary sector.

From OCSD to OISD

But it is also important that we continue to evolve, develop our strengths and reap the advantages of our new School with its wide range of research interests. Our key focus is sustainable development in both the built and natural environment. Ever since the Brundtland Report put the concept of sustainable development on the map in the late 1980s there has been a tension between the merits of the concept and its implementation in practice. We have for many years sought to develop the concept and to promote policy and practice to enable it to become reality.

The Oxford Centre for Sustainable Development (OCSD) was established in the late 1990s, structured around groups focusing on the technology, architecture and city scales of sustainable development activity. Professor Mike Jenks of the then School of Architecture was its founder and director. Over time, OCSD has widened in scope, but not in commitment to turning ideas into reality. An environment group led by Professor John Glasson was added, building on the strengths of the Impacts Assessment Unit in the then School of Planning. In the 2001 RAE, the OCSD groups constituted the bulk of the University's excellent performances in Units of Assessment 33 (Built Environment) and 34 (Town and Country Planning).

The merging of the Schools of Architecture and Planning to form the new School of the Built Environment, provided the impetus for the next step in our research organisation for sustainable development. The University, in its recent Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy, has supported the metamorphosis of the OCSD, to form the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD) – one of two new flagship research institutes for Oxford Brookes. OISD will raise the profile of sustainable development research at Oxford Brookes University, with links to other activity in the University. It will occupy from 2005/6 part of the new Research Centre, shown on the front cover, and will provide a caucus of staff/outputs which will be of international standing in their area, and for the next RAE in 2008.

The OISD, to be launched in early July with a major event at Headington Hill Hall, will be structured around six key research groups (see 'about be'), with over 40 research staff in total. The co-directors will be Professor John Glasson, Research Dean (Built Environment) and Professor Mike Jenks, Head of the Department of Architecture.

Professor John Glasson
Research Dean (Built Environment)

News in brief

The School staged a number of events earlier in the year as part of **Disability Awareness Week**. An exhibition bringing together the talents of



Mark Austin, Lab Technician and Sarah Dearing, local artist, developed the sensory aspect of materials including stone, wood and copper. Other events included a disability film

festival and a concert. The events were co-ordinated by Mia Flores-Borquez (Department of Real Estate and Construction).

Oxford Inspires' Sustainable Institutions

working group has embarked on a series of seminars aimed at giving its local stakeholders the opportunity to share and develop good practice in environmental management. Professor John Glasson chairs the group. Seminars so far have covered waste management, sustainable purchasing, buildings and transport.

Sue Brownill (Department of Planning) has been appointed the School's **Widening Participation Co-ordinator**. She will be helping to ensure that students coming in to the School are from a wide range of backgrounds. Widening participation has implications for our curriculum, how we deliver our courses and how we present ourselves to the outside world.

Alumnus, **Tim Nicholson** left Oxford in May on the **drive of a lifetime** to raise money for the British Red Cross. He is travelling to



his destination – Oxford, New Zealand – in a 1954 Morris Oxford car. Tim, studied Estate Management from 1991 until 1994 and would love to hear from alumni wishing to meet him en route. To get in touch visit www.oxford2oxford.co.uk

Research students

At present, the Department of Real Estate and Construction (REC) has eight PhD/MPhil scholars engaged in different fields of study.

In real estate, current topics include impact of overhead power lines on land and property values, and the impact of the Egan Report on social housing construction.

In construction, three programmes are concerned with aspects of slender steel structures namely behaviour of scaffold joints, behaviour of pallet rack structures under seismic loading, and a theoretical and experimental investigation into the analysis of pallet rack, cross-aisle structures under shear loading. This is complemented by research on the value management process for new projects using mathematical methods as opposed to current empirical procedures.

We are committed to the expansion of our doctoral research programme. For this purpose we have a dedicated departmental fellowship running every three years. All real estate and construction alumni are invited to contribute to our fellowship programme. Email rkeivani@brookes.ac.uk for further details.

Ramin Keivani
Research Co-ordinator and Tutor

Integrated research



Research is an integral part of academic excellence in real estate and construction. With the creation of a research cluster in the international land market we have instituted a major policy initiative – to provide a sharp focus for developing new initiatives in international comparative research – and are able to support established areas of expertise on local and national topics.

Our portfolio of research activity and output in leading scientific journals, reports and books is expanding, as is the Department. A number of new members of research-active staff with established track records now enhance our expertise.

In real estate, we are building on our pioneering work on globalisation and development of property markets in transition and developing economies. Areas of particular expertise include Central and Eastern Europe and China, sustainable property development, and conservation of historic environments. At the same time, we are exploring the use and impact of broadband technology in property, impact of changing property markets on local economic development, housing, restitution and valuation methodology.

In construction, our leading research work on scaffold and pallet rack structures continues, and we are developing new opportunities in stakeholder decision-making processes, construction procurement, and knowledge management.

In addition staff are involved in consultancy work for both private and public clients including government agencies.

Ramin Keivani
Research Co-ordinator and Tutor

Property market and urban development in China



In January 2004, J Albert Cao visited four major cities (Xi'an, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shenzhen) and a tourist paradise (Sanya) in Western and Southern China to investigate the property market and urban development in China.

The scale and speed of development in these cities is breathtaking. The housing development boom, powered by strong market demand, is transforming almost every corner of those cities. Demand for space has also revived the office leasing market and created a sizeable retail leasing market. Shopping malls and high-rise office buildings are being built in large number. Competition among cities has also led to a movement of designating central

business districts and heavy investment in urban infrastructure. Motorways, multi-lane inner elevated ring roads and broadband internet access are commonplace, and two underground railway lines are completed with three more being built.

However, a number of property development and infrastructure projects prove to be financially, socially and environmentally disastrous and many are of low quality. One cause is the shortage of expertise in planning, real estate management, construction management, urban design, and to a lesser extent, architectural design.

News in brief

Our new **MSc in International Real Estate** capitalises on our research and consultancy activities in the emerging markets of Eastern Europe and China and is designed to meet the needs of those wishing to pursue a career as a surveyor either in the UK or abroad. As such the emphasis of the international elements will be in these areas.

Work on the **MSc Project Management in the Built Environment** has accelerated since the appointment of Esra Kurul. Senior staff from industry and construction-related organisations have been invited to a discussion in London in July to consider present and forecast future recruitment problems the industry at professional level.

Our bid for a **scholarship fund** from the Jones Lang LaSalle Education Trust has been successful. The bulk of the £123,000 received will be used to provide bursaries for international students on our MSc programme.

As part of our remit to improve **access to higher education** we have developed relationships with local schools. Last year's Bridge of Sighs event (issue 2) was so successful that we repeated it in June this year. The challenge this time was to build a multistorey structure to support load on every floor, plus a fluctuating windload.

Mike Godley and Rob Beale have been helping to produce a **set of regulations** for the UK National Association of Scaffold Manufacturers to the new European code EN12811-1. Their research is extending the models used to produce buckling modes to obtain better estimates of the maximum loads that scaffolds can carry.

RECM people



Youngha Cho has joined us as Lecturer in Real Estate Management. After graduating with a PhD from the London School of Economics, she has been working as a postdoctoral

research officer in the Department of Land Economy in Cambridge. Specialising in housing market and real estate industry, she has recently carried out several research projects on social housing in education.



Esra Kurul was a research fellow at Glasgow Caledonian University before joining us in February as a senior lecturer. Esra's research interests include

project processes and management, managing complexity, conservation and re-use of architectural heritage, sustainability in the built environment, and (organisational) learning. Esra is helping to develop our new MSc in project management.

Applied and relevant research



Planning at Oxford Brookes University performed better than any other new university, and better than many old universities in the 2001 Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Research Assessment Exercise. Our submission of 30 research-active staff was the highest concentration of planning research expertise in the UK, with the exception of Cardiff University. This success provides a good foundation for the future and for new initiatives.

We have been extremely successful in achieving high profile, external research funding. Major contracts which are now reaching completion include: planning and climate change (ODPM, SEEDA), environmental impact assessment policy and practice (ESRC, EC), tenant participation in housing management (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister - ODPM), the Poundbury model West Dorset District Council and the Duchy of Cornwall, and the performance of English for core cities and London (GLA, Core Cities Group).

At the same time, there is a regular inflow of major new contracts (see back cover). These are delivered by an excellent team of academic, research and admin/technical staff. Recent additions include Juliet Carpenter, Jenny Crawford, Tamara Schioppa and Anja Uerberjahn Tritta.

Much of our research is applied and of direct practical relevance to many stakeholders. In addition to our research publications, we also disseminate findings through our continuing professional development (CPD) activity. We are a major centre for CPD events, from our Introduction to Planning course for new councillors, to the latest findings from cutting edge research activities – see back page for details.

Professor John Glasson

Research Co-ordinator, Department of Planning

Research students

Our research strengths provide an excellent basis for doctoral studies. We have a thriving research student programme with 37 full- and part-time students currently registered, some of whom are funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB). They play a vital part in departmental life and help to forge important external links, particularly where we have linked studentships with practice. The ESRC CASE scheme has facilitated research links with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), COSE, Innogy, and Wynns Consultants, each of whom makes a small contribution to research funding and support and gains access to in depth relevant research. The next ERSC CASE deadline is towards the end of 2004 and we are actively seeking new collaborative partners.

Our students are researching a wide diversity of topics covering such issues as the environmental management of the MoD Estate; NGO housing provision in South Africa; sustainable tourism planning in Thailand; conservation versus reconstruction of historic monuments; regional planning policy in the UK; and refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and Europe. As well as supervision, they receive training in research methods, they attend a regular seminar series where they can present their research and get advice and feedback, and they present at conferences in the UK and further afield. 24% are overseas students, with Thailand, Brazil, Taiwan and South Korea being well represented.

We have been particularly successful in gaining ESRC CASE awards, through which research is linked to a practice-based partner such as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), MoD or private firms. We also have one student doing a PhD by creative work, producing a cartographic version of a long-distance footpath based on Coleridge's *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*. All this proves that planning is about much more than development control!

Sue Brownill
Research Tutor

Housing in the English national parks

There is an acute and growing shortage of affordable housing in the national parks which has implications for the long-term sustainability of national park communities. Action is needed now to address the situation. The Housing Corporation and the Countryside Agency commissioned a study, undertaken by the department, to explore the constraints on, and opportunities for improved provision of affordable and supported housing.



Discussions with stakeholders from the national park authorities, government regional offices, local planning and housing authorities, housing associations and rural housing enablers prompted a number of key recommendations. These included elevating the importance of the national park authorities' duty to foster the economic and social welfare of local communities; national park authorities' officers developing greater knowledge

of housing practice and management; and seeking new ways of securing affordable private homes in perpetuity.

Eighteen case studies demonstrating innovative practice are grouped within the body of the final report to provide a 'fit' with the recommendations.

Case study: Widecombe in the Moor

Widecombe in the Moor lies in the heart of the Dartmoor National Park and has a population of some 200 persons. Brook Lane Cottages were completed in February 2001 and consist of four two-bed and two three-bed dwellings. They are of traditional design specified by the planners at Dartmoor National Park Authority, and managed by Hastoe Housing Association.

Funding

The Housing Corporation funded the development totalling some £385K (broken down into land, £30K; building contract, £305K and on-costs at 15%, £50K).

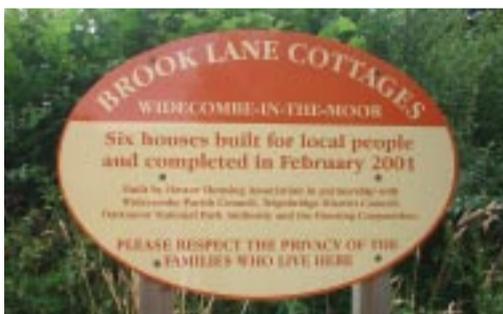
Process

The scheme was initiated by the Parish Council which was involved in the process of delivering affordable homes. The land owner made the site available at a reasonable cost. Some of the construction was sub-contracted to local builders. After the homes were completed a traditional Devon bank was constructed to prevent local ponies and cattle from entering the site. The project was put out for tender and won by one of the new tenants of Brook Lane Cottages. Funding was provided by Hastoe Housing Association, the Parish Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority.

All the residents have strong connections with the Parish of Widecombe but the Parish Council believes that there is still a need in the village for more affordable homes, and have asked Hastoe Housing Association to carry out another housing needs survey.

Benefits

The National Park Authority applauded the cottages as being 'produced in the local vernacular and a good fit with their village context'.



Rural economy of the south downs

The South Downs – stretching from Winchester across to Eastbourne and Beachy Head – is a glorious sweep of open downland bordered by enclosed woodlands.

A public inquiry is currently being held to determine whether the South Downs – which is currently divided between two areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) – should have designated national park status. This would have consequences in terms of planning, as a new park body would become the planning authority for the area. Moreover, the proposed designation of the South Downs National Park would provide a further impetus to ‘promote sustainable forms of economic and social development’, and to establish an innovative integrated protected area policy agenda.

A team from the Department, managed by

Jake Piper, has been commissioned by the two existing management bodies, the Sussex Downs AONB and the East Hampshire AONB, to undertake a study of the rural economy of the proposed park area. The study includes elements such as a questionnaire survey of a large sample of local businesses and authorities, looking at their economic linkages within the South Downs as well as their interaction with the environment. The area of the proposed park contains several thousand businesses, among which tourism and leisure businesses, consultancies of various kinds and food-related companies are common. This study will eventually identify what further assistance is needed to support local businesses and help them carry on their activities sustainably. Results of the work will eventually be published on the South Downs website www.vic.org.uk



Photo by John Cuckney

Researching skills shortages

The UK government has an ambitious agenda to deliver major growth area developments in the south and to restructure housing markets to aid regeneration in many areas in the midlands and north. But does the country have the professional staff to deliver such an agenda? We are undertaking important research projects on this key issue.

A research project on the skills base in the planning system is near completion. The research, undertaken by Bridget Durning and Professor John Glasson, was commissioned by the Local Government Association (LGA), the Employers' Organisation and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). The output is being published by the LGA in two volumes: a literature review of the issue, and the results of major survey activity of the key stakeholders involved. The research shows clearly that there is a shortage of UK planners to meet even current needs; this will be exacerbated with the demands of new planning legislation and by the acceleration growth area and regeneration agenda. It has highlighted the importance of planning discipline skills and shortages in particular areas (for example urban design in districts, and transport planning in London

Boroughs), and has also highlighted the importance of generic skills such as negotiation, working with communities and partnership working. The research has been used by the recent Egan Report and it is pleasing to see one response from the ODPM – the provision of a bursary scheme to encourage more students into fast-track postgraduate planning courses, including the one at Oxford Brookes.

A second project, funded by South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), is focussing on the built environment professional staff labour market in the south east region, and the implications of the sustainable communities agenda for the region. The project is being undertaken jointly with the University of Greenwich (Professor Richard Hayward); Juliet Carpenter and Professor John Glasson are providing the Oxford Brookes input. This project is looking more widely across architecture, planning, real estate, construction management and other built environment professions, and involves an analysis of evolving supply and demand and any constraints in the market. It will report in the autumn.

News in brief

Those of you who missed **George Monbiot's** lecture **The Hostile Environment** at Oxford Brookes in February can read it online at www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/planning/monbiot

A **video conference** was held on 12 March on the theme of adjustment of sustainable development planning policies in Serbia to recent European trends and practices. Participants were video-linked with contributors from the IASP Serbia via the British Council offices in Belgrade.

Liz Cairncross featured in an article in *The Guardian* newspaper (Thursday 15 April 2004) which focuses on a report about the **marginalisation of tenants** from housing associations. The report analysed a major survey of 3,500 housing association board members, conducted by Liz.

Professor Steven Ward was recently invited to participate in a Question Time-style discussion on **city identity**: the role of architecture, planning and marketing, organised by Southampton City Council. The event was chaired by the Channel 4 News presenter Krishnan Guru-Murthy.

The pioneering **Oxfordshire Food Group** has commissioned some research to assess the scope for purchasing local food, and a conference, Good Food on the Public Plate, was held in March.

Professor Roger Zetter's social capital analysis of refugee community-based organisations (funded by the ESRC) took place last year at a critical point of change in asylum policy in the UK. His research highlights how the role of RCOs has changed in response to the increasingly hostile policy environment in which they operate. The research was not policy-led, but significant policy issues stem from the study.

Planning people

Juliet Carpenter joined the Department in February as a research associate in urban regeneration and housing. Juliet joins us from the consultants GHK and is currently working on a number of research projects including an evaluation of planning aid for the RTP1 and a review of the lessons from the new towns experience, for ODPM.

Jenny Crawford joins us as part-time Rural Researcher. She is also working with the RTP1's policy and research team. She has 15 years' planning experience with local government and NGOs and completed the MSc in European Environmental and Spatial Planning last year. Jenny is working on the Rural Economy of the South Downs (National Park) project.

Anja Ueberjahn-Tritta started as a researcher in the Department of Planning in January after completing her PhD in Environmental Impact Assessment at Oxford Brookes. Her main focus is on the collaborative research project, Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in Urban Environments (ASCCUE) conducting research in the field of external thermal comfort. She is a member of the Department's Impact Assessment Unit.

Innovative research



The Department of Architecture is currently leading a wide range of innovative new research projects. Researchers in the Centre for Vernacular Architecture have recently begun work on an atlas of worldwide vernacular architecture; our technology research group is continuing its work on thermal modelling and is starting two new government-sponsored projects; and our sustainable architecture specialists are involved in projects implementing solar systems in homes in Oxford, and eco-buildings in Europe. Work is also just about to start on major new research predicting the effects of occupant behaviour on thermal comfort and energy use in buildings (funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, EPSRC).

The sustainable cities research team has recently started three new projects as part of research consortia funded by the EPSRC. The largest of these focuses on sustainable urban form, and the Department is leading this with a project investigating links between the physical elements of cities and their sustainability. Related research is investigating whether flagship sustainable developments lead to more sustainable lifestyles. In addition, our specialists in mental health and the built environment are partners in a consortium seeking to identify effective ways of ensuring the outdoor environment is designed to improve the quality of life of older people. Our staff are also continuing research in design and pedagogic theory, and architectural history.

It is important that we remain at the leading edge of our specialisms in order to influence practice and to inform our teaching. Our portfolio of new research projects ensures we can continue to do this.

Katie Williams
Research Co-ordinator

Architecture people



Al-Moataz Hassan has recently joined us as Research Fellow in Urban Sustainability and the City Form Consortium project manager. He has extensive experience with consultancies and international agencies including

UNDP and the DFID. His teaching and research interests include urban development, environmental planning and management, sustainable urban form, environmental impact assessment, public participation and community planning, and environmental policy making and sustainable urban environment in LDCs.

Research students

Our research student community is large, lively and hugely diverse. We currently have 34 students, with roughly a 50:50 split between full-time and part-time. The majority of the full-time students are international and generally self-funded or funded by home country organisations, while the small number of UK students are funded through research council (EPSRC) studentships attached to major projects. Several of the part-time students are staff in the Department.

In terms of the research areas, the variety is as great as the ages, nationalities and personalities of the students, but the predominant themes for new candidates are sustainable urban form and vernacular architecture. Elizabeth Burton has been research tutor since April 2003, and in January 2004 Lynne Mitchell was appointed as Associate Research Tutor. Together they have been busy improving facilities for the students.

Elizabeth Burton
Research Tutor

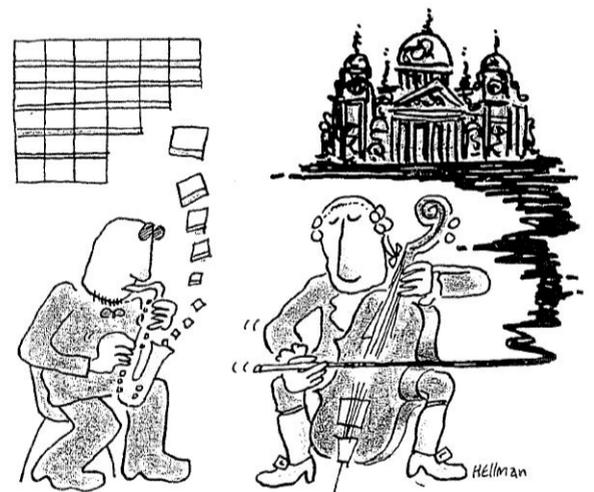
Thermal modelling

The Technology research unit has a longstanding expertise in advanced computer-based thermal modelling, in particular dynamic thermal simulation of whole building performance and conduction modelling of building details. Dynamic thermal simulation is used in passive building design to assess energy use and thermal comfort, and is valuable for the optimisation of building services solutions where air conditioning and mechanical ventilation is installed. Conduction modelling enables temperature distribution and heat flow paths to be assessed, and is an extremely useful tool for developing thermally efficient designs.

The 2002 Building Regulations Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Power) requires linear thermal bridging factors across junctions, door and window details to be calculated and added to the plane envelope heat loss for the building. Most details currently require thermal analysis using two- or three-dimensional conduction modelling to establish the additional heat flow. In addition, there are new guidelines concerning minimum internal surface temperatures to minimize

condensation risk and consequent danger of mould growth.

The Technology unit has undertaken many such analyses, both as part of its extensive research portfolio in this area and on a consultancy basis for commercial clients. For further information please contact Chris Kendrick (ckendrick@brookes.ac.uk) or Professor Ray Ogden (rgogden@brookes.ac.uk)



"Frozen music"

News in brief

Michael Humphreys and Mary Hancock are doing a pilot study of the **thermal comfort** of a group of four homes in Newport, Pembrokeshire. Two are strawbale houses with almost no CO₂ load and a couple are normal households. They are also carrying out a study of thermal comfort and preference vote with first year students.

The January lectures in London around the **TIA Ecohouse competition** provided us with at least three master's applications from Libya and Uzbekistan, as well as a visit from the Libyan attaché who wants to bring lots of young, postgraduate Libyans to Oxford Brookes. The competition and exhibition/lecture series were generously supported by Circle 33 Housing Group – who will sponsor next year's lectures and competition.

The Architecture research unit ran a successful international conference on **post-occupancy evaluation** in the spring. As people increasingly recognise that buildings are key drivers of climate change, the need to be able to appraise

how much energy a building uses is becoming crucial to our strategies for reducing carbon dioxide emissions from them. The conference provided a milestone in this developing field with heated discussions and croquet games enjoyed by all.

In March, staff and students of the **International Studies in Vernacular Architecture** course travelled to The Hague to participate in the international conference *New Directions in World Architecture: Motivations, Movements and Methods*. The conference provided an excellent opportunity to explore future opportunities for collaboration with our Dutch colleagues. The proceedings of the conference will be published early next year.

Our **Human Rights Film Festival 2004** screened a total of 24 films spanning five continents during February and March. The festival brought together documentaries and dramas set in some of the world's most notorious areas of conflict.

Research students

JCUD is the largest UK and international provider of MPhil and PhD research training programmes in urban design. The Centre presently has 22 students, two thirds of which are studying on a full-time basis. One third of the student body are UK researchers and the rest of the group are international students who come from varied professional backgrounds and countries of origin. Most UK researchers are studying part-time as they hold important government, research and academic posts.

Research topics include a broad spectrum of urban design concerns. The most popular in numbers and breadth are themes centred on resolving problems in historic cities and urban regeneration and community development. Other topics include issues of designing place-identities, aesthetic control, urban coding and guidance, urban morphology, sustainable urban form, town centre management and quality of public open spaces. A number of students are using participatory and anthropological research tools when examining issues of traditions, cultural diversity and governance.

Students are funded by a variety of scholarships and bursaries. Two are receiving Oxford Brookes University bursaries; others are funded by international research councils and university scholarships. After completing their MPhil and PhD degrees most students continue their careers in research or academic posts, some work as government advisers, others run research and practice offices. The Centre also hosts postdoctoral and visiting researchers.

Professor Georgia Butina Watson
Research Tutor

Internationally renowned research



The Joint Centre for Urban Design (JCUD), has a long standing reputation for carrying out research on a variety of urban design themes. The Centre is internationally renowned for its pioneering work in designing 'Responsive Environments', for developing guidance on urban design qualities and for producing theoretical and practical approaches to designing places. Some of the recent UK clients include Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), Heritage Lottery Fund and a broad range of local authority and private practice clients. Staff in the JCUD are also working on a number of international projects funded by the British Council, Department of International Development (DfID) and overseas governments.

Among the recent projects is the evaluation work on Poundbury in West Dorset, jointly funded by the West Dorset District Council and the Duchy of Cornwall. The research completed so far has focused on the assessment of the masterplan, the process of delivery, the quality of the area and the professional and user satisfaction surveys. The research team are presently producing their final report which is designed to reveal what transferable lessons might be useful in the design of future urban expansion schemes. The team members are Georgia Butina Watson, Ian Bentley, Sue Roaf, Pete Smith and Catherine Tranmer.

Professor Georgia Butina Watson
Research Tutor

Rebuilding the identity of the city in history

Jane Handal, who recently completed her PhD within JCUD, has been identifying methods for achieving change at the planning and urban design levels in the Palestinian town of Bethlehem.

Jane's research seeks to protect place identity in the age of globalisation and in the context of contested space. It recognises that the interplay between identity and urban form is multiple and highly diversified, and is impacted by what her research calls the two forces of the Head and the Heart. As the Head is formed by the flow of foreign meanings needed for achieving change, to progress and to adapt to era-specific realities,

the Heart is founded upon cultural projects, power apparatuses, political orders, religious revelations and collective associations of an imagined community. In the age of globalisation, the Head forces are eradicating the authority of Heart forces. The research suggests that, as a consequence, a globally-integrated form production system is arising, fuelled by standardised urban design, and planning guidelines based on deduction and abstraction. This crucial mismatch between Head and Heart forces is leading to the erosion of place identity and the resurgence of defensive identities constructed upon national, ethnic and religious foundations.

Annual school research students' conference

In April, the School of the Built Environment hosted the annual research students' conference. 13 PhD students from across the School presented posters or papers on their research. An award was made for best paper and best poster. Here are the winners:

Winner of best paper

Urban fragmentation: the case of Buenos Aires - Daniel Kozak



Over the last three decades the paradigm of city planning has shifted from large-scale visions to project-based strategies. The way in which planners and architects now think of and act in cities – which are increasingly

integrated into an accelerated global process – is deeply related to a cultural trend known as fragmentation; which is one of the most marked features of postmodernism. In particular, it can be hypothesised that the current approaches to planning in Buenos Aires are consistently bringing more fragmentation to the metropolis in several dimensions: physical, spatial, environmental and social. But fragmentation in cities is just an expression of a broader cultural phenomenon. One of the hypotheses of the present research is that there is a tight relationship between spatial and physical fragmentation and operational and social fragmentation. A polarized society makes a city that reproduces its fragmented condition and that afterwards exacerbates this original fragmented state.

Winner of best poster

Rammed earth architecture: a value for preservation - Mariana Correia

Earth as a building material is present in five continents, as a third of humanity still lives in earthen shelters. Some of the oldest and most impressive evidence of earthen heritage is present in large parts of the great-wall of China; in the middle-east, first urban settlements of

mankind (eg Jericó or Çatalhoyuk); in Yemen, Shibam with 500 earthen sky-scrappers of 10 floors; most of the mosques in Africa or the



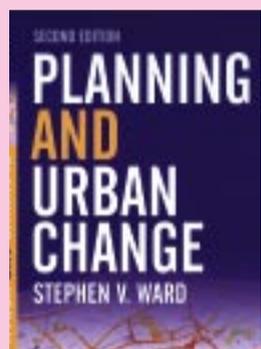
'missions' on the American continent; farms and rural villages in Europe. Worldwide, more than 12 different techniques of earthen construction were identified. One of the most known and difficult to restore is rammed earth (named after the compressed mixture of earth and aggregates rammed between form boards).

This PhD research intends to contribute to awareness of the need for protection of earthen dwellings, specifically of rammed earth structures. It should suggest different measures and paths to follow to produce a correct

PUBLICATIONS

Mike Stubbs (Department of Real Estate and Construction Management), Professor John Ratcliffe (of Dublin Institute of Technology), and Mark Shepherd (of Salford University) have just published *Urban Planning and Real Estate Development* in second edition. The contents have been updated, revamped and include new material on dispute resolution, urban renaissance, heritage planning and government reforms to the planning system and to planning obligations.

In March, the second edition of **Professor Stephen Ward's** (Department of Planning) book, *Planning and Urban Change* was published by Sage. This has become the



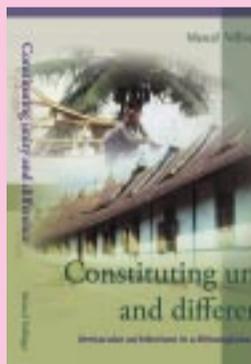
standard historical account of British planning since it was originally published ten years ago. As with the first edition the book examines planning ideas, policies and impacts from the 1890s. This second edition updates the story with an

extensive account of planning in the Major and Blair years.

Elizabeth Burton, Lynne Mitchell and Shibu Raman (Department of Architecture) have published a checklist of recommendations for designing dementia-friendly outdoor environments. Funded by the Housing Corporation, *Neighbourhoods for Life* will help housing associations to produce inclusive, sustainable communities, and to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of present and future older residents. The recommendations are based on findings from a research project funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

Fergus Nicol (Department of Architecture) has completed editing a special issue of *Energy and Buildings* based on the conference Building Research and the Sustainability of the Built Environment in the Tropics which he co-chaired in 2003.

Marcel Vellinga (Department of Architecture) has brought out *Constituting unity and difference: vernacular architecture in a Minangkabau village* (Leiden: KITLV Press). The vernacular architecture of the Minangkabau



in Sumatra constitutes one of the most popular and well-known building traditions in contemporary Indonesia. Despite this, it has received remarkably little scholarly attention. Marcel refines, supplements, and adjusts the popular image of Minangkabau architecture and focuses on the construction, design, and spatial use of vernacular houses in one region of West Sumatra. He explores the way in which vernacular Minangkabau houses are instrumental in the constitution, perpetuation, and manipulation of socio-political relationships and identities.

RESEARCH CONTRACTS WON

The **Urban Policy and Management** research unit, part of the Urban Policy and International Development Group (Department of Planning) is currently working on funded projects including an Evaluation of Public Participation in the Cowley Road Improvements in Oxford. Members of the unit are also researching projects for South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), the regional development agency for the south east and the Core Cities Group.

Georgia Butina Watson, Steve Ward, Alan Reeve and several other colleagues from the Department of Planning have recently won a research contract to study transferable lessons from the New Towns Programme. The study focuses on ten themes and aims to establish guidance for teams presently working on growth and expansion areas in the South East. The research is funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

Professor James Simmie (Department of Planning) and a team of leading researchers from six major universities have won a new research grant of £538,240 from the ODPM. The research lasting two years will conduct an analysis of the changes taking place in English cities. It will include major data analyses covering economic competitiveness, social cohesion, urban policy and some international comparisons. An interim report will form a major strand in the Urban Summit to be held in Manchester at the end of January 2005.

What's On

On-going throughout 2004

Strategic Environmental Assessment by Distance Learning

Monday 5 July – Thursday 8 July 2004

European Rural University Conference St Catherine's College

Friday 9 July 2004

Making Decent Streets: Urban Design at the local level

Thursday 9 September 2004

One-day conference: Impact Significance in EIA

The Department of Planning has been working for some time on the issue of community consultation and involvement in the planning process. A recent contract awarded by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) will contribute to these research interests through an evaluation of the re-launched Planning Aid programme. Planning Aid has recently been given a government funding boost of £3.8 million to expand the programme, which provides free and independent town planning advice to groups and individuals unable to afford professional fees. **Lead by Sue Brownill** and involving **Juliet Carpenter**, the research for the RTPI will evaluate the re-vamped Planning Aid service over the coming two years.

Fergus Nicol (Department of Architecture) has just landed an Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council grant for £142k for the project Predicting the effect of occupant behaviour on thermal comfort and energy use in buildings. The University of Strathclyde is also involved in the building simulation tasks of the project.

Rajat Gupta and Sue Roof (Department of Architecture) have funding for an Asia IT project: Sustainable Habitat Design Adviser. The aim of the 24 month long project is to create a web-based sustainable design advisory service and educative forum for planning sustainable habitats in India, UK and Spain. In this way, the project will also aim to create awareness and raise the standards of environmental quality in India as well as other participating countries. Partners are ICAEN (Barcelona, Spain) and TERI (India and Europe).

Monday 13 September 2004

Introduction to the Planning Process

Wednesday 15 September 2004

Screening, Scoping & ES Review under the 1999 EIA Regulations

Wednesday 26 January 2005

Virtuous Circles: Affordable Housing one-day Keep-up Conference Sustainable Housing

For more information contact:

Karen Hughes, Short Course Co-ordinator on 01865 483560 or email khughes@brookes.ac.uk or visit our CPD website www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/planning/shortcourses/index.htm for future events

For further information about anything featured in this edition of *be*, or to be added to or deleted from our mailing list, please contact:

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Front cover photograph artist's impression of the new research building

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