

# be

built environment  
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OXFORD  
**BROOKES**  
UNIVERSITY

School of the **Built Environment**



## Message from the Dean....



BE is sent to our alumni and other friends of the School. It is designed to keep you up to date with our work and with developments in the School and to provide you with opportunities to contact us to keep

in touch with our people and work. One of the School's major successes, the Reinvention Centre, a joint project with the University of Warwick' is described on this page. This project will have a very tangible outcome as we open a new state of the art study centre in the Abercrombie Building later this year. The Reinvention Centre represents the latest thinking in education and architectural design on student involvement in the design and operation of learning spaces.

Elsewhere in this edition you will read news about our work for example in Europe on planning for climate change, on rural development in the UK, on sustainable design and design for dementia and the role of the development industry in brownfield regeneration.

Student James Curtis won a commendation in the *Architectural Review* Copper in Architecture Awards 12 in October for his project - the Thames wharf bird hide in west London. A team from the International Projects Developments Office involving Nabeel Hamdi, Stuart Parker and Richard Hayward (now at the University of Greenwich) won first prize in the 2005 *Building* magazine Regeneration Awards for their urban renewal project in Ecuador.

2005 was a hugely successful year for the School in a number of respects and we embark on 2006 in a greatly strengthened financial position. Maintaining our international focus, we welcomed a number of newly appointed colleagues from the UK, France and Australia and two new professors with outstanding international reputations, Professor Tim Dixon, an expert on real estate development and the architectural critic, Professor Mark Swenarton who took up the position of Head of the Department of Architecture. The year ended for us in great sadness with the deaths Valerie Belton and Paul Roach. Those of you who graduated in Real Estate will have known Valerie and Paul and will know what a vital role they played here and how much they are missed.

Each item ends with an email address, so if you would like to receive further information or to discuss our work please do not hesitate to get in touch.

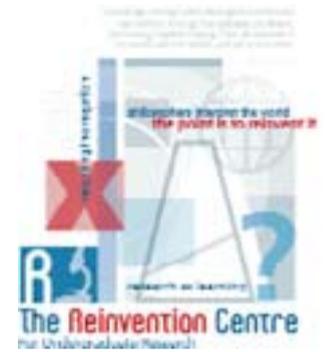
I wish a happy, healthy, and successful 2006 to all of our readers.

**Professor John Raftery**

Dean, School of the Built Environment



Architect's impression of what the new Reinvention Centre at Brookes will look like. Copyright Atkins



## School leads in reinventing undergraduate education

The School is spearheading a new project which could radically change the way undergraduates are taught across all disciplines at the University.

A specially designed teaching and learning space, known as the Reinvention Centre, forms the hub of a high profile Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) project, which the School of Built Environment at Brookes is running in partnership with the Department of Sociology at the University of Warwick. Over 100 guests were present at the official launch of the CETL, Research as Learning: Reinventing Undergraduate Research, held at Warwick in October 2005.

Funded through the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the joint project will receive £3.3 million, of which £600,000 will be spent on refurbishing 400 square metres of old teaching space in the Abercrombie Building. It will be turned into a state-of-the-art study centre for students. One of the main aims of the Reinvention Centre will be to embed research into undergraduate learning at a far earlier stage, encouraging students to engage in their own research from the second year on. The theory is that by 'reinventing' the relationship between teaching, learning and research, students will benefit from becoming contributors to the research culture of their own departments.

Marion Temple has led the Brookes team which includes Peter Smith, of the Planning Department. In addition, BE staff will have the opportunity to contribute to the CETL, as the School has a unique mix of knowledge and expertise which lend themselves ideally to developing the project. The School also has a long tradition of involving undergraduates in research and real life project work, and the CETL will strengthen our links with the local community. For example, parking and traffic in Oxford are two issues with enormous potential for our students to become engaged in research.

An architect, David Morriss, of Atkins, has worked closely with staff in the School on drawing up detailed design work for the Reinvention Centre, which is due to open in spring 2007. 'What is distinctive about this work is the way in which the Centre will be designed to become student focused,' said Marion. 'We are looking at the way students make use of existing space in their learning. For example, how do they use PCs, technology and the learning space itself?'

'This will feed into the design of the new centre which will be given over entirely to student-led group learning activities.'

Students have been involved in the process from the start. A group of seven second year Interior Architecture students are meeting twice each semester to advise staff on the development of the CETL, and will see the project through to the opening of the Reinvention Centre in their third year.

Although based initially in Built Environment, the aim will be to roll out the project across all the other Schools at Brookes over its five year lifespan up to 2010. Once the 'reinvention' is complete, then it is hoped its work could shape national policies on teaching and research for years to come.

The Reinventing Undergraduate Research project is one of 75 CETLs, which with total funding of £315 million over five years to 2010, represents HEFCE's largest ever single funding initiative in teaching and learning. Brookes has a second CETL, based at the Business School, looking at student assessment and standards.

For more information contact:

Marion Temple or Chris Rust [mtemple@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:mtemple@brookes.ac.uk) or [crust@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:crust@brookes.ac.uk).

## Honorary doctorate



An honorary doctorate went to the broadcaster Kevin McCloud, best known for his *Grand Designs* and Stirling Prize television programmes, and the recent groundbreaking series *Demolition*.

Kevin McCloud has played a key role in recent years in bringing architecture out of the academy and into the cultural mainstream. Kevin studied history of art and architecture at Cambridge before retraining and working as a theatre designer. He ran his own product design practice between 1987 and 2002, and recently launched his own range of ethically traded furniture and home ware featuring the work of new British designers. He is a keen building conservationist and supporter of sustainable construction.

## Responding to climate change

While climate change has pushed its way to the top of the political and media agendas during the last year, much of the work within the School over recent years has dealt with how building, design and planning might respond to this major environmental challenge.

The Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD) has sponsored the Environmental Futures lecture series in which a number of influential speakers talked on the future challenges for sustainable development. Environmental Futures was built around the lecture series developed by George Monbiot, visiting professor in the Department of Planning, and was jointly organised by OISD staff from the Department of Planning and staff from the School of Geography at the University of Oxford.

During 2006, OISD is sponsoring a number of events along similar themes. Two conferences are being held jointly with the School of Geography at the University of Oxford, bringing contact with the wider Oxford academic world (see back page for conference details). New this year is the launch of the George Monbiot awards for students doing the best work related to climate change. George will present the awards during Environment Week on 27 April.

For further information please visit the School's website [www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be)

## Ecuador project scoops top prize



A team from Oxford Brookes has won first prize in the international category in the prestigious 2005 Regeneration Awards organised by *Building* magazine. Designed by the International Development Projects Office at Brookes, the £86 million project, involving the reconstruction of 2.5 km of waterfront (malecon) in the city of Guayaquil in Ecuador, is one of the largest urban renewal projects to date in Latin America. In place of the

former dereliction and decay there is now a thriving complex including a public square, botanical gardens, the national museum and art gallery and a commercial centre. The seven-year project, which survived six changes of president as well as the collapse of the Ecuadorian currency, saw off a number of other distinguished entries in the awards, including two projects by Zaha Hadid.

## Designing dementia-friendly spaces

Elizabeth Burton and Lynne Mitchell, from the Department of Architecture, recently organised a successful one-day training course on dementia-friendly architecture and urban design. The course, which took place at Headington Hill Hall, was the first of its kind in the University, and was organised in response to popular demand for information on this subject. Elizabeth and Lynne have been carrying out research on dementia-friendly environments for several years now, within a newly-formed research unit called WISE (Wellbeing in Sustainable Environments) in the OISD. The WISE research unit has been set up to investigate how the built environment (at all scales) affects people's emotional wellbeing and quality of life, and aims to generate design guidance for use in practice in creating more sustainable buildings and places.

Interest in the course is evidence of the desire for practitioners to understand more about designing to meet the needs of the 21st century, in particular the needs of an ageing society. The course delegates were an interesting mix of people, including both those who design environments (mainly architects) and those who commission, influence or manage new buildings (eg care home managers). They were all involved in some way in real-life building projects for people with dementia, and were keen to put the lessons they learned into practice. WISE plans to offer future courses. Their ultimate aim is to optimise the quality of life of older people with dementia through the provision of evidence-based design recommendations, generated through rigorous, user-centred research.

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## New appointments

The department recently welcomed two new academic appointments from overseas. Dr Igea Troiani joins Brookes from the University of Queensland, where she was lecturer in architectural design and history. At Brookes she is teaching studio and history and theory on the undergraduate programme. Dr Brigitte Picquard, formerly professor at the Catholic University of Leuven, is an international authority on humanitarianism, particularly in Islamic cultures. At Brookes she joins the team on the master's in Humanitarian and Development Practice.

## Relaunch

This semester saw the launch, or rather the re-launch, of the Oxford Architecture Society. Initiated and organised by students in the school – particularly an energetic group in the Diploma. The society has rapidly established itself as the second largest student society at Brookes with over 250 members. As well as a regular series of film nights, a programme of lectures from guest speakers was devised and invitations issued to some of the leading figures in contemporary design. The first lecture in the series was given to an appreciative audience by **Jane Wernick**, best known as the engineering brains behind the London Eye. For the very latest society news and details on upcoming events see [www.oxarch.com](http://www.oxarch.com).

## Archaos conference

November saw the conference of the national architecture students society, Archaos, in the Digital Studio at Brookes. This was a major event bringing together more than 50 architecture students from 30 schools across the UK, as well as representatives from the professional bodies, RIBA, ARB and SCHOSA. The students debated the changes proposed to the validation criteria for architectural education – an arcane subject to outsiders but a vital one for architecture students

and schools. A day of intense discussion led to the production of a 14-point 'student directive' setting out the agreed positions of the student delegates. In particular they called for architectural practices to have a binding responsibility to assist in the education of architects, bringing the architectural profession into line with other professions.

## Vernacular architecture

The International Vernacular Architecture Unit at Oxford Brookes University organised an International Conference entitled Vernacular Architecture in the 21st Century: Theory, Education and Practice. Coinciding with the publication of a book of the same title (see page 8), edited by **Lindsay Asquith** and **Marcel Vellinga**, it focused on the way in which vernacular traditions can play a part in the provision of future built environments, within the context of globalisation, ecological change, population growth and rapid technological development. The conference was endorsed by The Prince of Wales, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism (INTBAU). It included lectures by various authorities in the field, including Amos Rapoport, Roderick Lawrence, Howard Davis, Sue Roaf and Paul Oliver.

## An inspiring start to my new appointment



I knew that taking up the position of Head of Architecture would involve me in learning new skills, but I hadn't predicted, however, just what they would be – for example, acting as a doorman

and bouncer when Martin Biewenga, principal in the celebrated Dutch practice West 8, gave an evening lecture in the School. Other tasks, thankfully, involved more brain than brawn and ranged from the uplifting – welcoming first year students on their first day at university, for instance, or finding out about the incredibly wide range of interests and expertise of our staff – to the mundane (why do university committees generate so much paperwork?). Thankfully whenever the emails got too much I could always go into the studio and regain inspiration from the work taking place there.

Indeed what has impressed me most through this (often bewildering) process of induction has been the commitment of the staff and the creativity of the students. Oxford Brookes is ranked in the top five architecture schools in the UK and, from my experience to date, it is not hard to see why. Wherever in the department you look – contract-funded research, specialist master's courses, undergraduate/ postgraduate studio, technology, cultural studies, digital design, PhDs – you find work of a standing that matches anything produced anywhere in the world. That is the reason why recruitment to our programmes is so healthy and why our graduates are so sought after in professional practice and academia.

Our changing world throws up new challenges – from climate change and globalisation at the one extreme to the new fee regime at the other – but it also creates new opportunities which we must seize. I look forward therefore to working with colleagues to making the most of these opportunities, developing new areas of expertise and new academic programmes as well as reinforcing the strength of those already in our portfolio. By so doing we can ensure that the architecture department at Oxford Brookes consolidates its reputation and plays its full part both in shaping, and in interpreting, the brave new world of the 21st century.

**Professor Mark Swenarton**

Head of Department of Architecture

## Honorary doctorate



An honorary doctorate of the university was conferred in September on Peter Clegg, founder of Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects and one of the world's most respected proponents of

sustainable design. Since the formation of his practice over two decades ago, Peter Clegg has been at the forefront in developing methods of design that minimise the negative impact of buildings on the planet. Peter was partner in charge on The Earth Centre, the visitor centres and galleries for the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and the low energy central offices for the National Trust. Recent projects include the academic and residential facilities for Kellogg College Oxford, the new Arts and Media Centre in Derby and a sustainable housing scheme in Somerset.

## New successes and initiatives



Department of Planning staff and students have been working hard for the successful implementation of new and revised undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. We are all very aware of the

shortage of qualified town planners and urban designers - but we were not expecting such a popular recruitment outcome into our one-year intensive MSc in Spatial Planning for the second year running. With some 25 full-time and 70 part-time students, we continue to be one of the largest courses of this kind. Staff and students are very pleased to see the continuous support given by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) through highly prestigious bursaries. Those who graduated in September 2005 all gained highly rewarding jobs.

The Department has also maintained its excellent teaching recognition at its November 2005 Periodic Review, with all its courses successfully revalidated – and attaining again high recognition. Amongst new initiatives is our revised postgraduate Tourism course, popularly called TED (MSc in Tourism, Environment and Development). In the pipeline is also a new certificate in Spatial Planning Studies, designed to attract practice-based planning technicians to become qualified planners.

We celebrated many doctoral completions and the newly qualified PhD experts are all in exciting new research and teaching positions. This success coincides with the opening of the new Buckley research building, which provides additional, high-quality research space with conference and other facilities. The Lloyd Building also got a new lift which makes the access to various levels easier.

We still have many challenges ahead of us. Each new year brings in new research projects and CPD activities. We also continue to be engaged in local and international partnerships that simulate our academic and practice-based work.

**Professor Georgia Butina Watson**  
Head of Department of Planning

## News

Dr Robin Ganser, a new Senior Lecturer in Spatial Planning at Oxford Brookes University, has received a research award for his dissertation at the University of Kaiserslautern, Germany: *Quantified Targets for the Efficient Use of Land for Urban Development in the English Planning System - A Model for Regional and Local Planning in Germany?* The prize has been awarded for the best dissertation of the academic year 2004. The annual prize giving for all disciplines honours highly innovative pieces of work which address fundamental research questions. The assessment of PhD theses, carried out using a specific marking grid from 'pass' to 'distinction', is an integral part of the German PhD system. Only a PhD which has already been awarded a distinction is usually evaluated and finally selected for the prize giving.

Professor Roger Zetter from the Department of Planning was recently in Cyprus as a visiting expert for the UNDP. He was a member of an International Consultative Panel advising on the Bi-communal New Vision Plan for the Core of Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus. The Plan has been produced under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as part of an initiative to assist rapprochement between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities of the divided island. The New Vision Plan is a major initiative to implement a heritage-led regeneration strategy for the historic walled city, now sadly decaying as a result of 30 years of being a divided city.



As part of the Oxford 2015 initiative to develop visions for the future of Oxford, a team of staff and graduate students from the Joint Centre for Urban Design created new ideas for the West End of the city. This interesting area is all too often seen as unglamorous, perhaps because the railway severs it so abruptly from the city centre. The project therefore sought ways of re-imagining West Oxford as an integral part of the overall city vision. It developed new concepts for addressing the study area, and for making the most of West Oxford's rich waterway network. This includes integrating housing into industrial and retail 'sheds' to offer a vitality of mixed uses, and redesigning the characterless Park & Ride area to create a welcoming new gateway to Oxford. The project formed a major installation as part of Modern Art Oxford's 2015 celebrations, with large-scale panels and models. It received much positive public and media attention.

## BRANCH Planning for climate change



A research team has been carrying out a review of current planning policies across the UK, France and the Netherlands to see what provision is being made for climate change. The aim is to promote planning policies that will help secure the long term survival of wildlife habitats.

The review is part of the BRANCH (Biodiversity Requires Adaptations under a Changing Climate) programme. This is funded under the EC's Interreg IIIb programme and which brings together ecologists, climate change specialists and planners across NW Europe. Brookes planners first examined strategic plans and policies made at national, regional and local level in the three countries, and held a workshop for representatives from the three countries. They will submit a final report illustrated by case studies outlining the issues and possible responses.

Preparing for impacts of climate change upon biodiversity needs a multi-pronged approach: whilst we act to mitigate or reduce impacts on the one hand, we must also adapt our spatial planning practices. This means reconsidering how we make decisions about development and what measures we use to protect the environment.

One element of the overall BRANCH programme has been the review of existing planning policies that deal with or affect biodiversity. These policies include, for example, site designation to protect wildlife and to protect sites and habitats such as the Natura 2000 network of specially protected areas across the EU as well as areas protected at a more local level.

The study team at Oxford Brookes University consists of Dr Jake Piper (Project Manager), Dr Stewart Thompson, Joe Weston and Elizabeth Wilson. In recent years this team has worked on a number of studies in connection with planning for climate change, spatial planning in the EU, and biodiversity protection in the EU.

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## Empowering young citizens

For the third year running, this three-day residential programme proved to be another memorable event. Thirty-five GCSE students from Oxfordshire and the surrounding counties participated in the exercise to create a vision for the Westgate area of Oxford, led by Professors Georgia Butina Watson and Ian Bentley from the Department of Planning and the Joint Centre for Urban Design (JCUD). They used a new teaching package, known as 'Making Better Places', which is offered to A-level geography students nationally. The package was awarded a silver medal by the Geographical Association in September 2005, being judged as 'likely to make a significant contribution to geographical education'. The teaching material in this package was developed by **Professor Georgia Butina Watson** and the JCUD team.



For more information and to view the material please visit [www.cabe-education.org.uk/makingbetterplaces](http://www.cabe-education.org.uk/makingbetterplaces)

## How to add value to the rural economy

Jake Piper, Lesley Downing and Andrew Chadwick, members of OISD in the Department of Planning, have been commissioned to undertake a study to help direct future rural development initiatives within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Wiltshire. The study, An Economic Assessment of Cranborne Chase and the West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, will advise the AONB partnership how it may 'add value' to the

local economy. Primarily a desk study, the research will make use of available statistical data from a variety of sources. Published statistics fit administrative boundaries but AONB boundaries are not aligned with these. A technique developed by the team for earlier work (for a new National Park) enables data to be collated for the AONB area more precisely.

The project team has undertaken other local and regional economic studies, both for local authorities and other designated landscape areas. They recently successfully completed a study of the character, dimensions and drivers of the rural and environmental economies of the South Downs (see **be** volume 5, 2004).

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## Taking a multidisciplinary approach to sustainable regeneration

Brownfield regeneration is a key part of the UK government's Sustainable Communities Plan. In England alone, there are some 64,000 hectares of brownfield land, equivalent in size to the West Midlands conurbation. More than a quarter of these sites are 'hardcore' sites suffering long-term dereliction, often with contamination problems, and physical and ownership constraints. Policies in the UK and overseas, where brownfields are also a key issue, have therefore sought to encourage the recycling of such sites for a variety of uses.

Research in this arena had tended to be fragmented and piecemeal until the launch in 2003 of the EPSRC Sustainable Urban Brownfield Regeneration: Integrated Management (SUBR:IM) consortium. This is one of two in which Brookes is involved, the other being City Form.

SUBR:IM, which will run until 2007 (with the prospect of grant renewal beyond) brings together social scientists and scientists from 12 institutions across 17 projects. Tim Dixon, Professor of Real Estate at Brookes, is involved in two of the projects as principal investigator and co-investigator, examining the role of the development industry in brownfield regeneration and the impact of climate change on pollutants in contaminated soil. Case studies in the first project include New Islington in Manchester and Barking Riverside in Thames Gateway.

'SUBR:IM has presented tremendous challenges in working across disciplines,' said Professor Dixon. 'But as the largest research consortium in the UK specialising in brownfields with support from government, industry and others, we believe the research emerging will help us understand and solve some key problems in our two case study areas, Thames Gateway and Greater Manchester.'

'Initial results from our research suggest that the EU Landfill Directive is driving more sustainable methods of clean-up, but is increasing development costs for many developers. But infrastructure and density issues are seen as being even more important than contamination.'

The projects based at Brookes are also linking with overseas partners, and reciprocal visits and collaborative research are being planned with the University of Venice and the Universities of Northern Kentucky and Louisville during 2006.

For more information and outputs from SUBR:IM, see [www.subrim.org.uk](http://www.subrim.org.uk), or the Research Paper series in the International Land Markets site of OISD.

## Expanding our Courses



The Department has over many years focused on creating a leading position in international real estate management courses. One particular aspect of our approach to education has been the 'personal

touch' that we offer to all our students. We have been fortunate to have had two stars in the Department who have nurtured this caring approach. Val Belton was our administrator for many years before she moved on to take a more School wide role in 2002. Val was diagnosed with cancer early last year and, sadly died at the end of November. Until her death she was still in touch with many former students, particularly from Cyprus and Ireland.

Our other star has been Paul Roach. For the last five years he has been the Field Chair for our real estate undergraduate programmes. Prior to that he made significant contributions to the development of IT and the dissertation module in the Department. Without warning at the end of November he suffered a fatal heart attack. The loss of his ongoing contribution to the academic work of the Department and, more especially his personality, will be immense. At the time of his death he was working on a range of integrative projects and international programmes.

Our vision for the next twelve months is to consolidate our undergraduate activities and expand our postgraduate and research work. Along with our MSc Real Estate Management programme (sponsored by Knight Frank, King Sturge, DTZ, Lambert, Smith, Hampton and Cluttons) and our MSc International Real Estate we also have an MSc in Project Management in the Built Environment. All three postgraduate programmes are within the RICS partnership. We are also working on a web-based version of the MSc International Real Estate programme initially for delivery in China. This year the Department also renewed its Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) accreditation for the construction management programme.

The quality of real estate research outputs in the Department was acknowledged in the last UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) as being of international standard. Since then the Department has continued to strive to promote the advancement and dissemination of knowledge to the international community through its International Land Markets (ILM) Research Group which was established in 2003 to embrace our work in both real estate and in construction.

**Peter Dent**

Head of Department of  
Real Estate and Construction

## New master's

A new master's programme, Project Management in the Built Environment, has been accredited by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. This course is unique to Brookes and welcomes students from all disciplines, although they should have at least six months' experience of the construction industry. The course has been developed closely with industry and is based on problem-based learning. Groups will work on real-life problems in the construction industry, sharing resources and learning from experience. Features of the programme include two field trips abroad, and distance learning interspersed with three short spells at university. Students will be fully supported throughout, and will be able to access materials through the internet. This course has been designed to meet industry criticism that MSc programmes are generally too academic and discipline orientated. It runs on a part-time basis over two years. The programme leader is Nick Spencer-Chapman.

See [www.brookes.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/pmib](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/pmib)  
Contact: Linda New [lanew@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:lanew@brookes.ac.uk)

## Appraising historic buildings

The Department has just completed a project with co-sponsorship from the National Trust, examining the role of sustainability in the heritage sector. **Dr Mike Stubbs**, who led the research work, reported the findings in a research workshop attended by conservation officers from London boroughs and by English Heritage. The work involved the development of a method of appraisal for historic properties and landscapes, dealing with a wide range of issues such as transport, construction, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. A number of National Trust properties formed case studies, including Prior Park in Bath, the Holy Jesus Hospital in Newcastle and Brancaster on the North Norfolk Coast. The findings revealed some of the challenges ahead in seeking to foster 'sustainable heritage' or 'sustainable tourism' but did report on some beacons of good practice already in progress. A report and research publication were subsequently published in *Planning Practice and Research*.

## Students in public inquiry

MSc Real Estate Management students have recently completed a mock planning inquiry exercise in which the School forged links with two

planning and public law chambers in London, the Planning Inspectorate, and the government agency responsible for determining planning appeals. The students prepared evidence and defended as expert witnesses. They were subjected to some fairly robust and very authentic cross-examination by barristers from 2 Harcourt Buildings and 4-5 Gray's Inn Square. In their preparation for this event they were briefed by a senior planning inspector in the various procedures and protocols of a planning inquiry. **Dr Mike Stubbs** who organised the event as a part of the MSc Planning and Development course said he was delighted with the performances of the witnesses which 'demonstrated a high level of professionalism at such an early stage in their careers and was a triumph of transferable skills'.

## Encouraging youngsters into construction

Each summer the Department hosts a two-day event for schools in Oxfordshire. Last year's event, organised by **Nick Spencer-Chapman**, set young students the challenge of building a tower. All their efforts were subjected to an approved testing procedure.

## Research Blossoms since OISD Launch



Following their official launch by Jonathon Porritt in July 2004, the six OISD research groups (Impact Assessment and Spatial Planning, Urban Policy and International Development, Urban Design,

Sustainable Urban Environments, Architecture, Culture and Technology, and International Land Markets) have formed the nucleus for a host of research activities.

With an annual turnover just under £2 million, the Institute now has approximately 100 doctoral students. At any one time the OISD has approximately 60 research contracts, with funding from a range of research councils, charities, and government departments.

Many of our new initiatives are covered below, and in the individual department sections, but a particular theme for 2006 is achieving research synergy across our groups, focusing on high profile policy issues in sustainable development. A series of events in 2006 will seek to 'incubate' new research initiatives in areas of strong staff expertise. The first 'incubator workshop' was on brownfield development in February 2006. Other topics in the pipeline include 'healthy and family friendly communities', 'smart growth', and 'skills/training in BE practice'.

Another important theme is the encouragement of business development opportunities emanating from our research portfolio. With support from the HEFCE Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF 2) we are having considerable success in developing strong commercial links with partners in industry. The work of Professor Ray Ogden with Corus is a prime example.

Corus have agreed to fund the Corus Centre for the Building Envelope along with a Corus professorship. The work of Dr Rajat Gupta also has tremendous commercial potential, and opportunities for Planning and Real Estate and Construction are also being explored. In addition, the School has gained a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Unite, while several others are under consideration.

Many of these initiatives are now based in the new Buckley Research Building on the Headington campus. About 25 OISD staff, covering a range of our research groups, moved into the top floor in summer 2005. New synergies are emerging especially as there are also benefits to being located above the University's Research and Business Development Office!

**Professor John Glasson**

Associate Dean (Research and Consultancy)

## Planning Aid

Sue Brownill and Juliet Carpenter are undertaking an evaluation of the national Planning Aid service for the RTP1. Planning Aid is a government-funded service that provides free and independent advice on planning issues to individuals and communities who cannot afford to hire a planning consultant.

The research has been running since March 2004, and has highlighted a number of barriers to community involvement in planning, including the lack of an appropriate level of resources, the lack of engagement by some key stakeholders, and a sense from some communities that planning isn't relevant to them. However, a number of success stories have also emerged, including the value of environmental education and working with schools to engage people in thinking about planning issues and their local environment.

The evaluation is due to report the Year 3 findings in July 2006.



DECoRuM uses GIS software, MapInfo, to extract input data for the underlying energy models and display results in the form of colour-coded thematic maps with an individual dwelling displayed as the basic unit of resolution (Figure 1 - top)

Generation of thematic maps showing the solar potential for individual dwellings (Figure 2 - left)

## Computer model tracks energy loss in buildings

Research fellow Dr Rajat Gupta has developed a unique computer mapping system which can pinpoint the amount of carbon dioxide given off by individual buildings. It has already been used to produce a map of an area of north Oxford highlighting emissions from homes and offices.

DECoRuM is a GIS-based domestic energy, carbon-counting and carbon-reduction model with the capability of measuring energy consumption in, as well as CO<sub>2</sub> emission, from the UK housing stock. It can also be used to estimate the cost of a range of measures to reduce emissions.

DECoRuM estimates current energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from existing UK dwellings, aggregating them to a street, district, and city level. This enables it to evaluate the potential and financial costs for domestic CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions by deploying a whole range of best practice energy efficiency measures, low carbon systems and renewable energy technologies on an urban scale. The Oxford case study has shown that it can be used to help planners monitor and improve the energy efficiency of both public and private housing, as required by the Home Energy Conservation Act.

DECoRuM is now on its way to becoming an industry standard in the UK for carbon emission reduction planning. Discussions are currently taking place with the London Borough of Merton as well as Oxford City Council. Funding has been secured from the South East Proof of Concept (SEPOC) Fund for the further development and market assessment of the programme. This will lead to the production of a robust GIS-based toolkit for use by UK local authorities, energy advisers, building surveyors and real estate professionals to assist them in counting, costing and reducing domestic carbon emissions.

## Drive to build sustainable public buildings

Brookes' researchers are playing a key role in a Europe-wide project to encourage the building of a new generation of energy efficient public buildings.

Given that public-access buildings tend to consume large amounts of energy, the project could lead to significant energy saving and reduction in pollution.

The aim of the SARA project is to encourage the development of sustainable, cost effective, public-access eco-buildings that can be replicated on a large scale in different locations. They will be equipped with advanced sustainable energy technology integrated with innovative architecture, and each building in the project will also have a combined monitoring and building management system (BMS).

SARA involves the construction of eight new public buildings in eight different countries. Teams of researchers from each country will work in parallel on specific issues such as the integration of BMS, remote monitoring, and internet based dissemination of information. It is hoped that the SARA project will make a significant contribution to the development of future European energy policy and the promotion of innovative sustainable technologies.

Brookes is one of two UK partners, the other being the University of Southampton. The consortium includes



partners from Austria, Slovenia, Poland, France, Italy, Uzbekistan and Germany, and is led by Universitat de Barcelona Spain.

A new administrative building at the University of Southampton will form the basis of research in the UK. It makes use of an atrium to maximise energy conservation, while a photovoltaic system on the roof (paid for with a DTI grant) has been designed to optimise energy generation and conservation.

The Oxford team is led by Sue Roaf and Manuel Fuentes, and includes Maita Kessler and Fergus Nicol. They will carry out a study of the Southampton building to evaluate its efficiency, as well as measuring student and staff satisfaction with the level of comfort in the new building.

Contact: oisd@brookes.ac.uk

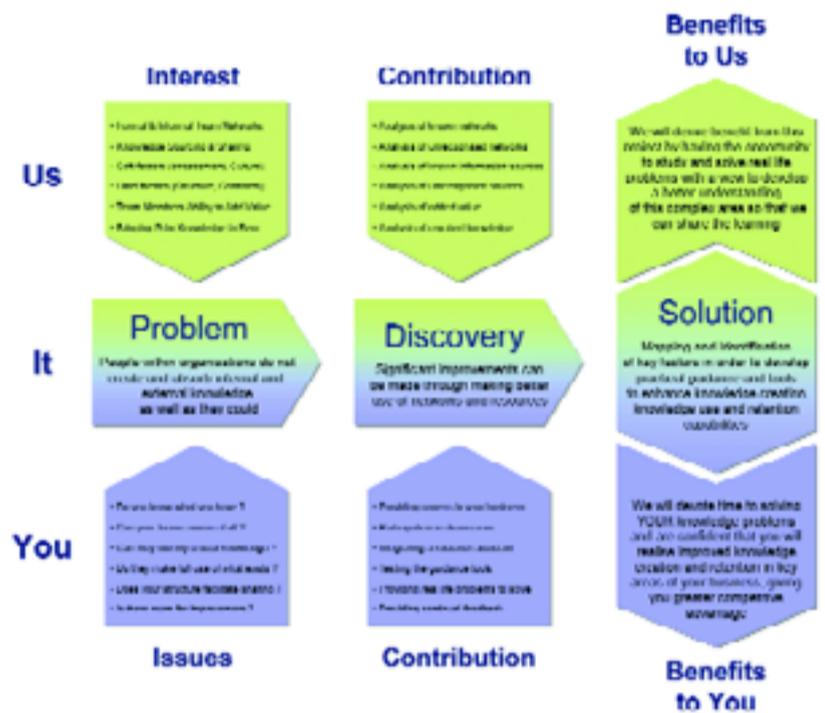
# How can organisations get to know themselves better?

Competitive advantage gained through innovation is crucial for all businesses working in today's ever changing world. In order to do so, they face two key challenges: 'what to do' with information and knowledge, and 'where to get it from'.

Within the construction industry, for example, organisations rely on their project team's ability to transform information and knowledge resources into solutions by relying on their collective capabilities and knowledge. However, all too often this is made unnecessarily difficult for the people involved. This is because people need to know what constitutes their knowledge networks, ie 'who knows what' and 'who knows who'. But often all they know is 'who works where' and 'who reports to whom'.

A research team at the Department of Real Estate and Construction is undertaking a research project which aims to visualise the knowledge networks of project teams in the construction industry in order to help project teams and individuals to improve their ability to create and absorb new knowledge. The project, full title 'knowledge creation capability and absorptive capacity of integrated project teams in the construction industry', is funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

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## OISD and business

As part of its drive to develop business opportunities from its research, OISD attended the combined Ecobuild, Futurebuild and Regenex exhibition on 22-23 February 2006 at Earl's Court in London. As well as extending its links with some of the construction industry's most well known representatives, OISD used this opportunity to promote three of its most recent initiatives; DECoRuM, a GIS-based model for counting, costing and reducing domestic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from UK cities; SUBR:IM, an integrated management approach to Sustainable Urban Brownfield regeneration and Building Compact Communities, a university partnership providing innovation in planning, design and construction processes.

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or see [www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/oisd/](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/oisd/)

## New student competition

OISD is to hold a student competition to help raise the profile of sustainable development at Oxford Brookes. Prizes will be offered for the best piece of work by a student in two categories. The first is for an essay or paper, and the second is for work in another medium, such as video, poster, or web. It will be open to all students in the university, at undergraduate and postgraduate level. A prize of £200 will be awarded in each of the four categories. The piece of work should contribute to raising environmental awareness and/or promote environmental progress linked to climate change.

The competition is being co-ordinated by Dr Bridget Durning, Manager: Research and Consultancy, OISD and Harriet Waters, Environmental Coordinator, Oxford Brookes. The closing date is 24 March 2006. The judges include George Monbiot and the two Co-Directors of the OISD, Professors John Glasson and Mike Jenks. The winners will be announced at the OISD Monbiot lecture on 27 April.

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## How does urban form contribute to sustainability?

The relationship between the urban form and social sustainability is being investigated by a research team headed by Professor Mike Jenks.

'City Form: The Sustainable Urban Form Consortium' is a large national research project involving five universities as well as local government and private sector organisations. It has £1.88 million worth of funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). The major research question that City Form is addressing is: 'to what extent and in what ways does urban form contribute to sustainability?'

The primary research is based in 15 case study areas in Oxford, Sheffield, Leicester, Edinburgh and Glasgow. In the summer of 2005, over 12,000 postal questionnaires were distributed to households these areas with an overall response rate of 38%, a very good result for a postal survey.

In addition to this, a site survey was conducted successfully using an effective method of data



collection using PDAs with GPS. This information will be analysed in order to advance a theory on sustainable urban form through the analysis, synthesis and integration of findings from the evidence-based research. This will be used to provide guidance on sustainable urban forms, which are both acceptable to users and more sustainable in the future.

For more information see [www.city-form.org](http://www.city-form.org)

## New staff

**Dr Andrea Colantonio** joins OISD:International Land Management as a post doctoral research associate on the EPSRC project. Dr Colantonio is an economist who has subsequently developed research interests in the areas of comparative urban studies, tourism development and environment in less developed countries and continuing socialist states. Most specifically, he is interested in investigating the links between globalising economic forces, local responses and environmental and social change in the urban areas of less developed countries, with a special emphasis on the Caribbean and Latin America.

**Dr Noriko Otsuka** joins ILM as a postdoctoral research associate on the EPSRC project. Dr Otsuka has 10 years of work experience in the Japanese construction industry, working for Takenaka Corporation. She started as a quantity surveyor in the estimation department and

became an assistant architect six years later. During her last two years with Takenaka, she was the project manager for a £20 million mixed-use project. Coupled with her practical experience, she has research experience in examining the relationships between stakeholders in town centre regeneration and their social networks. **Xi'aoxin Wang** joins OISD:Technology to work on Research with Chris Kendrick.

**Dr Robin Ganser** has joined the Department of Planning as Senior Lecturer and is also a researcher within the OISD:IAU.

Visiting academics:  
**Erling Holden** (Norway) visiting OISD:SUE.

**Tassos Perdicolous** (Portugal) is visiting OISD:Environmental Assessment and Spatial Planning Group.

At the dawn of a new millennium, in a time of rapid technological developments and globalisation, vernacular architecture still occupies a marginal position. Largely ignored in architectural education, research and practice, associations with a backward past, underdevelopment and poverty prevail, and recognition of the achievements, experience and skills of the world's vernacular builders remains limited. **Vernacular Architecture in the 21st Century: Theory, Education and Practice** focuses on these questions. Written by authors from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, it aims to give the initial impetus to discussions about the way in which the vernacular can play a part in the provision of future built environments. Discussing the value of vernacular traditions to such diverse fields as housing, conservation, sustainable development, disaster management and architectural design, the contributors argue that, in contrast to the persistent associations, there is still a lot that can be learned from the traditional knowledge, skills and expertise of the vernacular builders of the world.



What is needed, they conclude, is to raise the awareness of the value of vernacular architecture and to dismantle the stereotypes that continue to cling. A more critical and forward-looking approach should be taken to vernacular research, education and practice. Drawing on case studies from around the world, they argue that such an approach will enable the active implementation of vernacular know-how in a contemporary context, and will make it possible to say with confidence that there still is a place for vernacular architecture in the twenty-first century.

*Vernacular Architecture in the 21st Century: Theory, Education and Practice* is edited by Lindsay Asquith and Marcel Vellinga (Taylor & Francis, 2005)

**Streets for Life** presents a new concept for design and development in towns and cities across the globe. The authors developed the concept through their ongoing research in the Wellbeing in Sustainable Environments (WISE) research unit in OISD.

The unit is newly formed but is based on over ten years' research looking at how the design of the built environment affects people's emotional wellbeing and quality of life. WISE research aims to offer design guidance, based on rigorous research investigating people's views and preferences, on creating environments that maximise people's quality of life. There has been so much interest in the Streets for Life design guidance that the authors decided to include it all in this book, in a form that would be easy to read and use for those involved in the design and development of urban areas, neighbourhoods, streets and housing.

The authors put the case forward for streets that residents find easy and enjoyable to use as they grow older in their neighbourhoods, allowing them to continue living at home if they want to; and streets that are inclusive – that are easy and enjoyable to use by all members of society, including older people with dementia. They have developed a set of design principles and accompanying design recommendations that they believe, if used, will enable designers and



developers to create streets for life. This book is aimed both practitioners (including architects and planners) and users (including older people).

*Inclusive Urban Design: Streets for Life* by Elizabeth Burton and Lynne Mitchell is published by Architectural Press, price £24.99.

A major revised 3rd edition of the best selling text **An Introduction to Environmental Impact Assessment** (Routledge) was launched in May 2005. Written by John Glasson, Riki Therivel and Andrew Chadwick of the Department of Planning, the book is one of the most internationally cited texts in the EIA field. Sales of 1,500 in the first 6 months suggest the new edition is likely to be at least as successful as the earlier versions.

The Oxfordshire Economic Observatory (OEO), a joint initiative between our Department of Planning and the School of Geography at the University of Oxford has been active in publications in 2005. Briefing Reports on the Oxfordshire economy are now produced quarterly, and a major new report **Public Research: High Tech Spin-Offs: Measuring Performance and Growth in Oxfordshire** has been produced by Dr Helen Lawton-Smith (Oxford University/Birkbeck) and Professor John Glasson. It was launched at an Entrepreneurs Festival at the Said Business School in December 2005. Based on major survey work, it shows amongst other things that the Oxfordshire Public Sector research base has produced 114 companies, of which 90% are still in existence. They employ approx 9,000 people in Oxfordshire and had a combined turnover of nearly £1 billion in 2002. They include some well known names such as Oxford Instruments, Research Machines, Sophos and PowderJect.

## Conferences

**1 March 2006**  
**Climate Change and Social Change**

A one day event sponsored OISD and held jointly with the School of Geography at the University of Oxford. Speakers include George Monbiot, Caroline Lucas MEP, Erik Swyngedouw, Professor of Geography at the University of Oxford, and Andrew Dobson and David Pepper, both noted writers on environmentalism and environmental politics. It follows on from the Environmental Futures lecture series developed by George Monbiot, visiting professor in the Department of Planning. The conference takes place in the Buckley research building at Headington Campus. Details of the programme are available on. The event is free.

**10 May 2006**  
**Contemporary Environmentalism Conference**

Held jointly with the School of Geography at the University of Oxford, it takes place in Oxford University's new building in the science area. It will bring together well known experts on the questions surrounding the current changes in environmentalism. Details of the programme are available on [www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be)

Preparations are under way to host the third annual conference of the **Architectural Humanities Research Association**. Scheduled for November 2006, the conference is the flagship event among the activities organised by the AHRA, bringing together teachers of history, theory and cultural studies in the UK's architecture schools. A steering group at Brookes is currently developing the programme, with keynote speakers planned from North America and Europe. The 2006 event follows earlier conferences at the Bartlett (2004) and Nottingham (2005).  
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+44 (0) 1865 483200

## Short courses

Forthcoming Short Courses (CPD Programme) Contact: Karen Hughes, Short Course Co-ordinator  
[khughes@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:khughes@brookes.ac.uk) t. 01865 483560 f. 01865 483406

Date	Course/Conference Title
<b>Rural Transport and Accessibility Planning</b>	
Wednesday 15 March	Local and Community Transport
Wednesday 5 April	Rural Road and Traffic Management
<b>Further CPD events for 2006</b>	
Tuesday 11 April	Introduction to Strategic Environmental Assessment
Wednesday 12 April	Advanced Strategic Environmental Assessment
20 April – 29 June Thursday evening teaching sessions	Certificate in Environmental Assessment Procedures & Process
Wednesday 10 May	Cumulative Impacts in Strategic Environmental Assessment
Tuesday 6 June	Nature & Building Conservation
Friday 21 July	The SEA Directive: two years on

The above are the confirmed courses to take place. However, we will have additional courses taking place that have not as yet been confirmed.

For details contact the CPD website: [www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/planning/shortcourses](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/planning/shortcourses).

**To obtain a large-print copy of this publication or to enquire about other formats please contact +44 (0) 1865 484848 or email [creativeservices@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:creativeservices@brookes.ac.uk).**

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