

be

built environment
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School of the Built Environment

Message from the Dean....



Renewal

Many of you will have warm (and not so warm) memories of the Darcy Building, the demolition of which is progressing to make way for an exciting new development

being designed by the School's own Richard Rose-Casemore and his partners at Design Engine. We have entered an exciting period of renewal for the University and the School. Richard will create a new public square for the University bordering the Headington Road and a landmark new student centre where the Darcy building used to be. Over the next four years the School is to consolidate all its departments (Architecture, Planning, Real Estate and Construction) into an extended, refurbished and re-clad Abercrombie Building. This promises to give the whole School an environment which is well beyond 'fit for purpose'. Of course, our staff and students have been involved in sharing ideas and contributing to the decision making in these developments. As soon as we have sketches for the new proposals we will share them with our readers.

World class performance

The School continues to perform at the highest level in all that it does. Not content with providing the majority of the University's top scoring subjects, and having the highest A-level intake scores in the University, we were proud to welcome back in September our Construction Management undergraduate Richard Chambers who won a gold medal at the World Rowing Championships in August 2007. Richard has now completed his academic work and has joined Hugo Lee (Real Estate 2006) in full-time training for the GB 2008 Olympic team. As ever, I feel so privileged to act as Dean for such a successful School at Brookes.

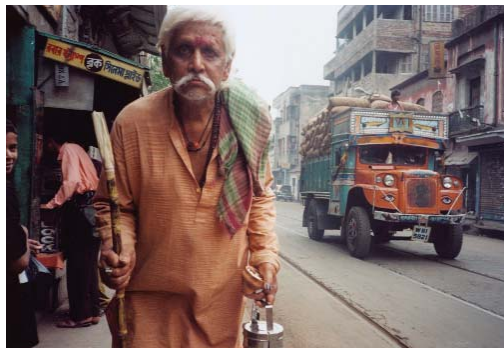
Changes at be

We are planning some changes at **be**. If you would like to be involved in contributing ideas for this please refer to the notice on page 7.

Professor John Raftery
Dean, School of the Built Environment



Freedom and Belonging at the Human Rights Film Festival



The Fifth Oxford Brookes University Human Rights Film Festival took place last in February and March 2007. The festival, organised by students from the MA programme in Development and Emergency Practice (DEP) in the Department of Architecture, has become a fixture for the university as well as within Oxford itself.

This year's festival theme was Freedom and Belonging, to coincide with the 200th Anniversary of Parliament's banning of slavery. To these ends the festival showed films from Russia, Bosnia, Nepal, Iraq, Sudan, Egypt, India, Burma, Afghanistan and Uganda. The festival was opened by the singer Billy Bragg with a showing of the film *Gem Slaves: Tanzanite's Child*

Labour, an account of child labour in Tanzania's Tanzanite mines. A highlight was the showing of the award winning film *Tsotsi*, telling the story of a gang leader's accidental kidnapping of a baby in South Africa.

The festival is organised free of charge to attendees and is open to all. Films are typically donated for free by film makers who support the event's aims. Each year the festival engages academics, film directors, actors and celebrities to present and discuss issues raised by the films. In 2005 the journalist John McCarthy presented a film, and in 2006 the festival was opened by DEP's Patron, the singer Annie Lennox.

The festival was inaugurated in 2003 to reflect the introduction of human rights within the DEP programme. DEP each year attracts practitioners and enquirers of all ages from all walks of life who want to learn more about and reflect on issues of third world development, war, natural disaster, climate change and poverty.

BE links with Vietnam

In December 2006 the Department of Planning from Oxford Brookes University and the Ho Chi Minh City University Architecture Department signed a Memorandum of Understanding to train staff from HCMCUA to MSc and PhD degrees and to develop joint initiatives to deliver planning programmes in Vietnam. To date some eight candidates have been involved in postgraduate education at Brookes.



Reinvention Centre opens its doors

2007 saw the opening of the Reinvention Centre for Undergraduate Research. The Reinvention Centre is a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), a joint project with the University of Warwick. Find out more at the Reinvention website: www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/research/cetl/

The Centre has eleven nomadic workstations, two televisions with DVD and video recorders and two projectors; all of which are for the exclusive use of students when preparing and practising the presentation of research work for their modules. There are also a couple of rooms in the Centre that students can pre-book for group work or presentations that require a closed space. One of these rooms also has video-conferencing facilities should students be working on a collaborative project with students in another institution. There is also a comfortable seating area where students can enjoy a hot or cold drink and relax.



New publicity from the School of BE

The School has been refreshing and updating our publicity to let our students, staff, alumni and other friends know about changes to existing courses, new courses, research progress and other activities. If you'd like to see some or all of our new material please contact us.

Current publicity includes the brochure *Could you shape the future of where we live?* with details of all our undergraduate courses, individual leaflets about each of our post graduate courses such as Tourism, Environment and Development, International Architectural Regeneration and Development, and Real Estate Management. We now have two editions of the *Architecture Yearbook* (2006 and 2007) and are planning a similar publication for Urban Design. We also have the annual review of the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD) and material relating to each of the OISD research groups and units and OISD's own newsletter.

Over 2008 we plan to add to this material with a new international postgraduate brochure, a DVD of live footage from open days and exhibitions, and an updated and expanded website for the School. Changes are also planned for **be** magazine, please see the Alumni section of the magazine for more information on how you can be a part of this.

Hides in the Park

Oxford Brookes University was the only school of architecture invited to take part in Hides in the Park, RIBA London's contribution to Architecture Week 2007. RIBA London invited five firms of up-and-coming architects and one student team – from Oxford Brookes University – to design and build the hides, working with the RSPB to develop the brief. The Oxford Brookes team comprised first year students led by tutors Laura Petruso and Liam Young, who came up with the idea of making the hide from natural rope fibre and concealing the watcher through the weave of the rope structure. At the end of Architecture Week, the hides were removed for storage and subsequent re-erection for use by schools and community groups. The Oxford Brookes hide is currently being stored in a new urban art space under the Westway on Portobello Road in London before being re-erected in Portobello Green, a small park next to the famous market.



Research into teaching



This has been an exciting year for the Department, with a number of innovations at both postgraduate and undergraduate levels.

Two new master's programmes (also available to Diploma students) were launched, the MArch in Advanced Architectural Design and the MA in International Regeneration and Development. To judge from the work produced to date, both are already establishing their own distinctive architectural agenda. Links between undergraduate and postgraduate have been further strengthened with the BA studio in Development and Emergency Practice, introducing undergraduates to the disciplines of post-disaster development taught on the acclaimed CENDEP master's programme.

During the year we welcomed a number of new staff at senior level, including Steve Race (Principal Lecturer in charge of Practice and Management), David Sanderson (Principal Lecturer and Director of CENDEP) and Fionn Stevenson (Reader in Sustainable Design). They are already making a significant impact within, and beyond, their areas of immediate responsibility.

Other highlights of the year included the participation of our first year students in the RIBA's Hides in the Park event, the success of third year undergraduate Samantha Sherwood in the competition for the New Forest Treehouse and two major international conferences, one held in Oxford and one in India.

A major achievement for the entire department came with the visit by the RIBA Visiting Board in September 2007. This resulted in a recommendation for the continued validation for a further four years, without any conditions, of our Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 programmes. Following a similar outcome the previous year for our Part 1 and Part 2 programmes in the Office-Based Examination, it means that we can now move forward knowing that we have achieved the best possible outcome for all our professionally validated programmes.

Professor Mark Swenarton
Head of Department of Architecture

AHRA conference

The Politics of Making (the 3rd annual Architectural Humanities Research Association international conference), 17-18 November 2006. Organised by the Department of Architecture and held at St Catherine's College, Oxford, the conference attracted more than one hundred delegates, with speakers drawn from all parts of

the world, including Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, The Netherlands, Romania, Turkey, Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand, as well as the UK. The papers were wide-ranging both geographically and in terms of subject matter, ranging from the training of architects in seventeenth century Paris, to the planning of post-

Independence Beijing in the 1950s, to the construction of the West Bank wall by the Israeli government today. Speakers included Iain Borden, Tony Fretton, David Harvey and Lorenzo Romito and the conference was sponsored by the Concrete Centre and the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development.

Doric Club 80th anniversary

The 80th anniversary of the foundation of the Doric Club – the event that led in 1929 to the establishment of the Oxford School of Architecture – was celebrated at a special dinner on 25 May 2007. Sponsored by Ibstock and Oxford builders and Kinglerlee, the dinner took place at St Hilda's College, overlooking the river and adjacent to the building originally occupied by the School of Architecture. More than a hundred people attended the dinner, including Oxford Brookes alumni from as far afield as Scandinavia and the USA.

Delhi conference

Greening Events and Energy-Efficient Cities for Lasting Legacies, 7-8 February 2007. Co-organised by Dr Rajat Gupta of the Department of Architecture in association with the British Council and others and held in New Delhi, this UK-India symposium attracted some 400 delegates from the worlds of architecture, engineering, business and government.

The conference considered ways in which cities could adopt renewable and sustainable energy strategies, in particular for major international events like the Delhi Commonwealth Games in 2010. Representatives from about 20 Indian cities participated, whilst six mayors declared their support for greening cities and events, as part of the closing ceremony. The conference was followed by meetings between UK speakers and the Mayor of Delhi on 9 February to discuss how the concepts of greening events and cities could be put into practice in the city.



New successes and initiatives



The Department of Planning continues to attract many UK and international students into undergraduate and postgraduate courses and research programmes. Particularly popular is the MSc in Spatial Planning (one year intensive full-time; two years part-time) which recruits some 100 students per year. In November 2006 more than 100 students received their master's degrees, and it is good to hear that they all have excellent jobs in local authority, private and voluntary sector organisations.

The Department also updated and revised some of its academic portfolio and we re-launched the MSc in Tourism: Environment and Development course to reflect the latest thinking in this field as well as to meet the demands of the fast growing tourism industry. Staff have also delivered many exciting research projects for major clients such as DCLG, CABE, RTPI, EU, BURA, ESRC and many other organisations. We also saw a very successful completion of PhD theses with 8 new Doctors. Congratulations to Dr Celida Gamez Gomez and Dr Delle Odeleye (Urban Design); Dr Camillo Boano, Dr Stefan Preuss, Dr Silva Ferretti, Dr Kean Birch, Dr Ingrid Greenhow and Dr Duncan Tyler (Planning).

The Department also continues to be active internationally. Particularly exciting for us is our new collaborative programme with the Ho Chi Minh City University of Architecture in Vietnam set up to train staff from Vietnam to MSc and PhD degrees. We are particularly proud to welcome two new colleagues: Dr Dave Valler, Reader in Spatial Planning and Dr Beacon Mbiba, Course Leader in Urban Planning in Developing Countries.

Professor Georgia Butina Watson
Head of Department of Planning

Path dependence

Professor James Simmie, Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Planning has achieved funding from the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts for research into path dependence, territorial innovation systems and the absorptive capacities of English city regions. This project was selected as one of the top seven projects out of over eighty applications. The work will be conducted over the next two years in collaboration with Professor Ron Martin at the University of Cambridge.

This research is closely linked with the emerging UK city regions and innovation policy agenda. It will lead to suggestions for actionable policy principles for those branches of government concerned with urban and regional innovation policy.

Evaluating regeneration through conservation

For the past eight years the Townscape and Heritage Research Unit (THRU) team in the Department of Planning have been working on a longitudinal evaluation of the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The THRU team is led by Dr Alan Reeve and Philip Grover from Brookes and Dr Robert Shipley from the University of Waterloo in Canada.

The aim of the research has been to evaluate the regeneration effects of the THI programme, and determine its effectiveness through a close analysis of seventeen projects ranging from large, urban quarters, such as the Merchant City in Glasgow; to small hamlets, such as West Wemyss on the east coast of Scotland.

The research involved developing a series of indicators and data sets to address four key themes – townscape improvement, confidence building, image, and economic improvement. The tools range from on site townscape scoring, to interviews with stakeholders involved or affected by the process, to household questionnaires, to reviewing national and local statistics on social deprivation. The work has also involved creating a base line picture of the sample of schemes, in 1999-2000; followed by follow-up visits and data collection to track impacts. The team will be publishing an executive summary of the work on the Heritage Lottery Fund website in the spring of 2008.

Brookes taking the lead in climate change adaptation studies

How can we address the impacts of climate change in major growth areas such as the Thames Gateway? An important guide on *Adapting to climate change impacts: A guide to good practice for sustainable communities* was launched at the Thames Gateway Forum by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, on 23 November 2006.

Written by a team led by Land Use Consultants, with CAG Consultants, Gardiner & Theobald, and Elizabeth Wilson and Rajat Gupta from Oxford Brookes University School of the Built Environment, it sets out what some of the impacts of climate change are likely to be in the growth areas. The study team worked with developers, funders, designers and planners in three pilot sites – Bedford Town Centre, Wood Wharf in London, and Queenborough & Rushenden on the north Kent coast. The guide makes suggestions for ways of adapting at different scales (location, layout and building) to issues such as flooding, water resources, thermal comfort, open space, biodiversity, and historic conservation.

The project was funded by DEFRA and the Climate Change Partnerships in the growth area regions. The guide is available at www.defra.gov.uk

Environmental change in Brazil

In October 2006 Dr Jake Piper visited the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil, to support our relationship with two universities there. Jake visited campuses of the University of Sao Paulo (USP) and of the Federal University of Sao Carlos in Sao Carlos city and presented lectures on EU and UK environmental policy and climate change and impact assessment.

This corner of Brazil is a major supplier to world commodities markets and some of its extensive sugar cane production is converted to ethanol to power the 'flexi' cars (petrol and ethanol) used by an increasing number of Brazilian drivers (80% of the cars produced in Brazil in 2005 were dual-fuel, compared to only 17% in 2004). A visit to a sugar cane processing plant was an opportunity to see how one company has responded to a past major pollution event and to compare environmental protection procedures.



Corenet essay award



Daniel Dutton, a first year student from Oxford Brookes' Real Estate Management course, has won a prestigious student essay award. The Corenet Student Essay Award is an annual competition which has been running for seven years and is open to all undergraduates on real estate courses. The winning entrant receives £1,000. Daniel's essay focused on the tax issues companies face when choosing whether to own or lease property and was published in *Estates Gazette* magazine.

Daniel said: "I am delighted to have won the award as most of the previous winners had been third year students. I was up against some stiff competition from Cass Business School and Reading and I hope, that by winning, this reflects positively on the quality of the Real Estate course here at Oxford Brookes."

Knowledge - an untapped resource

The Department of Real Estate and Construction organised a series of workshops as part of our research project funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). The workshops took place at the RICS in London and the University of Manchester. The series aimed to develop insight into the role played by social networks in creating new knowledge, disseminate the findings of our research, demonstrate guidance tools for sharing knowledge more effectively and to learn from them. It also connected delegates with a community of businesses and organisations interested in knowledge management in the construction industry.

While our industrial partners presented their views on being involved in our research project, we presented our findings of the Social Network Analysis of two project teams delivering facilities to their long-standing clients and the tools that we developed for host companies to enhance their knowledge creation capability. Our findings related to the way teams used their social networks in discovering new ways of doing things. We were pleased that our industrial partners shared their satisfaction from being involved in these projects with the audience. They were very appreciative of the discussions that our research project generated within their teams.

An international reputation



The Department continues to strengthen and develop its activities. We have now been running two successful postgraduate programmes in the real estate field for five years. We are shortly to complement this with our MSc Project Management in the Built Environment. We also have a new home for our postgraduate students – a fully equipped base room for all their major campus based activities. This is a significant improvement for the learning experience for the students.

Also our undergraduate programmes continue to grow and develop. We are in the process of a major review which will bring our real estate and construction programmes closer together helping us to broaden the students' experience. We are also working with a major construction contractor to develop a foundation degree which will extend our overall portfolio.

The Department is getting an international reputation for its research work. Albert Cao and Ramin Keivani have recently completed a major work on the China real estate market funded by the RICS and Shui On. The research report was successfully launched at presentations in Shanghai and Hong Kong. We also carried out the research which underpins the RICS's 'Green Profession' report (Tim Dixon, Andrea Colantonio and David Shiers) and which has a global focus. This work was completed in collaboration with Georgia State University and University of Melbourne (supported by King Sturge).

Youngha Cho is undertaking a research project with the University of Cambridge funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Youngha is modelling the future take-up of low-cost home ownership products. We have recently strengthened our links with the Investment Property Forum with the completion of research on EPCs in commercial property and new work on the occupier demand for sustainable office buildings.

To further strengthen research in the construction aspect of our work Professor Joe Tah has recently joined us from the University of Salford. The main focus of his research has been related to project management with a special emphasis on the application of computer science and artificial intelligence techniques. He has been funded to undertake his work through EPSRC, DTI, DETR, ERDF, ESF amongst others.

Peter Dent
Head of Department of
Real Estate and Construction

Fiddling while the planet burns?

This year's ERES property research conference, which was attended by over 400 delegates, was held at Cass Business School in the City of London from 27 to 30 June. The conference featured a panel session on real estate sustainability organised by the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD), Oxford Brookes University and sponsored by King Sturge. The panel (which included Professor Tim Dixon of OISD) had a controversial focus on whether property academics, practitioners and other stakeholders were 'fiddling while the planet burns'.

Although research on sustainability for buildings and property has come a long way, there is a need for better data at a building level and clearer definitions on what sustainability means for us all, even in a purely environmental sense. For investment it is essential to know what constitutes a sustainable building, and the relative merits of environmental and social sustainability. Perhaps most importantly, there is now a need to concentrate on the way buildings are used rather than the way they have been built. There is positive work being done by valuers around the globe to account for sustainability issues within the valuation process but ultimately the demand for sustainable buildings can only come from users – and the valuation profession can only reflect that as and when it happens.

European Real Estate Society (ERES) Conference, June 2007

The Department was well represented at this prestigious real estate research conference held this year in the City of London. Nine members of staff attended together with our visiting professor, Paul McNamara. Six papers were presented and we also hosted a special panel session on sustainable real estate, details of which are included above.



Dr Sally Sims and Peter Dent were awarded the Appraisal Journal Prize for the best paper on the valuation of real estate. The subject of the paper was the possible impact of wind farm development on residential values.



MSc Project Management in the Built Environment (MSc PMBE)

We continue engaging practitioners in the development of MSc PMBE through a series of meetings with influential people in targeted companies within the built environment sector. It is encouraging that the novelty of MSc PMBE in terms of its delivery based on problem solving and its potential contribution to improving practice continue to be acknowledged during our discussions.

MSc PMBE is mainly aimed at candidates who have good degrees, ie 2:1 and above, in non-built environment disciplines – the so-called non-cognates. But, we would consider applications from candidates with built environment related degrees and/or experience in the industry. We believe the choice of non-cognates as our target market will enable us to make a significant contribution to closing the skills gap in the industry by creating opportunities for it to recruit from a much wider pool of graduates.

Please pass the information on this exciting new course to people who you think might be interested in applying.

www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/courses/postgraduate/pmib

Sustainable development research with a cutting edge



OISD is the largest specialist institute dedicated to research on sustainable development for the built environment in the UK with an annual income of more than £1.6m. Since the last *be* magazine, OISD has continued to go from strength to strength which now gives us a platform for future growth and development during the run-up to the Research Assessment Exercise 2008 and beyond.

Providing a sustainable built environment (in environmental, economic and social terms) is fundamental to people's lives and jobs within sustainable communities. However, renewing and regenerating the built environment presents considerable sustainability challenges. This year, for perhaps the first time, the vast majority of commentators accepted that climate change was a real and present danger. This view was reinforced by the UK government's Stern Review which highlighted the very real perils that a 'business as usual' scenario presents for our global future.

There are then some challenging research questions to address in the built environment, and our research programme is already answering some key questions relating to a wider sustainability agenda including:

- How can we develop robust metrics systems to measure carbon footprints for buildings and cities?
- How can compact cities provide a template for sustainable development?
- How can we create sustainable, not transient, communities on brownfield sites?
- How can we assess environmental impact to create a sustainable future?
- How can new technologies advance sustainable building design?
- How can we design inclusively for all future generations, which includes an ageing population?

Examples of new projects which address many of these questions are highlighted below and also in individual department sections of this newsletter. It is clear from our story this year that our linkages with industry and commerce continue to grow (recent successes include the Corus Centre for the Building Envelope and our HEIF3 work within the wider School) and we have a strong presence in four EPSRC research consortia.

Also, for the first time we have produced an Annual Review and Newsletter of OISD's work both of which are available online at our website (www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/oisd/index.html) and also in hard copy form. Please contact us for further information at: oisd@brookes.ac.uk

Tim Dixon
Director, OISD



UrbanBuzz



The Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development has been appointed as Independent Evaluator on a major new £5 million Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF 3) – funded initiative 'UrbanBuzz: Building Sustainable Communities'. The project, is a two-year joint venture between UCL and the University of East London and involves over 120 partner organisations in a multi-disciplinary evidence-based programme designed to share knowledge, stimulate new thinking and make the ideal of building sustainable communities a reality in live development projects located in London and the South East.

The programme will identify problems and provide and test solutions, and the task of OISD is to evaluate the success and effectiveness of the UrbanBuzz programme and processes. Dr Carol Dair has been appointed as the research fellow to carry out the evaluation in the project which is led by Professor Mike Jenks with Professors John Glasson and Tim Dixon. Professor Georgia Butina Watson, Ian Bentley and Becky Kiddle are also involved in an UrbanBuzz project called ROOTSCAPE which involves young people from Blackbird Leys in Oxford and urban designers.

PPM^{BE} ushers in a sustainable and responsible business agenda

Sustainability, the concept of meeting the needs of present generations without compromising those of future generations, has been widely accepted in the form of the traditional 'Triple Bottom Line Model' (the economic, environmental dimensions). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) provides the 'envelope' for this by considering the management of an organisation's total impact upon both its immediate stakeholders and upon the society within which it operates.

CSR and sustainability cut across several key themes within OISD, and are driving 'smart growth' initiatives at regional (SEEDA/SEERA) and local economic levels. Adapting buildings and mitigating against extremes of climate, as well as ensuring the future of the natural environment are vital not only in technical and behavioural terms, but also in the context of environmental and planning policies. Sustainability and CSR are therefore key drivers in the built environment and the HEIF-funded PPM^{BE} programme brings together planning, architecture, technology, and real estate and construction disciplines in OISD to develop industry-funded research and consultancy activities. The programme has already secured funding from the European Investment bank's EIBURS programme (Tim Dixon); a range of new carbon-counting projects (Rajat Gupta); and cutting-edge technology-based research (Ray Ogden). For further information see the new OISD newsletter and website.

JET and Brookes fusion

Present plans call for the experimental fusion research operation JET (Joint European Torus) located in Culham, South Oxfordshire to finish its work at the end of 2010. The JET Site Stakeholders Group (JSSG) has contracted the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development to advise them on a public consultation process to determine the desired 'end state' of the site.

The consultation process has consisted of a website created to inform and to enable individual contributions by email to be made throughout the process; information provided to the local media; focus groups, with members from the communities immediately impacted by decisions about the JET site; a public event at which members of the public can give their opinions; and a report to be made to the JSSG so that its members may consider the outcomes of the process and ensure that it is fully representative of



the range of views in the local community and makes appropriate recommendations for a hierarchy of possible end states/uses of the JET site.

Staff involved include John Glasson and Bridget Durning from OISD.

MACIS project

MACIS (Minimisation of and adaptation to impacts of climate change on biodiversity) OISD's latest project on planning for biodiversity and climate change, was launched in Lund, Sweden, in November 2006.

The project builds on the BRANCH project (see *be* vol. 7, page 4) and on several other projects in which Elizabeth Wilson and Jake Piper have been involved over the past five years. Funded for two years by the EU, the MACIS programme brings together eleven research institutions across Europe, plus one from the South Africa.

The objectives of the MACIS programme are to develop a series of biodiversity and habitat models that address biodiversity impacts and can calculate the consequences of projected changes in climates and assess probable future impacts on biodiversity; to identify climate change adaptation and mitigation measures with significant potential for adverse impact on biodiversity as well as habitat types and species groups most at risk; and to identify policy options, particularly at the EU and the regional level, to prevent and minimise negative impacts from climate change and from climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.

The way up the mountain

An alumna of the School of the Built Environment shares her experience of working in Afghanistan.
 Kate Bowen, Tearfund Area Co-ordinator, Kandahar Afghanistan.



When I first arrived the violence was in the far outlying districts but it has continually crept towards us, the sound of bombs and air assaults have become normal and we hardly flinch at gunfire at night. This is the environment in which we try to provide basic services in health and hygiene education, wells, latrines and hand washing in schools in the city and natural disaster risk reduction with community radio in surrounding districts. The radio will prove to be a great asset to development I believe, because it can educate a largely illiterate rural population, it can reach women who are not permitted to leave their households and it is listened to in many areas which NGOs, International and Afghan alike, cannot reach for fear of the insurgency. The basic level of understanding of health and hygiene is very low. Access to women has diminished constantly and it is rare to be able to work with women outside the city districts and even within the city few NGOs are able to work directly with women. Tearfund uses many child focused approaches in which the messages are taught to the children who are encouraged to take them home to the women of the household and behavioural changes have been seen. Methods such as poetry and song, which are strong in the Afghan traditions are a good way to embed lessons in the heads of the children who sing them at home. Some such songs, extolling the virtues of clean hands to prevent catching worms have even been known to be sung at wedding parties in provinces we have not worked in.



I have been in this position as the sole expat in the Kandahar region for 18 months and have been in Afghanistan a total of almost three years, previously working with a

Tearfund Development partner. I completed the CENDEP MSc in 2003.

There are very few INGOs still working in Kandahar city and the southern region of Afghanistan due to the extremely volatile operating environment. This is by no means a humanitarian emergency situation, it is a slow burning deterioration. Since democracy arrived with the newly elected President Karzai the insurgency has increased in an attempt to destabilise the government and the Taliban, whoever they really are, have also stepped up their campaign of terrorism that now includes the previously unseen suicide bombers. The greatest risk of those of us working in the city and province is of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The priority targets are always international military, in the form of the NATO mandated International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF), some remnant Coalition forces and newly formed Afghan security forces (Army and Police). These are often targeted by Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices, or suicide car bombers, which ram into their convoys. As the targets widen to Afghan government officials the NGO personnel risk also increases as these live in the city among the population with whom we work.

Work is still possible but at high pressure, with many frustrations and restrictions and at a certain level of risk which many find unacceptable. There is hope for Afghanistan, but it will come from inspired and courageous individuals who are willing to stand up against the status quo and choose something different. Even Afghans are subject to peer pressure. There is an Afghan Persian proverb which says: 'There is always more than one way up a mountain.' It may be that a western influenced democracy is not the way up the Afghan mountain, time will tell.



My alumni

A message from the Development Office at Oxford Brookes.

As alumni, you are valued members of the university community. We want to provide you with up to date news and exclusive discounts as well as the opportunity to keep in touch with fellow alumni via our website or by meeting up at events.

We will be relaunching our alumni programme this winter, with a brand new website full of relevant content, news and offers. We will be launching both 'Email' and 'Career Services For Life' as well as a new list of alumni benefits, from discounts at Oxford's Big Bang and Gees restaurants to exclusive online discounts from Blackwell's, who will deliver worldwide.

If you would like to find out more about the new services we have to offer and how you can be involved, follow the link to:
www.brookes.ac.uk/about/support/alumni_new

We look forward to keeping in touch.



Changes are coming to be

In 2008 we're discussing changing the format of *be* magazine, making it even more relevant to our alumni. If you'd like to be involved in a focus group, online survey or simply to send us your thoughts and ideas for the magazine, please contact the school marketing team at the following address:

Built Environment Marketing Team
 A102, School of the Built Environment
 Oxford Brookes University
 Headington Campus
 Oxford.
 OX3 0BP

One of the proposed changes is that as well as being available on our school website, you could choose to receive *be* magazine by email as a PDF. If you'd like to sign up for this service please contact be_marketing@brookes.ac.uk with your current email address.

Share your stories

Are you one of the School of the Built Environment's alumni?
Do you have a story to share about your life and career after university?
Do you work for an organisation or charity that you think would interest our readers?

Our alumni are scattered across the world in a wide variety of professions and roles. We'd like to know more about you and where your qualifications have taken you. The stories you share with us will help to inspire our current students and encourage them to realise their own goals and dreams. From CEOs of corporations to charity workers, we want to know what's happened in your life since university and what you're doing today.

Number 10

Melissa Goodacre works for Oxfordshire County Council in Transport Planning and in May 2007 was invited to Downing Street as part of an event to thank local government workers for their contributions and successes.



New books

The Politics of Making

Edited by Mark Swenarton,
Igea Troiani and Helena Webster
Published by Taylor and Francis (2007)
ISBN-13: 978-0-415-43101-9



A unique collection of contemporary writings, this book explores the politics involved in the making and experiencing of architecture and cities from a crosscultural and global perspective. Taking a broad view of the word 'politics', the essays address a range of questions, including: What is the relationship between politics and the making of space? What role has theory played in reinforcing or resisting political power? What are the political difficulties associated with working relationships? Do the products of our making construct our identity or liberate us? A timely volume, focusing on an interdisciplinary debate on the politics of making, this is valuable reading for all students, professionals and academics interested or working in architectural theory.

Social Research Methods

by Nicholas Walliman
Published by Sage (2006)
ISBN-13: 978-1412910620

SAGE Course Companions are an exciting new series from Sage offering students an insider's guide into how to make the most of their undergraduate courses and extend their understanding of key concepts covered in their course. Course Companions are designed to augment, rather than replace, existing textbooks. Social Research Methods provides student readers with essential help with their research project, with revising for their course exams, preparing and writing course assessment materials, and enhancing and progressing their knowledge and thinking skills in line with requirements on Research Methods courses. It is an essential tool to taking learning and understanding to new levels and in new directions that are the key to success at undergraduate level.

Sustainable Brownfield Regeneration: Liveable Places from Problem Spaces

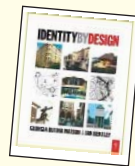
(Paperback)
Edited by Tim Dixon, David Lerner, Mike Raco and Philip Catney
Published by Blackwell (2007)
ISBN-13: 978-1405144032

Brownfield regeneration has become a major policy driver in the UK and other developed countries. Bringing brownfield sites back into active use has taken on a new urgency amongst policy makers, developers and other stakeholders in the development process. The book is based on research completed within the EPSRC SUBR:IM programme in which OISD was a key partner.

This book assesses the effectiveness of different types of regeneration policy by identifying best practice. It also examines ways in which science and social science research disciplines can be brought together to help solve brownfield regeneration issues.

Identity by Design

by Georgia Butina-Watson and Ian Bentley
Published by Architectural Press (2007)
ISBN-13: 978-0750647670



In a world of increasing globalisation, where one high street becomes interchangeable with the next, 'Identity by Design' addresses the idea of placemaking and the concept of identity, looking at how these things can be considered as an integral part of the design process.

Structured around a series of case studies including Prague, Mexico, Malaysia, Boston and other cases, the authors discuss an array of design approaches to explain and define the complex interrelated concepts. The concluding sections of the book suggest ideas for practical application in future design processes. With full colour images throughout, this book takes the discussion of place-identity to the next level, and will be valuable reading for all architects, urban designers, planners and landscape architects. This book helps you: learn about the current debates regarding how design affects place-identity; understand the processes through which place identity is formed and the role which designers play in these processes; and gain a practical insight, through international case studies, into the kinds of creative design approaches which can be applied to the development of place.

Conferences

Friday 25 January 2008

Designs on the Planet: studio culture and the challenge of climate change

Architects are now expected to be on top of the climate change agenda – but many design tutors in schools fear that design quality will be the loser if sustainability assumes too much importance in the studio. This one-day workshop at Oxford Brookes University will explore ways in which the design studio can maintain and strengthen its design ambitions while also introducing students to the elements of sustainable design. The workshop is open to all design tutors and heads of schools. The aims are to explore general issues and approaches and also to come up with specific resolutions in relation to design studio tutoring and assessment. Phone Karen Hughes on +44 (0) 1865 483560 to make a provisional booking.

12-15 December 2008 IASTE conference

The International Vernacular Architecture Unit at Oxford Brookes University is delighted to act as local host for the 11th Conference of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE): 'Interrogating Tradition: Epistemologies, Fundamentalisms, Regeneration and Practices'. The conference, organised in collaboration with the University of California in Berkeley, will take place at the University of Oxford Examination Schools.

For more information and the Call for Papers, please visit <http://arch.ced.berkeley.edu/research/iaste/2008conference.htm>

To obtain a sponsorship package or exhibition space, please contact: Archer Yates Associates, tel: +44 (0) 1608 731 800, www.archer-yates.co.uk

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

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Short courses

Forthcoming Short Courses (CPD Programme) Contact: Karen Hughes, Short Course Co-ordinator
khughes@brookes.ac.uk t. +44 (0) 1865 483560 f. +44 (0) 1865 483406

Please visit our CPD website:

www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/planning/shortcourses. Here you will find up-to-date information regarding our CPD programmes, publicity brochures and booking details.

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