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OPEN BUILDING PERSPECTIVES

Guest Editor: JIA Beisi, Department of Architecture, The University of Hong Kong

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Any close observer of architectural movements over the last decade cannot overlook one new trend: infrastructuralism. Infrastructuralism shifts the focus of architecture from the static implication of form to the variables of ephemeral events. It identifies with the existence of an invisible reality. World architectural leaders such as Bernard Tschumi, Rem Koolhaas, Stan Allen, Greg Lynn, Toyo Ito, and Dominique Perrault share common qualities in this connection: minimum, moderated, passive and neutral, but flexible and anticipatory, yielding to what might call 'operational' rather than 'formal' effects. A possible dilemma that arises is the question that asks what happens to the remaining operable elements if the architecture itself becomes the infrastructure. Is there any relationship between "infrastructuralism" and the theory of "support" by Habraken first published 40 years ago? What kinds of life patterns can accommodate our age of rapid technological change, global communication penetration, and intensifying multifold cultural exchange? What can the previous 40 years of open housing concept and practice teach us for the future? Tradition is not trash, but a torch to be handed to the future generation. This issue as collection of student works tutored and conducted by Dr. Jia Beisi and his colleagues in Hong Kong. In addition to his writings, studio programs, and introduction to Hong Kong where all the projects are based, this issue represents a collective effort of educators and students to advance Open Building and other new architectural movements into the early 21st century.

No.2 June

HOMELESSNESS – a cross cultural perspective

Guest Edited by Dr. Ayona Datta, Queen's University Belfast

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The questions we want to ask are: How is homelessness stereotyped? How is it represented both spatially and socially? Who enters these spaces of representation and why? How do gender, race, ethnicity, religion, class and culture intersect with the homelessness discourse? What is the role of the built environment professions in all this? How is it possible to design for an inclusive society? How are gender, power and space related to homelessness and how is it possible to design for a socially sustainable built environment? We argue against any polarising claims that points at any single reason. We feel that the most interesting work in this field has tended to stress the varieties of local practice, an abandonment of North/South polarities and hierarchies, and a post disciplinary approach.

No.3 September

HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND BUILDING REGULATIONS

Guest Editor: Henk Visscher, OTB Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies, Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands

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A special issue on 'Housing Management and Building Regulations' to be published in 2004. Market orientation in social housing management has been a policy issue in the Netherlands as well as in many other West European countries. In many European countries governments transfer responsibilities and tasks more and more to the housing sector in search for more effective and efficient management and procedures. The consequences are the abolition of direct financial government support and the reduction of administrative regulations. The role of the government in building regulations and quality care is also changing. Deregulation leads to a focus on essential aspects of health and safety of inhabitants, but the growing importance of sustainability also introduces new requirements. Another development in Europe is the shift of building control tasks from local authorities to the private sector, finally leading to certification of self-control. Further more in the coming years building regulations have to be transformed in a way that they will suitable for urban renewal projects.

In 'Housing management' we concentrate on the development of more business like approaches in stock management, in which social and commercial landlords formulate goals and strategies and anticipate market developments. We ask colleagues from other universities and research centres to deliver scientific contributions on the following topics:

1. Option assessment and appraisal in housing investment;

2. Strategic asset management and technical maintenance;
3. Commercialisation of the social housing sector.

'Building regulations and quality care' concerns the regulations that affect the quality of dwellings and the procedures and instruments to control that quality. The following subthemes will be addressed:

1. Shifting scopes of public building regulations and private law alternatives;
2. Alternative systems of building control in Europe;
3. The application of building regulations for urban renewal projects.

No.4 December

URBAN VILLAGES

Guest Editor: Bridget Franklin, Department of City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK

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The concept of the 'urban village' has existed in the US and the UK since the 1960s, when urban sociologists, such as Gans, adopted the term to describe the continuance in urban settings of the social systems associated with close-knit rural communities. Such urban villages generally consisted of enclaves of migrants who endeavoured to maintain their identity in a seemingly hostile city through strong social and territorial allegiances. The areas in which they settled were generally spatially bounded and characterised by particular styles of dwelling and uses of space, bestowing a unique sense of place and local identity.

More recently this usage of the term urban village has been appropriated in a slightly different guise in the UK, by the Urban Villages Group. Concerns about contemporary urban development led this group to explore the defining characteristics of older parts of cities which were aesthetically pleasing and which seemed to 'work'. They then drew up the defining criteria for urban villages, to include well designed, human scale, mixed use and sustainable urban areas, with a sense of place and community commitment. At the present time developments named urban villages are appearing across the UK, but in fact only a minority conform to the principles established by the Urban Villages Group. In the US, there is a similar movement known as New Urbanism which supports traditional neighbourhood development (TND) and, to a lesser extent, the creation of urban villages.

In the Western world therefore, there is a movement which is both urbanist and nostalgic, which aims to re-create within the city the sense of community and harmony seen as typical of villages. In other parts of the world, urban growth is at a different stage, and it may be therefore, that urban villages resemble more the urban village of Gans, in which populations and existing villages are becoming swallowed up by urban expansion. Thus the term 'urban village' has different connotations and can be constructed in different ways in different places, albeit still conveying some essence of what is meant by that emotive word 'village'.

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No.1 March

OPEN BUILDING IN PERSPECTIVE.

Editor: Nicholas Wilkinson

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This first issue of 2005 contains a selection of some articles from the recent Open Building conference on Sustainable Environment held in Paris at the CSTB headquarters in September 2004. This issue signals the start of the regular publication of material dealing with Open Building projects either as additional articles in theme issues or as full open building issues twice a year. After more than thirty five years of experience Open Building is a recognizable part of mainstream Architecture in housing and in health care and renovation projects found in many different countries of the world. Open Building projects in general show how users are indispensable decision makers in the design process and act as forces of change and adaptability over time.

No.2 June

COMMUNITY ASSET MANAGEMENT – Africa, Asia and India

Guest Editors: Max Theis and Robert Brown, The Max Lock Centre, University of Westminster, London.

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The world's governments have agreed a campaign to cut by half the proportion of people who live in absolute poverty, and to provide access for everyone to basic social services such as primary education and healthcare by the year 2015. Hampering this however is generally poor design and construction, a top-down delivery approach, a lack of life cycle planning and appropriate management and maintenance of these assets, in addition to the enormous shortfall in basic infrastructure itself.

The question is how can these basic services be provided and run so that they continue to contribute to the livelihood of the people using them over the course of the asset's life, and that the longevity of that asset's ability to do so can be extended?

No.3 September

BEYOND RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY: Linking Residential Choice with Urban Change

Guest Editors: Hugo Priemus & Roland Goetgeluk. OTB Institute, University of Delft, The Netherlands.

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Over the past decades, residential mobility has received a good deal of attention in the academic world. However, its mutual relationship with urban change has a more recent history. Even so, an increasing number of academic researchers and policy makers who focus on housing processes and urban transformations realize the importance of linking the two together. This is exactly what this special issue is about. Starting from the perspective of one of the working groups of the European Network for Housing Research – the migration, residential mobility, and housing policy group (<http://www.enhr.ibf.uu.se>), we plan to relate the knowledge on migration and residential mobility to the knowledge of processes of urban change. A range of papers on this topic was presented during the ENHR conference in Cambridge in the summer of 2004.

No.4 December

PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE - SUSTAINABLE HOUSING SOLUTIONS WORLDWIDE

Guest Edited by the: Building and Social Housing Foundation, Coalville, United Kingdom

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For twenty years the World Habitat Award competition organised by the Building and Social Housing Foundation has identified innovative and long-lasting solutions to housing problems faced by countries of the global South as well as the North. Included in this issue are eighteen housing projects which demonstrate successful approaches to some of the most prevalent housing problems in the world today.

The projects are drawn from a range of different contexts. They vary in size from large national programmes to individual projects in small neighbourhoods and address a broad range of housing-related issues. What they have in common is an approach that recognises the value of involving people in the decisions that affect their homes and lives. The approaches used here transcend the divisions of North and South and present concepts and approaches that have proven capacity for transfer.

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No.1 March

MANAGING URBAN DISASTERS

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When naturally triggered hazards – such as flooding, earthquakes, hurricanes or landslides – strike in urban areas, the effects can be more disastrous than in other environments. In many cities, disasters conspire with rapid and unplanned urbanization, creating dangerous situations of vulnerability, especially for around 1,2 billion poor that live worldwide on disaster-prone land in badly built shelters. Documents like the UN Habitat agenda call for a range of measures to reduce risk. Nevertheless, there are few examples of such approaches and existing disaster studies as well as most agencies, donors and policy makers still focus mainly on rural areas. In this context, the compendium of articles in the special OHI-issue seeks to identify and demonstrate initiatives that mainstream risk reduction within all sectors of urban development, not only protecting lives but also reducing poverty. Based on the thinking that emergency assistance, reconstruction, mitigation and development aid do not have to be seen as conflicting, independent principles, the articles can cover all the mentioned working fields – but only if active risk reduction is integrated within the concrete initiatives. These can be realized by local or external, non-governmental or governmental organizations, as well as from private sectors. Articles discuss questions regarding the factors that determine the vulnerability or resilience of cities, and demonstrate concrete initiatives in the field of housing and urban development that can reduce the risk of low-income settlements for natural disasters. Topics included here are appropriate housing design, construction techniques, infrastructure improvements, urban management, policies and codes, as well as related advocacy campaigns, institutional strategies, methods and tools. The special interest of “Handling Urban Disasters” lies in demonstrating best practices from Africa, Asia and Latin America with new integrated approaches to risk reduction, that link different levels/actors and do not focus only on technical questions.

No.2 June

OPEN BUILDING IN EDUCATION

Guest Editor: Prof. JIA Beisi, University of Hong Kong.

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Housing courses, housing studio projects and housing-related training programs have been key parts of architectural curricula worldwide. In some schools 'housing' is the subject of core or basic courses. This is not simply because housing remains the largest construction sector in many countries; on a more fundamental level, housing represents the intimate relationship between human activity and built form. However housing design education often falls short of social reality. Design studios regularly produce static objects which do not reflect changing social processes behind habitat formation. The problem lies in a limited understanding of design. Open Housing advances this understanding a step further by redefining housing design as both process and object. It is about design for uncertainty while integrating new technologies. In order to accommodate this development, researchers, promoters, educators and designers will need to adopt new teaching methods. This issue of Open House provides a platform where new teaching experiences and experiments about Open Housing can be shared. The following topics are not exclusive: Design for change, Housing education, Studio teaching methodology, Open housing education in history, Studio work and evaluation

No.3 September

DESIGN STUDIO TEACHING PRACTICES – Between Traditional, Revolutionary & Virtual Models

Guest Editor: Ashraf Salama, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals-KFUPM.

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This issue of OHI explores studio teaching practices by investigating pedagogical aspects that associate different studio teaching models; traditional, revolutionary, and virtual. The conventional model represents studio teaching that follows the educational system of the Beaux-Arts and later the Bauhaus that primarily adopts the mastery-mystery and showingtelling modes of teaching. The revolutionary model represents a number of alternative attempts that aimed at reshaping the educational process in the studio by introducing new concepts and theories including Piaget's theory of knowledge assimilation-accommodation, Kolb's theory of experiential learning, and other teaching mechanisms. The virtual design studio represents the recent advances in CAD and visualization, combined with technologies to communicate images, data, and simulated live actions. Interestingly, none of the models has replaced another; the three models coexist now in most schools of architecture around the world either as distinct unique models or integrated to form new models.

Research papers in this issue will introduce cases that shed light on paradigmatic shifts in studio teaching practices in the developed and the developing worlds. Papers may reflect on a wide spectrum of studio types including architectural, interior, landscape, urban, and community design studios. While some papers will place emphasis on creativity and social responsibility as integral components in studio teaching, others will explore dialectic relationships between contents, methods, teaching/learning styles; process-product mechanisms; problem representations vs. exploring solutions; competition vs. collaboration; and the tools utilized by studio educators to achieve their studio teaching objectives.

No.4 December

CULTURE, SPACE & TIME: Traditional Environments

Guest Editors: Hulya Turgut, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey

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Rapid change in living conditions and the contradictions between global world culture and local cultures create new paradigms and new dimensions about culture-space interactions. This transition can be exemplified through examples of traditional environments and brings out new developments in both theory and practice. A vital issue for the field is therefore the need of a new kind of database for planning and designing in traditional environments. The new millennium, with new strategies and paradigms, is an appropriate time to review theories, concepts and methods of culture-space studies. Within this context, theoretical and applied research studies at various scales of traditional environments should be examined and evaluated. With these aims, the international symposium titled "Traditional Environments In A New Millennium: Defining Principles And Professional Practice" was jointly

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No.1 March

THE EFFECTS OF CAD TOOLS ON THE DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Guest Editor: Dr.Karim Hadjri, United Arab Emirates University, El Ain, U.A.E.

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Computer Aided Design (CAD) made its appearance a few decades ago thanks to the aerospace and car industry. Within the last decade, there has been a proliferation of CAD package providers, which made CAD systems widespread and easily accessible to schools of architecture and engineering throughout the globe. This includes Computer Aided Architectural Design (CAAD) packages, Three-Dimensional Modelling and Virtual Reality software applications. There are also Geographic Information Systems (GIS) which are increasingly used in design and development areas such urban and regional planning and environmental impact assessment, in addition to transportation studies and remote sensing using Satellite Imaging.

No.2 June

ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION - Alternative Ways for Teaching & Learning Architectural Education.

Guest Editors: Munevver Ozgur Dinand & Yonca Hurol, Eastern Mediterranean University, N.Cyprus

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The origins of education go back to military and religious forms of education. The undemocratic character of education, which depends on these origins, still exists, even though there have been and still are and will be the invaluable efforts of educators trying to find out new ways of balancing permanence and change in order to be in the service of more democratic relationships between the teachers and those being taught. The contemporary idea of "student based education" was invented in order to make a democratic response to the contemporary problems of education. These went under the banner of such as "continuous change" because of the political-economic demands, of multiplicity of world-views, multi-cultural education and the lack of concentration of students who are subjected to extreme environmental stimuli. The position of architectural education within this portrait should be studied separately as in the case of all types of education. The permanence of the traditional education of the architect as an artist of special buildings and monuments, within contemporary architectural design education is being criticized negatively for many reasons. This is the ignorance of some of the basics of practical every day architecture, such as a need for the distribution of responsibilities in the building process, forming teams with other professions, sharing the same values with them and more importantly handling the issues of change and transformation in buildings. The hidden traditional characteristics, which still survive within the contemporary architectural design education, also bring forth hierarchical differences between the people who are involved with architectural education, besides bringing forth product based "artistic" education, rather than "learning." The jury system, which is used for the "evaluation" of student projects, is a kind of ceremony, which displays the anti-democratic traditional characteristics of architectural design education.

The relationship between the teachers and students of architectural design education does not allow any equal dialogue, let alone any democratic participation and sharing of values between students. However, the ongoing social transformation of democratisation requires everyone as a "learner" and to think in the alternative ways of others.

Whether the reason depends on practical needs or the realization of human ideals, it is of the utmost necessity and importance that we work further in developing our ideas for alternative education formats for architectural design. This competition is aimed at helping to combine the practical needs with human ideals on the way to achieve a more applicable and democratic architectural education.

No.3 September

METHODOLOGIES IN HOUSING RESEARCH

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A selection of papers from the book Methodologies in Housing Research from the conference of the same title held at the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, in September 2003. The papers presented here is a result of a process of selection from the book and conference contributions. In the first place two coordinators of each workshop made the first selection of papers for the book. Thereafter the editors, in

cooperation with others, reviewed the papers. One criteria for selection was to secure a variety of methods and to avoid overlaps. A collection of selected articles as such, combines some advantages in comparison to similar books in the same subject, especially if the subject is as large as housing research. Rather than presenting a research world in unity, it combines diverse approaches to research and creates a more ambiguous but more open ended and deep research understanding. The selected articles cover the following subjects: Methodologies in contemporary housing research, The perspective of "inquiry." Case study methodology, Participant observation, Paired comparisons, The use of multi-dimensional methodologies, Home environment for elderly, Cross-national housing research, Consultation methodologies, Visual analysis, Analysis of space, Income generation, Welfare state regimes, Housing vacancy and urban shrinkage, Developments of computer models, Use of computational simulations, Internet based housing research, Measuring change in housing areas, Integrated research methods and philosophical questioning, Generalisations in housing research, and Less structured data.