Editorial

URBAN DESIGN *International* (2005) 10, 67–68. doi:10.1057/palgrave.udi.9000143

From its inception URBAN DESIGN *International* set out to present the best of the new work from research, teaching and practice and, as its name declares, to debate this work in an international context. The papers that make up this issue reflect these aims, with contributions by academics, researchers and practitioners from at least four countries. The contributions are diverse – but if there is a discernible theme linking the papers it is the role of urban design in political, social, spatial and economic regeneration. The papers are not uncritical – the role and uses of urban design and urban designers in the contested and competitive contexts of urban development and redevelopment are critically reviewed. This is welcome in an age of self aggrandising city branding and promotion, and highly necessary to qualify the deluge of good practice guidance.

The first paper in this issue considers the role and use of urban design in the contexts of globalisation, 'glocalisation' and nationalism. The authors, Hatuka and Forsyth, review the way in which Western urban design concepts have been used during colonial times and, more recently, in design schemes for Rothschild Boulevards in Tel Aviv. They propose that, in using these concepts, the city's leaders have attempted to be part of Western culture while at the same time have tried to develop and adjust a locally contested notion of 'place'. Urban design schemes have been used, here and elsewhere, in the process of demarcation of a political-spatial order through the organisation and regulation of urban space. By focusing on one public space, the authors present a power triangle of 'regime', 'means' and 'inhabitants' and consider how it has affected decision-making in the design of this part of the city. In their conclusions, Hatuka and Forsyth note that cultural 'glocalisation' in Tel Aviv, as in many other places, was intended to guarantee a national identity that would secure the city's place in the modern world. However, as the political economy is managed by the dominant groups in society the lack of consideration given to the inhabitants in

this power triangle will tend to give priority to the global over the local.

One of the original intentions of the journal was, and continues to be, the dissemination of reflective practice. The second paper is the result of a collaboration between an architect and a consultant, Alan Hudson and Tim Evans, who have been involved in the *HeART of Slough* regeneration initiative. In 2000, with the support of an outside agency, Slough Borough Council developed a programme of consultation and action to make significant improvements in the town centre. Long stung by John Betjeman's invitation to 'Come, friendly bombs, and fall on Slough', the Borough Council its considerable town centre land holding to develop a phased transformation involving 1500 new homes, 60,000 square metres of office space, a transport interchange, together with arts, cultural and educational facilities. The paper reviews the process and progress of the initiative and highlights critical issues in the delivery of such programmes.

The third paper by Muge Akkar addresses the declining 'publicness' of contemporary public space in a post-industrial city. The research uses a case study of the Grey's Monument area in Newcastle upon Tyne in northeast England to explore this claim. Three dimensions of this recently refurbished city centre space are analysed, 'access', 'actors' and 'interest', in an attempt to assess changing degrees of publicness before and after refurbishment. The study confirms trends that have been noted elsewhere and concludes that although the refurbishment scheme has produced a strong visual image and identity for the space it has also resulted in a reduced level of actual and perceived publicness.

The reasons for this are the increasing involvement of the private sector in the management and operation of the space, increasing restrictions on the social accessibility of public space through surveillance and other strict control measures

designed to improve security and protect the image of the space. Akkar concludes that these new urban forms, despite the best intentions of politicians and designers, significantly favour private interests over public interests and question the very definitions of publicness in contemporary cities.

In the final paper of this issue, Haase presents the results of a research programme into the urban transformation of three East German cities. This transformation has taken place against a background of fundamental changes in political economy, demography, technology and life style. Her central thesis is that, as global systems of ensuring social welfare weaken, new demands have arisen to re-embed people and functions in their local living environments. In East Germany, the effects of this transformation are more severe as it is taking place in conditions of spatial enlargement through the process of suburbanisation but accompanied by marked population 'shrinkage'. Using the work of Lefebvre as a conceptual framework Haase develops the notion

of 'topographies of value' within the settled areas of the cities in order to develop a new model for the spatial practices of urban renewal. The paper explains the method developed to identify and situate topographies that are appropriate for the present and future conditions of urban living and working in the particular context of East Germany. Haase contrasts the spatial topographies of the 'inner' and 'outer' areas of the cities and compares their potential for renewal. The results of this research indicate that spatial interconnectedness is vital for successful renewal and that this attribute of space must be supported in order to develop, sustain and enrich local cultural life.

The issue concludes with a controversial *Street-sweeper* by Ivor Samuels, which questions the primacy of high density as the new yardstick by which to measure the delivery of new housing.

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