Repositioning the Landscape in Architecture: Towards Innovative Research & Design Processes for Site Planning in Uncertain Times

May 5th, 2011
School of Architecture, University of Hawai‘i
Repositioning the Landscape in Architecture: Towards Innovative Research & Design Processes for Site Planning in Uncertain Times

Thanks to the Search Committee for the new positions and the office of Dean Dean Clark Llewellyn for the opportunity to speak in Hawai’i — and to reconnect with the East-West Center.
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Today, there are divergent approaches for building the landscape sustainability initiatives of architecture schools – especially the doctoral programs.
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The approach that I offer today centers on site planning, better integrating a wide range of scales, combined with interdisciplinary research methods.
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“Site planning,” includes concerns for built and ‘unbuilt’ space & a wide range of design, planning, and policy-related interventions and practices for communities.
Engagement in scales is broad from 1:500 to singular, built structures and outdoor sites to neighbourhood texture to planning policy and its impact on-the-ground.
bound set of scale

1:500
conventional, urban planning
site
1:50,000
urban design
state, regional, national, global
1:5,000,000
urban planning for
sustainability
Sustainability challenges:
- organizations & communities in the Washington
  & disaster (causing & response) region
- war & conflict
- resource shortage & crises (causing & attenuation)
- depopulation
- economic contracting & shortage of capital & potency
- environmental & economic
  value
- economic development models
- LEED, engineering, legal, urban planning, regional
  strategies & policies
- ecosystem management, integrated real
  biological, habitat, open space, conservation
  heritage, recreation, contemporary culture, community, education
- ecosystem productivity, energy production, infrastructure
I spent much of my life for twenty years in and around Wurster Hall, the College of Environmental Design of the University of California, Berkeley, and left as a retrofit preoccupied the work there for nearly a decade. “Wurster” has almost become a metaphor for the new centrality of site planning in architecture, broader environmental design, and community development.
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My underlying argument presentation is that a number of pressures are driving a shift in work on landscapes & environmental health to a focus on site planning.
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All of the 20th Century preoccupations of landscape architecture, around protection of environmental amenities, continue to be relevant.
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The pressures on landscape architects and planners to equitably respond to the needs of shifting arrays of social groups continue to intensify.
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Three more 21st Century trends are driving the refocusing of landscape architecture, and relationships to broader architecture, back on to site planning.
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While landscape design continues to be a form of contemporary art, aesthetics have diversified with today’s more interesting site-based art weak on site planning.
Successful sustainability initiatives require new forms of site planning that involve relatively high levels of research, care, cognizance, and monitoring.
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Sustainability priorities in architecture increasingly embody concerns for higher levels of conservation, hazards prevention, and public health.
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Expanding conversations on hazards prevention drive new kinds of research and design that re-examine conventional environmental & stakeholders knowledge.
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And new ways to synthesize knowledge about sites and neighbourhoods drive emerging kinds of design processes refocused on sites & neighborhoods.
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This discussion is especially concerned with architectures needed for island communities, cultures and ecosystems.
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What new kinds of knowledge are necessary for expansive kinds of site planning for sustainability and public health (and liveable landscapes) in uncertain times?
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In sharing some of my projects, I want begin to create a list of the kinds of knowledge and conversations you might to further support in the School of Architecture.
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Some contexts and projects where new research methods for
innovative site planning are needed -- especially that
contribute to sustainability
Vancouver & the Pacific Northwest Urban Corridor
The Vancouver Peninsula has some of the highest populations densities and greatest disparities of wealth, consumption, health, and security per square km in Canada.
Vancouver’s first formally planned and permitted green roof combined with housing
some research approaches & design processes for making communities more liveable and sustainable:

✓ sources and provenances of plant material and documentation related to local environments, microclimates and sites;
✓ roof engineering typologies;
✓ roof retrofitting typologies, best practices and standards;
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- agro-ecosystems: ‘permaculture’ versus annuals-driven production (and in between)
- container gardening movements & cultures; garden aesthetics and ‘multiculturalism’;
- ecosystem management and organizational development models for green roofs;
- irrigation, fertility and pest management; and
- urban planning strategies and typologies
Planning, Designing & Developing Entire Sustainable Neighborhoods
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Revisiting ‘Vancouverism’

Arthur Erickson 1955 Proposal for the redevelopment of the West End of Vancouver from the January 2010, Vancouverism exhibit
The term ‘Vancouverism’ was first used widely in a 2005 article in the New York Times.

“The surrounding 40-acre area, much of it opened up after highways damaged in the 1989 earthquake were demolished, is to become San Francisco’s most densely populated neighborhood, based on a planning model known as Vancouverism. Named after the city in British Columbia, Vancouverism is characterized by tall, but widely separated, slender towers interspersed with low-rise buildings, public spaces, small parks and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and facades to minimize the impact of a high-density population.”

“The problem of our inability to truly understand the city can be summed up in a sole name: Vancouver. A peaceful Canadian city, which has become the model, in the absence of others, of the more or less correct city, more or less friendly...” Rem Koolhaas 2009

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1 Rem Koolhaas, 2009. 'All architectures are survivors'. arq (Madrid) (December 21, 2009)
http://www.arq.es/anomalies.php?arq=rem_koolhaas_all_architectures_are_survivors&language=en
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from shangri-la to shangri-la, 2010, Vancouver by Ken Lum
last day of Digital Natives billboard project, Snaaq, Vancouver 1 May 2011
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Vancouver’s Olympic Village in the months before its completion in early 2010. This new neighbourhood is the largest single sustainability project so far seen in North America involving $500 to $700 million of public and private financing. With falling sales and prices, the City of Vancouver could lose $200 to $300 million of taxpayer money – putting other city programs and infrastructure at risk for a decade or more.
Vancouver’s Olympic Village: From blessing to burden
The Vancouver mayor rode into office on a wave of public anger over the city’s involvement in the massive Olympic Village project. Yet he could very well be punished at the polls himself in a year’s time if taxpayers decide once again to vent their anger over the issue.

The saga surrounding the City of Vancouver’s involvement in the former Olympic athletes village, now a condominium project, has been an unmitigated disaster.

To be fair, Mr. Robertson inherited this mess and is doing his best to clean it up. On Thursday, he went public with where things stand and confirmed that the city will go after the assets of the developer – Millennium Development Corp. – if need be to protect taxpayer dollars.

What Mr. Robertson didn’t say, because he can’t, is that he is sitting on a property appraisal of the Olympic Village that is grotesquely ugly. Here is the picture: Millennium owes the city $731-million, which includes $170-million for the land on which the project was built. Currently, according to the appraisal the city commissioned, the project isn’t worth anything near that.
Not surprisingly, no one around City Hall wants to talk about underwater mortgages. But I’m reliably informed that the gap between what Millennium owes and what the property is worth today is somewhere between $150-million and $200-million.

City goes after assets of Games developer

FRANCES HULS
VANCOUVER— Special to Globe and Mail Update Published Thursday, Sep. 30, 2010 6:56PM EDT
Last updated Friday, Oct. 01, 2010 12:55AM EDT

150 comments

Vancouver is taking aggressive action to secure the corporate and personal assets worldwide of the Olympic village’s private developer after acknowledging that the developer did not pay the full amount of its first $200-million loan payment to the city.

Although he scrupulously avoided the word “default,” Mayor Gregor Robertson said on Thursday that Millennium Development Corp. paid only $192-million of the first payment due on Aug. 31 and that its failure to come up with the other $8-million through some means other than village condo sales – admittedly sluggish for many reasons – is a serious concern.
Should the very poor share neighbourhoods with the very rich?

FRANCES BULA

VANCOUVER— From Wednesday's Globe and Mail
Published Tuesday, Oct. 05, 2010 10:50PM EDT
Last updated Wednesday, Oct. 06, 2010 11:54PM EDT

Very poor people shouldn’t be mixed with very rich people at the Olympic village or it will affect the price of the still-unsold condos – and eventually hurt taxpayers.

That’s the provocative point of view that a well-known Vancouver development consultant and onetime council candidate has been airing in interviews and blogging
some research topics & design processes for making communities more liveable and sustainable:

- local vernaculars & design histories
- certification programs (building on LEED and Sustainable Landscapes) and more supple sustainability indicators and milestones;
- sustainability auditing (over time);
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✓ financing strategies and methods;
✓ project management;
✓ management, maintenance and training for sustainability technologies;
✓ technology impact assessment;
✓ assessment of technologies and materials in terms of climate and global change
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✓ organizational development for sustainability and ecosystem management;
✓ retrofitting design and reconstruction
✓ technology impact assessment; and
✓ assessment of technologies and materials in terms of climate and global change
Urban environmental history, public art & cultural infrastructure for neighborhood development
False Creek, Vancouver
Lookout (2001) by Kristos Dikeakos and Noel Best
NOT EVEN A MEMORY NOW
Köbberling & Kaltwasser 2010 *The Games are Open* – adjacent to the Olympic Village Neighborhood. There are some serious problems with the site-planning. The binder in the recycled wheat board, which consists of 6% of the total mass, is MDI which will degrade the adjacent habitat restoration areas particularly because of the asphalt underneath the piece recently laid by the artists.
The public art site (central) with Olympic Village (east) and habitat restoration area east and north (circa late-2009)
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some research topics & design processes for making communities more liveable and sustainable:

- research on the environmental impacts of materials;
- environmental impact statements for site-based art;
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✓ documentation of development and permitting of site-based works;
✓ design and construction documentation;
✓ broader and more critical local histories;
✓ teaching life sciences in art schools;
✓ revisiting ‘landart’ theory; and
✓ theory on ‘wetware’ and art that intervenes in ecosystems and gene pools.
Regional Ecosystem Recovery Strategies & Site Planning Spanning Rural and Urban Areas
entire range of Garry Oak Ecosystems

areas with Northern Garry Oak Ecosystems
Landscape design and sand use planning as part of ecosystem recovery strategies requires in-depth stakeholder analysis. Few planners, and fewer biologists, are prepared in their educations for the necessary levels of social science and critical theory.
Conservation planning circa 1980, Mount Maxwell, Salt Spring Island, British Columbia
some research topics & design processes for making communities more liveable and sustainable:

- landscape ecology;
- spatial planning from 1:50 to 1: 5,000;
- environmental histories;
- cultural aspects of landscapes;
- ethnography;
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✓ traditional knowledge;
✓ stakeholder analysis;
✓ legal history and case law;
✓ site planning for species at risk;
✓ control of invasive species;
✓ ecosystem recovery strategies and typologies;
✓ governance and integration of frameworks of site planning for both environmental conservation and community development
Community planning and design (including land use planning) initiated by Native communities
Stelly’s X Road centre from left to right (west to east) with Tsartlip Indian Reserve to the north (upper) and Brentwood Bay, British Columbia bottom half (south-eastern Vancouver Island)
Council of the Haida Nation
Protected Areas

Areas are in approximate hectares

Qanuu Gandii - 80
Qanuu - 290
Kumdis Slough - 1,340
Tsuuguus Gandii - 1,700
Jinanga - 1,790
Qaydngaaw-Qaysun - 2,180
Kunxalaas - 2,780
Gawii Gawagaay - 3,650
Nang Xaldangaas - 5,620
site of a former long-house, ‘Bad-Talk-Town, Dolomite Narrows, Burnaby Island, Gwaii Haanas, Haida Gwaii
some research topics & design processes for making communities more liveable and sustainable:

✓ traditional ethnographies extending to language, knowledge, culture, design, and architectures;
✓ modern histories;
✓ demographics & public health trends;
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✓ modern governance and political histories and related case law;
✓ heritage conservation and restoration;
✓ contemporary culture and contemporary cultural production;
✓ regional economic development strategies
Stakeholder Analysis: Sexual Minorities, Public Space, and Community Development

Homomonumenten, Amsterdam
PUTTENHAM JOURNAL

Here’s the Pub, Church and Field for Public Sex

A mat used by people having sex in a field adjacent to the lay-by on the A31 next to the village of Puttenham.

By SARAH LYALL

Published: October 7, 2010
open space along English Bay on the edge of Stanley Park, Vancouver - an area of conflict between the police and gay men in the 1970s
Reinstating Transgression Conference

REINSTATING TRANSGRESSION: EMERGING POLITICAL ECONOMIES OF QUEER SPACE

CONFERENCE GOALS

Mindful of the conference commitment to build tighter connections between political economy, queer theory, and studies of sexual and spatial transgression, presentations and discussions at "Reinstating Transgression" will use case studies of neighborhoods and broader metropolitan areas to address two general themes:

- When and why are certain groups and individuals tolerated, often only as exceptions, while others are reconfirmed as deviant, and often made abject, re-marginalized by the state often through less overly repressive means?

- How are more privileged and better-protected strata of sexual minorities competing with and sometimes being used by other local interests, and by aspects of state authority, in contest with more vulnerable social groups, e.g. the impoverished, the disabled, migrants and natives?

WHEN/WHERE
April 17-18, 2010
American University,
Washington, DC

(Conjointed with the annual
Lavender Languages & Linguistics
Conference, April 16-17)

***AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD
(All revised 4/12)
Conference Program
Conference Abstracts
Confirmed Contributors

SUBMIT ABSTRACTS

Please submit abstracts for conference presentations to Gordon Brent Ingram by March 15:
studio@gordonbrentingram.ca

The presentations in the colloquium are intended for a university press anthology. Discussion at this colloquium will support contributors in developing their papers into chapters for the book.

Questions?
Please contact:
Gordon Brent Ingram
studio@gordonbrentingram.ca

William L. Leap
wlm@american.edu

AU Anthropology
202-885-1830
some research topics & design processes for making communities more liveable and sustainable:

✓ cultural studies & critical social theory;
✓ demographics & public health trends;
✓ stakeholder analysis;
✓ design programming;
✓ urban planning and design theory related to decision-making and political economy
Image, text & ideology in the public open spaces of Rome

Piazza Della Rotonda
some research topics & design processes for making communities more liveable and sustainable:

✓ cultural studies & critical social theory especially around sense of place;
✓ street art and public art;
✓ restoration and control of vandalism;
✓ public communication venues & urban design (and stakeholder analysis);
✓ design programming;
The Sahel region of West Africa
The Sahel region of West Africa: Vernacular and design adaptations to desertification
some research topics & design processes for making communities more liveable and sustainable:

✓ environmental histories;
✓ studies of local vernacular designs and sustainability practices;
✓ demographics & public health trends; and
✓ contemporary responses to changing environments
The Arabian / Persian Gulf Region
Dubai
Hajar Mountains which are mostly in Oman
The Persian Gulf Region: Conservation of Heritage Neighborhoods & Ecological Infrastructure
The contrasting treatments of two of the older neighborhoods of Dubai, Bastakaya and Satwa, illustrates the tremendous pressures to discard traditional ecological (and social) infrastructure in favor of volatile global relationships.
Misfat Al A'brayeen, Hajar Mountains, Oman – a community that has proudly maintained traditional sustainability infrastructure and related knowledge.
some research topics & design processes for making communities more liveable and sustainable:

✓ local building and garden vernaculars and sustainability practices;
✓ historical and contemporary design and planning frameworks; and
✓ cultural studies and history
The Gulf Region: Environmental planning & design with Conflicted Jurisdictions
Makbarat al Sahabi, a historic battlefield and cemetery straddling the border of the United Arab Emirates and Oman which is of considerable significance in the early development of Islam.
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some research topics & design processes for making communities more liveable and sustainable:
✓ heritage landscape theory and precedents;
✓ local religious and cultural history;
✓ political and jurisdictional history;
✓ contemporary governance and decision-making frameworks
Conservation of heritage landscapes and forest, Salt Range, Punjab, Pakistan

Salt Range, north-western Punjab Province, Pakistan (lower half of satellite image) squeezed between two ‘megacities’: Lahore(-Amritsar) and Rawalpindi-Islamabad
South Asia: Learning from and Restoring Mughal Gardens and Sustainability Practices
The irrigation system of the gardens of Humayan’s Tomb in New Delhi was recently reconstructed by a foundation funded by the Aga Khan Foundation.
Fatehpur Sikri, Uttar Pradesh, the celebrated planned capital of the Mughal Empire that was abandoned after fourteen years.
The former lakebed that was the water source for the city of Fatehpur Sikri. Its drying is one factor in the abandonment of the city.
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some research topics & design processes for making communities more liveable and sustainable:

- forest and landscape ecology;
- architectural and cultural history;
- contemporary frameworks for decision-making for conservation and restoration;
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Towards sustainability architectures for islands
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Island Communities: Community-based conservation initiatives

Fergusson Island, D’Entrecasteaux Archipelago, Papua New Guinea
traditional healer also engaged in locally-based land use planning and conservation initiatives, Matatonan, Siberut, Sumatera Barat, Indonesia, 1988

guardian & local administrator, Lake Lavu Conservation Area, Fergusson Island, Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea, 1989
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some research topics & design processes for making communities more liveable and sustainable:
✓ island ecology;
✓ ethnographies of traditional knowledge and local land management and design practices;
✓ contemporary institutional histories and related law;
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- conservation planning theory;
- stakeholder analysis;
- modeling environmental change;
- trade-off analysis;
- planning and design at multiple scales;
- monitoring and auditing;
- political economy, governance, and organizational development
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Island Communities: Responses to global change & hazard risk
Archipel des Tuamotu, French Polynesia, 19 May, 2010
modeling environmental change;
modeling for public health risks;
retrofitting architecture and infrastructure;
stakeholder analysis;
trade-off analysis; and
spatial planning and design at multiple scales
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- demographics & public health trends;
- monitoring and auditing related to environmental and public health risk factors;
- retrofitting in response to unacceptable levels of risk to public health and wellbeing
- political economy, governance, and organizational development
University courses developed & taught

Graduate (postgraduate) = **
Undergraduate = *
Primarily lecture = Δ
Seminar = *
Study (more recently combined with digital tools) = /
Field instruction (a significant portion of the total course was taught in field conditions) = @

Taught
- Biodiversity Conservation, Local Communities & Sustainable Development (2005)**Δ*
- Ecological Design for Sustainable Communities (2006) */** Δ/
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Biodiversity Conservation (2006) **Δ*
- Site Planning Theory and Methods (2003, 2004)**Δ*
- Land Use Planning (2003, 2004)**Δ*
- Urban Ecosystem Management & Restoration (2001, 2002)**Δ*
- Forest Biodiversity Assessment and Conservation (1999, 2000)**Δ*
- Forest Degradation and Rehabilitation (1999, 2000)**Δ*
- Contemporary Theory in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning (1998)**Δ*
- Open Space Planning (1989 – 1994) *Δ*
- Forest and Land Use History (1993, 1994) *
- Visual Resources Management (1989 – 1994) *Δ*
- Urban Environmental Planning (1992 – 1994) *Δ*
- Ecological Analysis (1989 – 1994) **Δ*
- The Idea of Planning (1989) *Δ*
- Environmental Assessment (1989) *Δ*
- Environmental Impact Analysis (1987-1989)**Δ*
- Habitat Protection and Restoration (1987 – 1989)**Δ*
- Environmental Systems Design and Management (1987 – 1989) **Δ*
being developed

- Third World Cities: Communities, Ecosystems & Environmental Management **Δ⊗
- Environmental History: Methods & Analysis**∞
- Traditional Knowledge for Environmental Management**Δ.⊗
- Public Art & Neighbourhood Development**ΔΔ.
- Urban Environmental Design for Social Equity & Inclusion*/** Δ∞
- Theories & Practices of Environmental Justice**∞
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Conclusions: Nurturing innovative research & design for sustainable communities in architecture schools
The kinds of site planning of landscapes and neighbourhoods necessary for adequately serving communities, including minimizing risks of hazards and threats to public health, require that architects engage in a wider range of disciplines.

March 1964 tsunami damage in Port Alberni, Vancouver Island, British Columbia
In these uncertain times, policy, planning, and design are only as effective as the extent of the implementation, construction, and management at the site level. In this way, the pressures for effective landscape architecture and urban design are being re-socialized as decision-makers are increasingly concerned about protecting communities from hazards and threats to public health.
The crisis ideograph in Mandarin consists of the character for danger followed by that of opportunity as in ‘danger-opportunity’.

危機
To belabour the clichés of that celebrated Chinese ideogram for crisis, the individuals who come to archawai’i to explore the landscape and environmental health position(s) are presenting various strategies on how to prepare professionals and scholars to better turn intensifying ‘crises’ into ‘opportunities’.
In closing, I want to leave you with an image, that can be something of a metaphoric goal for designers and planners for the coming decade, from a painting that is now being exhibited in Chicago. The Norwegian painter, Edvard Munch is most known for his iconic 1893 painting, *The Scream*. The painting has also become symbolic for the kind of chaos and despair that designers and planners attempt to alleviate and preclude.
Edvard Munch, The Scream, 1893
But Munch painted a wide range of experiences. Less than a year before painting The Scream, he portrayed a far different vision in “Kiss By The Window.” The world of “Kiss By the Window” is safe, communitarian, and allows for an array of public space. But that ‘space’ was probably not so affluent in terms of today’s consumer society.
Edvard Munch, Kiss by the Window, 1892
In the coming years, these kinds of modest goals for liveability and community will be as central to the design of sustainable communities as new technologies and expensive initiatives.
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This presentation is posted at www.gordonbrentingram.ca.

email: studio@gordonbrentingram.ca