

THE ROLE OF HERITAGE AND FUTURE IN URBAN CHANGE

EVALUATION OF PART II PRESENT: CONSTANT PROCESS OF CHANGE

- The visits, tutor presentations and young planners projects were geared towards exploring what role regeneration and new developments were able to play respectively or in common in bringing about sustainable urban change to prepare the city of tomorrow for future generations.
- The focus on projects which were designed to generate structural change at intra-urban scale was a logical progression from planning physical and social transformation processes which would enable specific urban places to improve or reinvent their heritage value. There is obviously no neat separation between these two urban interventions and most examples presented, as well as student proposals combined these two urban development objectives.
- An unresolved issue was that of urban change. Some equated it to constant movement akin to the movement of particles in chaos theory, whilst others considered that the pace of urban change was neither as intense nor as rapid. Also they identified two types of change, either driven by natural organic processes mainly outside governance control, or by wilful political intervention, translated into strategies and operational programmes by the professionals of the built environment on the one hand and the development industry on the other hand. Both types of change did not take place all the time and in every part of the city and beyond. Quite the reverse. What did not change signified what was changing, gave it its meaning, its dynamic and its controversial character at times. Moreover, the political standpoint, the economic context varying from free market to social market economies and the position of the development industry, together with investment opportunities were in constant interplay, sometimes in harmony and sometimes in contradiction.
- While changes due to policy and planning strategies were relatively easy to identify, although more difficult to evaluate in terms of their short term and longer term implications, spontaneous or inherent changes were far

more difficult to capture. It is not surprising, therefore, that most academic studies presented at the EUSS were focusing on understanding these complex processes of urban change. They ranged from descriptive and proscriptive approaches to those viewed from a specific economic and political standpoint. Others concentrated on particular functional aspects, such as ecological excellence, historic trajectories and their mark on the physical fabric, or the link between such urban change and the need of new, place-specific governance. The urban development processes analysed also varied in scale. Some focused on a specific part of a city being regenerated, while others concentrated on broader citywide strategies, achieved through structuring elements. They included changes in the transportation network, location strategy for the transformation of the city economy or opportunities of international included pulsar effects to regenerate large derelict areas and thereby to rebalance spatial city dysfunctions.

There were remarkable spin offs from these diverse experiences and their interpretation onto the work of the young professionals. They found it more challenging to deal with the outer ring, as it was not yet completed and thus still in a diffuse conceptual state with little consideration about the spatial implications along the proposed road or on the wider transportation network. What was clear was that the ring which cut through the city core represented a generic problem of urban intervention, whereby conflicting demands on such a space could not be accommodated without compromise and without some winners and losers. This raised the issue of legitimacy and whose decision it should ultimately be to impose such changes with unavoidable uneven repercussions. Finally, the cultural consequences of such urban change were highlighted and considered equally important as physical and material change, owing to their effect on the image and feel of the city, as well as on its quality of life.

SALIENT POINTS FROM THE OUTSIDE

LESSON LEARNT FROM TUTOR PAPERS PRESENTED IN PART 2

- Several papers concentrated on change initiated by different actors. They included specific points of view from landowners, developers and investors (RH), as well as the more traditional approach of spatial planners (PD); some focused on small sustainable changes decided in participation with those concerned (MM & SN); some looked at larger scale renewal programmes established at speed to prevent a void which could be misused for purposes unsuitable for the city (PD). At that pace, modelling can provide ideas for scenarios and their relative robustness (US).
- Taking advantage of pulsar effects – which the city of Wrocław intends to do with EURO 2012 as well as bidding for 2016 European Capital of Culture – brought two main advantages which were confirmed subsequently: the regeneration of a very large deprived area and a new governance structure which was able to apply its expertise and generate income for the city in the future (JL). Wrocław should take advantage of such governance opportunities to manage not only its pulsar effects but to redress the weaknesses of its metropolitan and city – region development strategies.
- The ingenious transformation processes proposed for industrial cities (GC) or traditional ports (PL) which deliberately do not turn their back on their past can provide inspiration for Wrocław as well, especially the way these cities have managed to regenerate not only their physical heritage but also a very differentiated socio-cultural fabric which led to the revival of civic pride.
- The comparison between the historic evolution of Wrocław and a much larger capital and the implication of these current city structures for opportunities to adapt them to a much more interdependent world was carrying lessons also for the host city (FK).

The less tangible issues of authenticity, identity and sense of belonging were discussed in depth, together with their repercussion on design strategies which had to avoid standardisation and covert privatisation of the public realm, so easily imposed by the globalisation process. Only genuine integrated regeneration encompassing physical-material as well as socio-cultural dimensions will make the development process a long term success.

SUMMARY OF YOUNG PLANNERS FINDINGS

FROM PROJECTS ON DSR & WZ IN PART 2 PRESENT: CONSTANT PROCESS OF CHANGE

The young planners had a challenging task in transforming and regenerating two busy roads accommodating public and private transport, considering that they recognised the need to reconcile the conflicts between movements and liveable spaces alongside.

The WZ road which provides access to the core city fabric is cutting through it and separating it from its surrounding dense urban area. The young planners acknowledged the importance to retain the multi-modal traffic flows and access points to keep the city centre alive. Thus they attributed priorities to competing uses while composing with the diverse characteristics of the road and its main crossings. They identified central cultural destinations, connected them across the road with ingenious designs and invented new uses for pedestrian flows along the road, sheltered by new tree lines.

The downtown southern road (DSR) could be a noisy, polluting but incomplete 4-6 lane ring road designated to curb traffic congestion. It is severing the inner city from the adjacent urban expansion. The young planners proposed design solutions for critical points which would complete and transform this wide avenue into a user friendly boulevard and attenuate adverse effects on adjacent areas. Basing design interventions on sound to establish adjacent uses undisturbed by traffic noise was an original idea.

FUTURE: INTRODUCTION TO PART 3 TRANSFORMATION AT CITY LEVEL

- The third and final part of the European Urban Summer School presented the most ambitious challenge. How to understand cities and their dynamic as a whole? How to detect, understand and anticipate change, and how to assess its favourable or adverse impacts on the city as a whole, its wider region, but also on particular areas, people and their livelihood? Both the heritage and the regeneration question are important in this discussion, together with how to balance them against each other to the benefit of the city as a whole and its longer term future which should aim to become sustainable.
- Several approaches can be taken to this complex task. Politicians would approach it by imagining a vision, a long term perspective, a dream as Tomasz Ossowicz chose to call his idea of the future of his city. Such visions can emphasise the visual physical picture of the city, the image it would project to

the world in which it needs to compete. From a standpoint of the city and its options for the future, its decision makers have to make choices at present to secure the future prosperity of the city, but nobody can really know the longer term repercussions of these choices. Thus imagining the future of the city is an exciting business but one which carries large risks and responsibilities. How to limit the possibility of getting it wrong, especially in current turbulent times with their rapid and unpredictable changes? Knowledge and understanding of both the present and the past of the city are certainly an important investment into future development strategies. Imagining them as loose frameworks sufficiently flexible to be adapted to new demands and discoveries is another way of preparing for new eventualities. Finding a balance between decisions which can be implemented with confidence and others which may safely be left to decide at future dates constitutes the art of the possible for politicians and the professionals of the built environment. This may demand both imagination and humility, trust in others to give views and advice, as well as robust governance structures which can accommodate implementation as well as adaptation.

A city is not an island and many influences come from the outside and will remain beyond the control of the city stakeholders and their actions. Some are tempting, especially in the current climate of competition between cities in a globalising world, when marketing, city branding and publicising are the going currency. While such tactics may be unavoidable, nothing replaces solid knowledge, intellectual understanding, as well as a feel and emotional empathy with one's city to imagine a successful and sustainable future for the city and its current inhabitants, as well as its newcomers which will bring the new blood not only to keep it alive but to make it thrive.

Cities have undergone enormous change over recent years, not least in terms of scale and speed of change. While plans are made up and futures are imagined cities are continuously changing

and any static image will be out of date. Thus new ways of representation have to be invented, relying on constantly innovating tools and technologies.

- A sign of strength is to be single minded about discovering the city's weaknesses, its dysfunctions and pathologies. Far from hiding them away, they should become part of public debate to trigger ideas from those who have a sense of belonging and ownership of the city and care for its future. Technical knowledge is of the essence, and those who decide about the city future can be assisted by tools of modelling and simulation for policy making, but inspiration can also come from poets and novelists who use the city as their backcloth to their narratives.
- Ultimately it is a matter of coping with the city, not just understanding it. It will never be easy to steer overall spatial and functional development and accommodate and transform the longer term evolution of a city in a sustainable direction, be it by managing its growth, limiting the damage of its decline and remaining vigilant regarding its change. Nothing guarantees success, but putting energy and passion into visions and action can help create a better future for the city and its citizens.

TASKS FOR YOUNG PLANNERS PART 3

The third task was dealing with the complex issue of understanding urban structure and urban growth and exploring what type of contributions to city growth would generate transformations which would lead to a new sustainable urban form in the longer term. <

A comprehensive study visit through the wider city and beyond introduced students and tutors to Wrocław's peculiar city structure with its large housing estates from communist times, underused industrial areas, considerable land reserves, remote villages, urban sprawl and a number of large scale structural interventions under construction which are likely to change the scope and shape of the city structure. <

The young planners were asked to analyse these spatial and possibly economic growth drivers and the new magnets, such as the stadium for EURO 2012, roads of metropolitan importance and the new airport expansion, techno- and business parks on the city fringe and many shopping malls often located on green field sites. From that understanding they were asked to explore what new spatial patterns and layers they would generate, within what cultural and social context, and with what governance. Students were expected to experiment with efficient and sustainable models of growth using Wrocław as their case study. This work was expected to produce ideas, diagrams, governance structures, and general concepts of spatial organisation. <

Meta-spatial strategies were presented and models and simulations, together with applications and interpretations, to assist students in their task of exploring models of dynamic sustainable urban forms. <