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**KEEPING UP WITH PLANNING LITERATURE:
RECENT BOOKS ON
URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN**

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Patsy Healey

As many recent planning graduates will know, there is a continual flow of books published in and around the planning field, from textbooks to major theoretical contributions, and specialist monographs to practice handbooks. Only a small number of these are publicised in the press that planning practitioners have readily available to read. The monthly *Town and Country Planning* does at least have a book reviews section. The weekly *Planning Newsheet* rarely mentions the existence of books.

Yet this planning literature has a significant impact. The planning academics use books to help shape their thinking, both in their research and in their teaching work. Ideas are exchanged through the medium of books. Material which emerges in the form of journal publications is consolidated in the book form. Books provide quick points of reference to journalists and others trying to pick up on a subject quickly. So planning practitioners need to have some idea of what is being discussed in this literature, which might shape how others think about them as well as provide helpful insights for those planning practitioners with time for reflection.

This of course is the problem. There seems so little time for reflection these days, even though the need to such reflection is encouraged in much contemporary professional training and in the RTPI's CPD requirements. There is even a book called *The Reflective Practitioner*¹, which includes planners as an example, though not a very complimentary one. The planning and related literatures these days have a lot to say about the importance of a 'reflexive' capability in order to be able to take the opportunities of our dynamic and confusing age, and not be overwhelmed by the de-stabilising sense of living in perpetual flux. The literature also emphasises the importance of knowledge resources, of all kinds and including consolidated academic ideas and findings, in the quality of planning and governance in the contemporary period.

One way to get an idea of what interesting material there is around to read is to read book reviews. It is these which are missing from *Planning*. As academics, in the Centre for Research in European Urban Environments (CREUE) at Newcastle University, we regularly review books. The book review usually provides at least some idea of what is in the book, as well as some debate on its contents and significance, sometimes in some kind of 'conversation' with other contributions to the field. So the reader of book reviews gets an idea not just of the book, but the field of discussion too. Mostly, these reviews are written for academic journals, which are largely only read by other academics. To help to give practitioners some idea of the planning literature as it has been developing in the 1990s, we thought it would be a useful idea to collect together the reviews we have been doing, and make them available in the form of this Working Paper for the 'Reading Practitioner'.

This collection reviews 26 book. It reflects our own interests in our Research Centre. We have grouped them into sections on European Planning Systems and Practices, British Planning, Planning and Housing, Cities and Design, Conservation, and Planning Theory.

¹ Schon D 1983 *The reflective practitioner* New York, Basic Books

These may seem at first sight very disparate topics. However, reading and reviewing this range feeds into our discussions with each other, with students and with colleagues elsewhere, to give us quite a strong focus in the work we do in our research and teaching.

We hope readers will find this collection a useful introduction to some of the literature and debates in our field. If people read it, then we may produce more collections; unless, of course, book reviews become more common in the planning practice press!

We would like to express our thanks to our Centre Secretary, Yasmin Ibrahim, who put in a lot of effort to bring this collection together. It would not be possible to publish the book reviews in this way, without the permission of the editors and publishers of the journals which commissioned the reviews. We would like therefore to thank the editors and publishers of the following journals for their prompt and positive replies to our requests for copyright clearance: *International Planning Studies*, *Cities*, *Urban Studies*, *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, *Town Planning Review*, *Journal of Urban Design*, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, *Local Environment*.

Since writing these reviews, Geoff Vigar has left us for Leeds Metropolitan University, and Michael Benfield, who successfully defended his PhD in summer 1997, is now working as a consultant in the West Midlands.

SECTION 2

RECENT BOOKS ON EUROPEAN PLANNING SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES

Controlling Development: Certainty and Discretion in Europe, the USA and Hong Kong by Philip Booth, published by London, UCL Press, 1996, 168 pp., £14.95, ISBN 1-85728-585-9

Review by Geoff Vigar

(published in *International Planning Studies*, Vol 2 (3) pp 406-408 1997)

This book represents a welcome contribution to UCL Press's rapidly expanding Natural and Built Environment Series. The main concern of this particular text is to provide an account of the continuing evolution of systems for making decisions regarding development.

Booth's departure point for this project is that two types of development control system have emerged; first, systems such as that of the UK which adopt a 'discretionary' approach to decision making over development proposals; and second, systems such as the French case, where a more regulatory approach is widely held to provide a more certain, less flexible, system of control. Most of the discussion revolves around the UK and French systems although additional material is presented on Hong Kong and literature relating to some other European states and the USA is mobilised, "to deal with particular issues [to] which these systems give rise" (p 67).

The book then has two central concerns:

- with certainty and flexibility in development-control decision making and the discretion afforded to decision-makers;
- with power. As a result of the discretion afforded and the accountability built into systems, where does power lie in development control systems, in particular with central government or locally?

Certainty is defined here in two ways. First, in terms of the possible outcome of a decision and second, in terms of the process through which decisions pass. A comparative approach is central to this discussion with Booth adding to evidence that zoning systems are far from characterised by certainty. Two small criticisms arise here. First, certainty of process in this sense seems to be conflating a number of issues which makes for something of a weak argument in parts of Chapter 5. Second, the British case would have benefited from more empirical material in support of the arguments presented. However, Booth adds to this discussion the dimension of accountability which proves useful in taking us beyond the certainty/flexibility dualism initially presented.

In looking to the possible reform of planning systems Booth emphasises that it is not merely a simple matter of shifting systems along some certainty/ flexibility continuum. The historical context outlined and the wider politico-administrative systems within which each system is situated negate this sort of simplistic thinking. Embedded cultural values and practices are thus vital elements. However, if this conclusion is a strength of the book it may also represent a weakness. It allows a discussion of recommendations as to how far and in what ways individual planning systems might be transformed, to be side-stepped. This is a shame

as just when Booth seems about to make a prescriptive attempt at reform, perhaps toward a system based more upon a performance criteria approach, he withdraws from the debate.

Two other small criticisms arise. First, although in fairness the book is not intended as a study of power, it does keep entering the discussion, particularly in relation to the discretion afforded decision makers, and the text is methodo-logically weak in its appraisal of this. Second, it would have been useful to have entered into a fuller debate about the relationship between development control and development plans in different systems. The potential paradox in this is recognised, i.e. what is the power and usefulness of the development plan when development control decisions can be taken in relation to other factors, but this is not really followed through.

However, these minor points aside this text is perhaps unique in its thorough contextualizing of development control systems within a comparative and historical setting. The emphasis on cultural factors, political and social relations in the development control process, and the recognition of the power of socially ascribed private property rights in different planning systems, is welcome. This emphasis also makes the text a much more enjoyable read when compared with many others which seem preoccupied with the minutiae of procedural and legal detail. The legal system can after all be tweaked forever; it is, however, what planners do and what the expectations of systems are amongst the users of these systems which is ultimately more important.

This book is recommended for academics interested in planning systems and the evolution and direction of particular governance forms. It should find a place on the reading list of advanced undergraduate, or perhaps more particularly postgraduate, courses which embrace development control and land-use planning systems more generally. A further recommendation arises from the depth of knowledge and the passion for understanding the French system which is very evident and comes through in writing. Anyone with an interest in this particular planning system and with wider issues of territorial governance in France will find this text an interesting and thoughtful contribution.

Urban Planning in Europe: International Competition, National Systems and Planning Projects

by Peter Newman and Andy Thornley, published by Routledge in 1996, 291 pp

Review by Dick Williams

(to be published in *Urban Studies*)

The authors set out to explore 'the existing degree of variation in approaches to urban planning in Europe, and the underlying reasons for this' (p.4). They do so in a way which is fascinating, contains valuable ideas and observations, plus a wealth of interesting detail. However, the latter relies very heavily on research into urban planning and the development process undertaken by the authors in just three countries, England, France and Sweden. The main title is therefore somewhat misleading as readers may expect to be offered a greater level of detail about a wider selection of countries. The subtitle gives an accurate indication of the thrust of much of the analysis in the book.

The text was written during the period of the UK's Conservative government, drawing upon Thornley's analysis of urban planning under Thatcherism. This is an obvious point, but if, as

I anticipate, this book remains on reading lists for some time, future readers may need to be reminded of this. The conclusions draw attention to the distinctive character of the UK in respect of the key dimensions of fragmentation of executive responsibility for urban policy through quangos, local partnerships and agencies, and of centralisation of governmental responsibility for both policy and financial control. A real test of the new Labour government in respect of urban policy will be to observe to what extent the conclusions presented here become out of date.

The book is structured in two parts. Part I (3 chapters) analyses national and international influences on the political and cultural environment in which urban policy is conducted, and Part II (7 chapters) concentrates on the planning systems and development process in the three countries studied.

The first substantive chapter in Part I discusses the international context for urban policy in terms of globalisation, the urban structure and hierarchy of Europe, the place of cities in the construction of Europe, and briefly refers to creating market conditions in eastern (sic) Europe. The next chapter is sure to attract interest and debate. It places the legal and administrative systems found in Europe into categories, and proposes a set of 'families' of national planning systems. Short outlines of most of the systems of western Europe are included. The final chapter of Part I discusses the currently prevailing concepts of urban governance and characteristics of 'successful' cities, and then presents short cases studies of Frankfurt, Milan, Barcelona, Prague and Berlin to illustrate aspects of the discussion.

It is brave of the authors to tackle national planning systems in terms of the typology of 'families'. This central feature of Part I, I have found to be a valuable framework for teaching European planning, as it is capable of generating a lively discussion. I understand the logic behind the author's inclusion of Netherlands and Italy in the same group, but I do find this hard to reconcile with the contrast between Dutch 'rule and order' and the problems of enforcement and respect for the systems noted in Italy.

The outlines of planning systems and issues in selected cities in Part I, covering a range of countries not featured in Part II, is a less satisfactory feature. The treatment of each country and of the five cities leaves the reader wanting more detail. They are too brief to redress the overall balance of the book whose real meat, for many readers will be the analysis of urban policy implementation and the development process in the three focus countries in Part II.

Part II consists of six paired chapters, plus the conclusions of the book as a whole. The six chapters, representing well over half the book's length, take the form of national urban policy reviews for Great Britain, France and Sweden, each followed by a chapter of English, French and Swedish case studies.

Each of the general country chapters discusses in depth the key issues in recent urban policy and the political context in each country. The British discussion centres on the legacy of the Thatcher period, boosterism and competition in urban policy, and the emerging 1990s trends of environmental issues and a more plan-led system. The case studies are drawn from London and Birmingham. The French section is concerned with decentralisation, the roles of the communes and intercommunal associations, and the place of national policy. Case studies are taken from Paris Rive Gauche and St Denis, and Euralille at Lille. The Swedish chapter likewise analyses key issues in recent national urban policy, not least in the context of

challenges to the social democratic consensus. Case studies focus on the Globe project in Stockholm, the so-called Dennis package of strategic transport planning, and the Oresund link between Malmo and Denmark.

All the case studies are very thorough and well researched. All raise key questions of accountability, the nature of partnership and political coalitions for the development of the institutional capacity for urban change. The Globe and Euralille raise the question of what is worthy to be considered extraordinary in the national context. But one must not forget that six of the projects studied are in national capitals and the others in major regional cities of European significance.

Seeking a European profile for a city is one of the themes common to all the non-capital city case studies. Another is that of flagship sports projects. Such projects, for the 1989 Ice Hockey World Championships, the 1990 Football World Cup and the 1992 Olympic Games, form a persistent refrain in Part II. Sports-event led urban regeneration is not an explicit aim of the book, more a counterpoint to the main theme, but could perhaps be justified as the main theme of another comparative urban policy book.

European union urban policy is a recurrent topic, although not directly used in the analysis. The EU does not have a competence over urban policy as such, although this situation may change after the 1997 IGC. The main ways in which EU policy does interact with urban development, through the structural funds and environmental assessment, for example, are identified, but the concept of an EU urban policy as such is not unpicked in respect of all the elements that do exist. Also, discussion of the idea of harmonisation shows some confusion over whether this is seen as an observable trend or a political goal of the EU.

Overall, this book draws its strength from quality research by the authors into urban regeneration in England, France and Sweden. It will be valuable as a contribution to the urban policy literature and as a learning resource for students.

Process and Policy Evaluation in Structure Planning

edited by Abdul Khakee and Katerina Eckerberg, published by the Swedish Council for Building Research, Stockholm, 1993

Remaking the Welfare State

edited by Abdul Khakee, Ingemar Elander and Sune Sunesson, published by Avebury, Aldershot, 1995

Joint Review by Angela Hull

(published in *Cities* 1996, Vol 13 (3), pp 233-234, Elsevier Science Ltd, Exeter)

Both these books emanate from workshops held at the University of Umea and bring together methodological reflections and research accounts of the dismantling of the Swedish welfare state since the 1980s. Khakee and Eckerberg bring together a collection of nine papers which present different methods of evaluating both the process and policy impact of welfare planning. There is little argumentation between the methods in this first book and is, therefore, appropriate for undergraduate students who wish to familiarise themselves with a wide selection of approaches. Khakee et al, in the second book, present twelve accounts of Swedish research projects with extensive literature reviews, formulation and refinement of concepts on the basis of empirical material, and with future research outlined.

In *Process and Policy Evaluation in Structure Planning*, the papers, as the title suggests, are loosely grouped into those which focus on how to evaluate the planning process and those which evaluate planning outcomes. Only the papers by Stromberg, by Gustafsson, and by Khakee and Eckerberg use Swedish examples.

In the first paper Khakee and Eckerberg seek to explain how the postwar consensus around the centralised blueprint planning in Sweden has weakened. The process has gone hand in hand with the slackening of economic growth, which had helped to cement the consensus, and is now further threatened by the multiplicity of conflicting interests that have a voice. Comprehensive planning of land use is losing power at municipal level, being replaced by the appraisal of individual projects.

Healey analyses the process of planning through identifying the systems of meaning embedded in three English land use development plans - those of Birmingham, Solihull, and Harlow district councils. The framework she develops to understand the plan's often conflicting messages focuses on the systems of meaning which contain both the technical/scientific and normative/political claims of those who have helped to construct them. She analyses the extent to which these negotiated statements will reinforce or challenge established power relationships.

Both Forester and Borri in their papers focus on the interactive nature of the planning task. Forester highlights the normative, ethical aspects of a planner's day-to-day work in particular the 'moral improvisation' in their practical judgements of how to pose a problem, suggest options, envision their consequences, justify the final choice and assess the likely outcome. Borri assesses attempts to mimic the reflective and interactive nature of the planning task using artificial intelligence expert systems. The ill-structured knowledge base, the uncertainty over events, the scarcity of routine problems with clear criteria for success and failure, and the conflicting norms of different actors make it difficult to adapt these logical expert systems.

Three papers by Yewlett, Lichfield and Pearce emphasise the importance of integrating policy generation with policy evaluation, and remind us that the choice of method will determine and restrict the usefulness of the answers produced. Lichfield presents Community Impact Analysis as a rigorous method of evaluating the chain of impacts from a proposed development on a range of community sectors. Claimed benefits of the methodology are that it makes political decisions regarding impacts and the available options available more transparent and therefore can be seen as a useful communication tool. Pearce examines the impact of planning control over the release of land on the pattern of land use using ex post data on changing land and house prices. Concentrating on private costs and benefits as opposed to social costs/benefits, he found it difficult to separate out planning constraints from supply constraints such as physical limitations, infrastructure availability, market power, disequilibrium in land and housing markets and transaction costs. Yewlett explains the refinement of Friend and Jessop's Strategic Choice method into a piece of decision support software called STRAD or Strategic Adviser.

Stromberg's analysis of Swedish housing policies since 1984, with national government setting a broad framework of rules and subsidy for house renovation, highlights the wide variety of municipal outcomes with the greatest significance being explained by the

personality of the chief planner. Gustafsson specifies the key themes of a research project to be undertaken on democratic practice in Sweden looking specifically at the patterns of authority at local level and the responsiveness to citizens' demands.

The papers in *Remaking the Welfare State* seek to evaluate the extent of the fragmentation of the Swedish 'welfare community'. The post war consensus, underpinned by high labour participation rates and a paternalistic state, has been shaken by internal criticism, economic crises and an alignment with EU harmonisation policies. The book conceptually and empirically examines the shedding by the national state of its welfare responsibilities since the 1980s in the areas of social planning, environmental planning, housing and social care, and central-local relationships in urban planning.

The first two papers on social planning and policy-making analyse how the previously dominant paradigm of institutionalisation has been replaced by the normalisation concept. Meeuwisse and Sunesson find a conceptual flux in the psychiatric literature which fails to explain the depletion of psychiatric institutions and the relocation of ex-patients. They develop a conceptual scheme to throw light on the conflicting tendencies between social control and social integration which compares the differing lifetime experiences of 'patients' in America, Northern Europe and Italy. Mallander unpacks the claims of stakeholders to illustrate the process by which a dominant paradigm (institutionalisation) is concretised in policy by an alternative concept (normalisation). Denvall takes a critical look at the role of expert professionals in the strong paternalistic Swedish welfare state through a comparison with advocacy planning in the USA.

The three papers in the second section evaluate the performance of the municipalities in considering environmental and ecological matters. Elander et al's analysis of the development of Swedish environmentalism in the twentieth century highlights the enormity of the current implementation dilemma that requires civil society to act collectively and individually to reverse the environmental impact of our actions. Looking towards possible outcomes they explore what it would take for a radical ecocentric ideology to become hegemonic. Eckerberg analyses the trade-offs made between economic and environmental interests in municipal structure plans. She concludes that the lack of definition in national framework laws, the advisory nature of the structure plan, and the conflicting professional values of municipal bureaucrats which create Chinese walls lead to both differing interpretations and a failure to address available resource and environmental data. Scheele describes an attempt by the city of Orebro to build a green neighbourhood in accordance with ecological principles using a flexible design brief to engender diverse visions amongst the twenty two developers.

Section three is entitled Planning for housing and social care. The first paper by Danermark and Ekstrom discusses how knowledge is created borrowing from both the positivist and interpretative social science traditions. They see the planning profession moving from a state where scientific knowledge is held as a prerequisite of progress and emancipation to one where knowledge is created through dialogue and action in a 'learning society'. They test the explanatory power of a stratified model of the interplay between structure and agency in their study of preventative health care for the elderly with analysis focuses on the macro economic/political processes, the more specific relatively enduring societal practices, the face-to face daily activities, and the emotional dispositions of the elderly themselves.

Jacobson reviews mainstream theories on social gerontology concluding that their micro-level normative perspectives fail to explain the differences in provision and support between European countries. He suggests more research into the cultural systems of responsibility in each country which rest on a combination of structural, economic, social and technical conditions. Sahlin uses case study material to identify the decentralisation of those with housing problems to local social service authorities. He employs concepts of 'border control' to explain the behaviour of private landlords and 'discipline' to explain the investigation, motivations and sanctions used by the social service authorities in controlling 'problem' tenants.

The final section addresses local-central government relationships in urban planning. Anttila and Elander note the lack of Swedish theoretical discussion on the relationship between local government and wider political and socio-economic actors. They test macro theories of capitalist development for their explanatory value using four empirical studies. They conclude that the actions and attitudes of local political and other elites are crucial to municipality response to fiscal austerity but that neither macro theories nor extensive empirical research on elites have thrown much light on the process of local policy implementation. Lidstrom presents his research on local politicians' perceptions of their influence on central government and points to the importance of policy brokers and networks between local and national political actors.

Khakee presents research on the normative, methodological and institutional aspects of structure plan production focusing his analysis on issues and scope of coverage, the readability of the plans, the data utilised, and the sharing of control between officer and politicians.

Urban Environmental Planning

edited by Donald Miller and Gert de Roo, published by Avebury, Aldershot, 1997

ISBN Number:

Review by Angela Hull (eds Miller, D. and De Roo, G., Avebury)

(published in *Town Planning Review* 1998 Vol 69 (1) pp 108-109)

This book disseminates the product of a international symposium on Urban Planning and Environment sponsored by the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Physical Planning and Environment and held in Seattle, USA, in 1994. All but six of the twenty-two contributions present case-studies from these two host countries. Each reports on a local initiative to measure and manage urban environmental quality. To this extent it makes a valuable contribution to the widening concern to integrate environmental management with spatial planning.

The different approaches of these two professions are counterposed by the editors in the introduction as one which reveals a conflict in principles concerning the use of space in cities. "Physical or spatial planning has sought answers to questions such as 'Where can we locate this activity?' and 'What can be located here?' Environmental planning takes an opposite perspective, asking 'Where can this activity not be located?' and 'What can not be located here?'" Marrying these different perspectives has been the aim of the Dutch Provisional System for Integrated Environmental Zoning (IEZ) since 1990 which has sought to assess the additive effects of negative spillovers from industry or traffic on sensitive uses in their

proximity. The symposium brought together a sharing of experience so far from the pilot studies in the Netherlands with similar experiments world-wide.

While Miller and de Roo draw attention to the technical and administrative dimensions of programme design and hint at the political, institutional and economic aspects of implementation it is a shame that these latter programme blockages are scarcely reflected in the structure of the book or the chapter presentations. Most of the case studies describe the spatial policy dilemmas which have presented themselves as improved knowledge of the negative combined spillovers from noise, odour, and air pollution has become available. The resolution of conflict over environmental objectives, the network management required to ensure the co-operative contribution of all the parties involved (regulators and regulated), and the regulatory framework that needs to be set in place by central government to ensure this happens are not addressed by this text.

The editors have catalogued the twenty-two presentations into five parts. Part A is entitled *A descriptive introduction to environmental and spatial conflicts in the urban area*; Part B, *Answers to negative spillovers in the urban area*; Part C *Integrated environmental zoning as a sophisticated instrument to deal with environmental spillovers*; Part D *Positive environmental spillovers in the urban areas, a neglected field of interest* and Part E *The spatial plan as a tool for sustainable solutions*.

Specific case studies of pollution abatement measures are presented for a range of possible incidents, including flood damage, a waste water treatment plant, a former nuclear weapons site, and an international airport. Possibly the most important achievement of the book though is the insight it gives into the different methodological approaches to IEZ tried in the Dutch pilot programmes. Meijburg introduces the district oriented Stolp method applied in Amsterdam, where the aim is to target action on pollution reduction measures that are the most cost effective for the city as a whole. Resource decisions would be made on the basis of the pollution level index, liveability index, and population numbers in each district, as well as the cost effectiveness of proposed measures. Timar suggests an approach to improving the environmental performance of new buildings which he calls the Environmental Performance System. This involves setting a minimum threshold to be attained for acquiring a building permit with points being awarded for each element of design deemed to be ecologically sound. Strefkerk outlines a method for involving environmental impacts in spatial planning (MEP) in his case study of Zwolle. Both Miller and de Roo, in separate chapters discuss the Dutch IEZ programme, drawing out the technical problems in programme design, without referring to the more detailed case studies presented.

This book provides a useful, and accessible reference source for students and planning practitioners who find they are working more with environmental issues and wish to consider how they can apply planning solutions to environmental quality problems. A much more focused book is required though that discusses developments in these innovatory techniques, how to secure political acceptance, and which puts issues of equity, at long last, at the top of the agenda in environmental management and spatial planning

Transport in Transition: Aspects of British and European Experience

edited by J. McConville and J. Sheldrake, published by Avebury, Aldershot 1995

Review by Geoff Vigar

*Published in **International Planning Studies** (Vol 1 (3) 1996, pp 372-373)*

This book consists of a collection of papers arising from a colloquium held at London Guildhall University in 1993. It provides some useful discussions regarding shifting contexts for, and state involvement in, transport. However it shares the faults of many such collections of this type in that whilst the individual papers provide useful contributions to their respective fields, the book itself functions less well as a coherent whole.

Transport in Transition attempts to come to terms with changing forms of regulation in transport in Britain and Europe. It provides some interesting comment on the evolution of policy, and of regulatory frameworks, in different institutional contexts and of the outcomes of such changes in a specific set of fields, i.e. transport sub-sectors. To extract this useful commentary does however require quite an effort on the part of the reader due to an introduction that perhaps tries to do too much, the lack of a concluding chapter, and no obvious sign posting within the text.

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 provide context, looking at the history of state intervention in transport in the UK and Europe. These chapters also bring to bear a series of theoretical economic considerations on changing forms and modes of regulation in transport and in wider areas of governance.

Chapters 4-10 provide detailed accounts of changes through time with regard to specific elements of transport provision. Chapter 4 looks at the growth of consumerism in transport, charting the rise of user group involvement in various transport sectors. Chapter 5 examines local government's changing responsibilities concerning transport, looking at the various regulatory tools available to local authorities regarding road passenger transport. Chapter 6 profiles the 1985 Transport Act and attempts to chart its origins in ideology and more particularly from the output of think-tanks. Chapter 7 looks at the use of various modes of transport in European urban centres. This paper in some ways provides the substantive basis for the whole project and might best be sited earlier in the collection. Chapter 8 provides a practitioners perspective on the EU's involvement in attempting to shift freight from roads to other modes. Chapter 9 continues the freight distribution theme, examining trends in distribution warehousing infrastructure and the prospects for the future location of such networks. The final chapter looks at the productive efficiency of UK ports in the context of the British Government's moves toward privatisation.

Most chapters set recent developments in a historical context. In some cases this is illuminating, in others perhaps unnecessary or a little long-winded. One or two chapters may have benefited from a more contemporary approach rather than going over established ground in discussing the evolution of transport policy over a much longer time-frame. Generally each chapter provides a useful account of how changing forms of state intervention are affecting particular transport sectors. In most cases the possible implications of these trends for the sector's future are put forward and critically assessed.

In general terms the first half of the book provides a good round up of the liberalisation of transport markets and the background to the rolling back of the state in this area throughout

western Europe. A thorough examination of factors that have prompted changes in the evolution of regulatory responsibility in transport, written from this perspective, has long been over-due. In later chapters there are useful summaries of recent changes as they impact upon specific transport sub-sectors. The European illustrations are particularly helpful, providing valuable cross-national comparisons of shifting regulatory concerns.

There are a number of small production errors such as inaccurate page referencing in places, spelling mistakes, and some inaccurate or incomplete references. Some of the proof-reading is sloppy also, especially in Chapter 10. A further quibble is that it shares the same title as Stephen Peake's book produced in 1994. Given that the title tells you little of the book's contents and there is no preface or information on the jacket to tell the prospective reader what the central concerns of the book are, this makes launching into the publication something of a step into the unknown despite a useful opening introductory chapter, (albeit a 10 page chapter of unbroken text with no sub-headings). With little to guide the reader in terms of the book's contents it is difficult to imagine who will be prepared to pay £40 for less than 200 pages. In some senses this is a shame because many of the chapters have much to recommend them and would prove valuable contributions to tighter edited and more coherently themed collections.

SECTION 3

RECENT BOOKS ON BRITISH PLANNING

The British Planning System: An Introduction

by Yvonne Rydin, published by Macmillan, London, 1993

Review by Geoff Vigar

(published in *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* Vol 15 (2) 1997 pp 249-250)

NOTE: THIS BOOK HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY REVISED, AND PUBLISHED AS *URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING IN THE UK* 1998

Rydin's text is a further contribution to the excellent Government Beyond the Centre Series. Its main aim is to provide students with an accessible introduction to the British planning system. However, although this is primarily an introductory textbook for students of British land use planning, this should not dissuade other groups from reading it. This volume provides a fresh and innovative perspective on contemporary planning issues and theory for other student groups, researchers, and academics both in the UK and overseas.

Part One of the text covers familiar ground in detailing the development of the British Planning system since the nineteenth century. Rydin then moves on in Part Two to introduce the system as it stands today. To some extent other introductory texts provide better accounts of these two areas, although Part Two also provides a very useful parallel discussion of the state of planning theory at particular times. Some texts, especially those published since this one, provide richer historical accounts and constitute better source-books of information being both more comprehensive and now more up-to-date in what have been constantly shifting areas of government guidance and policy. This is especially so in the discussion of transport planning. Although this deficiency is partly corrected in later sections on the environment, transport issues are not treated systematically and the further reading section misses one or two key works which are probably more beneficial than some of those cited.

A further innovation in a book of this kind is in the presentation of four theoretical approaches to planning thought for the 1990s; New Right, New Left, Liberal Political Economy, and emerging Institutional perspectives. These perspectives are returned to throughout the remainder of the text, particularly usefully in the discussions of planning and the market.

This text scores most highly in parts Three and Four which detail both the politics of planning and the relations between planning and the market. By focusing on these conceptual themes Rydin avoids some of the failings of other texts and perhaps circumvents theoretical problems associated with the compartmental nature of the UK planning system in general. In addition by taking a more relational approach Rydin goes some way to introducing the complexity of interaction and the power dependencies inherent amongst stakeholders in urban regions. The contested and negotiated nature of public policy makes the inclusion of such a discussion an essential element of any such text and highlights what is missing from other books of this kind. The section discussing the relations between the state and the market is particularly good, analysing as it does four issues in some depth; land for housing, minerals exploitation, pollution control, and the 'inner city problem'. Part Three also introduces a series of exhibits

into the text which serve to illustrate and bring alive key debates in contemporary land-use planning.

The concluding part attempts to critically review the impacts of UK planning and attempts to answer the question, 'why plan?' This it does rather well, countering a primarily downbeat message in documenting the impacts of planning with an upbeat one on its potential managerial and redistributive role in the future.

This book provides possibly the most useful introductory text to the UK planning system in what has become since its publication, a more crowded market. One or two areas are rather thin, perhaps most notably transport planning. In addition although this is a book about the system, a discussion of issues such as land for employment, retail issues, and central area issues more generally, all of which are very much contested policy areas at present, may have added to the comprehensiveness of the work. It provides, as other similar texts do, a source-book of information on relevant subject areas within land-use planning and the procedures and agencies for implementation of policy therein. Where this publication scores over these other works however is in its introduction of various theoretical contributions and in discussions of the relations inherent in complex policy systems such as planning. In fulfilling these elements this book possesses a dynamic which many of its competitors, often with dryer, more procedural approaches, fail to achieve.

British Planning Policy in Transition: Planning in the 1990s

edited by Mark Tewdwr-Jones, published by UCL Press, London

Review by Mark Baker

(published in *Town Planning Review* Vol 68 (2) 1997, pp 517-518)

This book brings together a set of essays by both academics and experienced practitioners and policy-makers on a variety of policy matters relating to the operation of the statutory land-use planning system in Britain in the mid 1990s. It thus provides a opportunity to reflect on the impact of a number of significant changes in the political and policy context since the end of the 1980s, most notably the move to a 'plan-led' system; the growth of national and regional planning guidance; the emergence of an environmental agenda; the growing importance of the European Union; and the impact of local government reorganisation. Although the editor makes clear from the outset that the book is predominantly a 'descriptive volume with some analysis and evaluation' (p xiii) rather than a theoretical text, an attempt has been made to organise and theme the contributions to avoid the pitfall of some edited works of presenting a disparate collection of individual essays with little overall coherence. Thus, the first two parts of the volume concentrate on recent developments in the policy and institutional frameworks of the land-use planning system. The majority of these chapters are written by practitioners or policy-makers and thus tend to draw heavily on the authors' personal experiences. In contrast, the contributions in the final part of the book have been prepared by a number of academic, several of whom are colleagues of the editor at the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cardiff University. This final section thus takes on a more academic or 'social-scientific' stance, highlighting some of the current political, social, economic and environmental dilemmas and opportunities facing practitioners. Tewdwr-Jones' s own contribution to the volume, other than the task of editor, is restricted to providing an introductory, contextual chapter which both explains what is to follow and provides a short review of recent policy and institutional changes. Intended only to 'set the scene' this introduction is useful for those

with little existing knowledge of recent events or policy developments, but makes no attempt at analysis or to add to the more in-depth treatments of most of these themes which are available elsewhere. The editor has not attempted to provide a concluding section to the volume as a whole.

The first substantive part of the volume kicks off with a chapter on the role of national planning guidance. Written by a civil servant from the DoE's planning policy directorate, it inevitably reads at times as 'official-speak' and does not really address all sides of the debate over the necessary extent of national policy and central intervention in the planning process. Although a valuable reference source for introductory planning courses, readers looking for a more reflective and analytical work will need to look elsewhere. The next three chapters respectively cover the land-use planning policy context at decreasing spatial scales: Jeremy Alden (Cardiff University) and Chris Offord (Northumberland County Council) chart recent national developments in regional planning guidance before providing a mainly descriptive account of the RPG preparation process in the Northern Region (although this region's experiences may not be 'typical' as the lack of any formally constituted regional planning forum or conference means that the consultative arrangements were more limited than elsewhere). Richard Jarvis (Clwyd County Council) provides an account of his authority's experience of preparing a structure plan as well as commenting on the potential gap at the strategic policy level resulting from the demise of structure planning in the new unitary system of local government in Wales. Finally, Alan Jones (Newbury District Council) covers local planning based on the 'Newbury experience' which in turn likens a local plan to a butterfly or daffodil (you'll have to read the book to find out why!), considers 'life in the plan-led system', and goes on to address issues such as the value of development plans, public involvement in the preparation process and the DoE's scrutiny process (an obsession with 'presumptions'). The result is an excellent chapter which goes beyond a descriptive account of plan preparation in one locality to give thought-provoking comments on the operation of the system as a whole. Part One of the book ends with Keith Hayton (Strathclyde University) shifting attention north of the border with a review of the different policy framework which exists in Scotland. He echoes earlier fears for strategic planning following local government reorganisation as well as calling on the development plan system to become more pro-active in order to convince the wider development community of its relevance.

The first of the three chapters in Part Two of the volume continues the theme of local government reorganisation: John Clotworthy (South Somerset DC) and Neil Harris (Vale of Glamorgan BC) jointly review the fundamental changes to the 'institutional framework' through which planning policy is formulated and implemented. Backed up by a case study of reorganisation in south-west England, the authors take an optimistic stance which, although noting potential problems especially in relation to strategic policy, conclude that there are also reasons to believe that the changes offer opportunities for improvement. Ted Kitchen's contribution (written whilst still at Manchester City Council) covers strategic planning activities in a broader context of a variety of continuous planning and related processes which extend well beyond that of development plan production. He does, however, offer advice to plan-makers that their plans should satisfy his 'law' that 'we should get at least as much value out of plans as the effort we put in' (p133). Unfortunately it seems that most plans fail this test! Finally in this section, Ian Gatenby and Christopher Williams (McKenna & Co, Solicitors) offer a legal perspective on the 'plan-led' system and highlight the differences between the legal matter of identifying relevant matters which must be taken into account in

the development control process and the more policy-driven manner in which subsequent decisions are made.

The final section pinpoints 'constraints and opportunities in the policy process' by pulling together several contributions by academics. Sue Essex (Cardiff University) reviews the roles and relationships between elected councillors and planning officers which, despite high profile cases of conflict as in North Cornwall, more often involves constructive partnerships. Huw Thomas (Cardiff University) provides an overview of the public participation process from an academic perspective and calls for clear thinking about the purposes of participation. The following two chapters by Andy Thornley (LSE) and Kevin Bishop (Cardiff) respectively cover the role of market and environmental / sustainability considerations in the planning process. Although Thornley argues that a strong market orientation has been retained in the post-Thatcher years, it does appear that there has been something of a shift towards 'local choice' although not to the same degree as some of the 'community empowerment' initiatives of the Clinton administration in the USA. There has also been a shift towards a greater emphasis on environmental matters which has resulted in a 'greening' of planning law and policy but, in Bishop's view, the delivery of sustainable development still requires further fundamental changes in policy and practice. The book ends with a chapter by Lyn Davies (Reading University) which considers the growing influence of the European Union on the UK planning system and the likelihood of greater convergence between planning systems within member states despite countervailing forces such as regionalism, local democracy and professional distinctions. Although the author concludes that closer integration is probable, he expresses doubt about how far there can be a serious move towards spatial planning in the UK in the absence of an enhanced level of regional planning.

Overall, this is timely collection of essays which fully meets the (admittedly rather limited) aim of 'description with some analysis and evaluation' stated at the outset, although it is a shame that the balance struck by some contributions is rather too skewed towards 'description' rather than 'analysis'. The absence of a final chapter giving a general overview of planning policy in the mid 1990s and possible future developments is also a little disappointing. However, as an introduction to a wide variety of current issues, backed up by first-hand accounts of planning practice, this book can be enthusiastically recommended to new students of the British planning process and several chapters deserve prominent mentions on lecturers' reference lists. It should also be of value to 'reflective' practitioners and policy-makers who seek an accessible and up-to-date account of the wider context within which they operate.

Local Authorities and Regional Policy in the UK: Attitudes, representations and the Local Economy

by R.M.Ball, published by Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd, London 1995, 196pp

Review by Angela Hull

(published in *Cities* Vol 13 (5), Elsevier Science Ltd., Exeter, pp 363)

We are presented here with a tightly structured book which brings together the author's insights on "local sensitivities to centrally administered spatial economic policy" (xvii). The core data for this is derived from local authority (LA) responses to the 1992 government consultation paper entitled 'Regional Policy: Review of the Assisted Areas of Great Britain'. Using the 317 LA responses, supplemented with a limited survey of selected areas and media response to the review outcome, a discussion enfolds around local attitudes, representations

and sensitivities of local economic position and performance. Given that the invitation to comment was restricted to a three month period, the responses are of varying levels of engagement and of necessity mainly dominated by officer reaction.

The book is divided into 4 sections. Part I sets the scene as one of declining Treasury support for regional industrial and financial assistance in the 1990s-, changing central-local relationships; apparent N-S differences; decline of defence and tourist dependent areas; increasing LA perceptions of peripherality; and an emphasis on place marketing to secure resources. Local authority motivations and strategies for engagement with the Department of Trade and Industry over the Assisted Areas map review are discussed, and inferences made about LA attitudes to regional policy and the policy formation process during the consultation period.

Part 2 describes the basic data of 'who', 'what', 'how, and 'why' of the 317 responses, This quantitative information is brought to life with cameos of the policy process in 5 selected areas, providing information on each area's economic problems, reasons for response, the main rationales underpinning their 'bid' for assistance, and the management of the representation. This analysis draws out the institutional issues of the production of consensus, the role of key individuals, the relationship between coalitions, and the lobbying functions in support of submission documents.

Part 3 and 4 focus on the detail of the LA documentation. Part 3 discusses the attitudes to regional policy and the self images that are revealed, drawing out the economic problems of coastal areas, defence-laden areas and the sensitivities of southern LAs for further analysis. Part 4 isolates the components of unemployment and peripherality, identifying how these components are interpreted by the LAs and publicly presented in a visual form for government consumption. Ball draws out the inherent tensions between local autonomy and central dependency, between the negative place marketing required for bidding and the positive images implied in growth boosterism.

The book interestingly meshes sociological concerns of agent motives, strategies, and alliance building with the traditional descriptive regional studies approach to government policy impacts. As such the book represents an initial stab at utilising the potentially rich resource of comparative data held by central government institutions to tease out the local political dynamics, referred to as the "representational base" by Ball, in the production of place- the "representational detail" (p 135). How LAs present and reveal their strengths and weaknesses, their qualities and sense of place, is becoming increasingly important for leverage of central government resources (Assisted Areas, Single Regeneration Budget, National Lottery, etc) and European Union regional funds. This book will therefore be of interest mainly to practitioners engaged in the process of developing their skills in place presentation, particularly for the emerging practice of holistic place marketing in which LAs audit the social, economic and environmental conditions of their areas in order to lever in resources to add value to their assets and reduce their vulnerabilities.

SECTION 4

RECENT BOOKS ON PLANNING AND HOUSING

Planning, the Market and Private Housebuilding

by Glen Bramley, Will Bartlett and Christine Lambert, published by UCL Press, 1995

ISBN Number:

Price: £12.95 pb, 263 pages

Review by Angela Hull

(published in *Cities* Vol, pp)

This is a book by three experienced housing researchers that draws together existing research on housing regulation and market interactions from a wide range of methodological standpoints to produce a heuristic model of the dynamics of private sector supply in Britain. Specifically focused on the supply response of house builders to changes in demand at local level, the model attempts to predict the behavioural responses of builders and landowners to different regulatory inputs. With its pan-theoretical approach drawing on the urban economics literature in North America, the economic modelling of British housing markets, and hedonic modelling to explain individual preferences, it represents an important contribution to the current debate on the effect and efficacy of market intervention.

The authors' aim is to build a model capable of explaining the differences in house price and dwelling outputs between local authority districts, using factors of location, employment and social structure as proxies for demand, and construction costs, land availability, planning policies and profit constraints as the supply side factors. In determining the relationships between these factors, the authors first review academic work on market response to housing demand, developing and then testing hypotheses in model pilot runs. The initial assumption that local housing markets based on district boundaries are sufficiently separate and open on the demand side, was found on testing not to be a valid assumption. Assumptions that a demand shift would lead to a lagged response from suppliers but a quick response in price were more robust. Two fairly crude measures for expressing the responsiveness of land use planning to market forces were employed. The first measure was a 'restrictive' or 'very restrictive' categorisation of County Structure Plans on the basis of their policies. The second proxy was the percentage of successful planning applications awarded by the districts.

The authors use their model to test some of the myths about the restrictive effect of land use planning on both the price and supply of land for housing. Doubling the amount of housing land released over a ten year period through the planning system, using different assumptions about the time taken to exhaust the land, did not increase the supply of land onto the market for housing by more than 28% in any of the scenarios tested. The model suggested that as land supply increases, dwelling prices reduce to some extent, causing the profitability of Housebuilding and the supply of land to fall. The additional land coming onto the market will be greater in high demand areas and lower in industrial and rural areas.

Two conclusions are reached from these model runs. First, that the restriction of land supply through planning policies does raise house prices to some extent which redistributes in favour of existing owners and against tenants and new buyers. The authors are optimistic though that these increases are compensated by the affordable dwellings negotiated through planning

agreements. The second conclusion is that housing supply is very inelastic in Britain both in terms of response to increased demand for new build and for conversions. They were able to demonstrate that even where the planning system allocates large quantities of land, housing supply is not highly elastic. This contrasts with the pro-development lobby argument that more land released will reduce prices and increase access to housing affordability in general. It appears that landowners derive more benefit from occupation than current market value, and that the highest value is retained by waiting for future gains.

The model unfortunately does not throw any light either on housebuilder response to the increased primacy of the development plan or to demographic trends for smaller households. Housebuilders have always relied on flexibility in the planning system bringing forward sites in response to market pressure during periods of high demand. Housebuilders' land acquisition policies will now have to be tied more closely to local authority preferences for spatial growth and sustainable development. This increases the degree of uncertainty about future outputs and profits, and comes at a time when they are expected to contribute to infrastructure and social housing and when demand itself is more volatile.

The authors recognise the important influence of the urban land market on the policy options open to central and local government regulators. They demonstrate that as the housing land market is very inelastic in response to increased demand; that subsidies for owner occupation become capitalised in house prices rather than increasing housing output. The model therefore supports the governments' reduction in mortgage interest tax relief, which should help to reduce house prices. More sophisticated housing requirement targets in Structure Plans would reduce the present uncertainty for developers if they were expressed in different levels of target: (i) a minimum, (ii) an expected, (iii) a maximum, and (iv) an aspirational target. The authors suggest that these targets should be contingent on the relevant conditions of the housing market, that local plans should take a time horizon longer than the present 10 years and that housing land release should be phased.

The authors have achieved what they set out to do in terms of producing a heuristic model of local housing market response. They no doubt are currently refining this model to incorporate distinct sub-markets within local authority boundaries as evidenced in the work of Ball & Irwan (1977) and DoE (1992)². Also the model needs to be able to respond to changes in national, economic and monetary conditions underpinning the cycles of housebuilding and development. The debate about the effect of planning regulation will continue. Bramley et al conclude that it creates rent or price differentials between land with and without planning permission, but throw doubt on how far it increases the average rent level rather than its distribution.

² Ball, M., and Kirwan, R., (1977), Accessibility and supply constraints in an urban housing market, *Urban Studies*, 14(1), 11-32. Department of the Environment (1992) *The relationship between house prices and land supply*, DoE Planning Research Programme, London, HMSO.

Steering the Housing Market, New building and the Changing Planning System

by Glen Bramley and Craig Watkins, published by the Policy Press, Bristol

Review by Angela Hull

(published in *Cities* Vol xx () pp xxx 1997)

This is billed as the second stage output of the research, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, into defining a heuristic model to represent the dynamics of private sector housing supply in England. The first stage model was tested using 1986-88 data; this second stage refines the model using a wider data base for 1986-1992 and a wider geographic study area which "comprises a contiguous wedge of the country stretching from central London and Kent in the SE to Lancashire in the NW, together with one non-contiguous county (Cambridgeshire)".(3)

Chapter 2 explains the purpose of the economic model, the authors have constructed, as being to analyse the effect of the planning system and land supply on the housing market at local level in England. Several key assumptions are made concerning supply and demand factors:

- Supply to the market is measured as an annual flow of units.
- Demand in the market is also measured as a flow of household units, with backlogs of demand or oversupply assumed to clear in the medium term.
- Housebuilding developers are expected to maximise profit, constrained by uncertain and finite demand, varying land and construction costs, and the vicissitudes of gaining planning permission.
- New planning permissions depend on the interaction between the supply propensity of developers and the response of the planning system, based on policies and restraints.
- Planning policies are substantially autonomous from market forces.
- Local housing markets are approximated by districts, although these local markets are very 'open' on the demand side because of migration.
- Local new and second-hand housing markets are closely integrated.
- Housing land prices are determined mainly by house prices less building costs.
- Local house prices are determined by a mixture of national macroeconomic, local structural and local variable factors, where the latter factors include the labour market, demography, and affordability.

Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 expand on the data sources and derivation of indicators used in the sub-model routines. Sub-models are used to measure planning policy restrictions, local land supply, construction costs, the supply of new housing completions, and issues of housing demand. In each case the explanatory power of variables is tested and the variables grouped together on the basis of their statistical intercorrelation. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss the results of applying the model to simulate the effects of different housing land release policies over the 10 year study period (1987-97).

As a planner, several of the indicators used to explain local planners' attitudes to housing growth still appear as rather crude measures. The housing figures incorporated in Structure Plans are as much a reflection of Department of Environment's household projections, and lobbying by the regional Housebuilder's Federation than an indicator of local planning discretion. Variables to measure the influence played by environmental restraints and locational attractiveness need refinement also.

I would particularly commend this project report to readers who wish to gain some understanding of housing developers response to market change and land use regulation. For those who have read Bramley et al's (1996)³ more theoretical contribution, the report is a disappointment, being little more than a summary, and failing to advance the debate on either steering the market or the changing planning system.

The report does, however, throw some light on issues relevant to recent housing policy debates. The model suggests that even if plan policies were relaxed to the extent of increasing Structure Plan provision where feasible by 50%, disregarding local environmental policies, allowing for maximal initial allocation of land, and replenishment to ensure a five-year supply subsequently, completions would only increase by 19%. Prices, would however, reduce by 8% and 15% fewer dwellings would be built on urban land. The model simulations also suggest that large changes in plan provision would affect prices more in high price areas; that major concentrated land releases, such as large scale new settlements, could have significant local as well as regional price effects - reducing house costs by as much as 3-4%.

The model iterations support their earlier work that housing supply in England is relatively unresponsive to price in a weak market; that developers are risk averse, and perceive their local markets to be finite. The regression affirms that only when policies are restrictive, constraints tight, and land availability limited will the take up of former urban land rise to a high level. The authors suggest that the penalty for such market restriction appears to be quite modest. The policy impact of increasing the share of urban land by one quarter would only reduce output by 1.5% and increase prices by 0.9%. although it would increase density by 8%. The model reaffirms Bramley's contention of both the circularity and the impact of plan housing allocations, in that potential migrants tend to be directed to areas where more new housing is being built. These in turn tend to be areas where land is being released for housing by the planning system. The model predicts that for every 10 extra private completions, nearly 5 extra net migrants are attracted.

Developments in Housing Management and Ownership

Ricardo Pinto (Ed.), published by Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1995

Empowerment and Estate Regeneration: A Critical Review

Murray Stewart & Marilyn Taylor, published by Policy Press, Bristol, 1995

Joint review by Rose Gilroy (published in the **Journal of Urban Design**, Vol. 1, No. 2 pp 234-237)

Readers of this journal might be surprised to find these two books reviewed here when ostensibly they have little to do with urban design. The first book analyses policy changes in the housing field over the last 15 years while the second focuses on the growing importance of resident empowerment which has grown up against this background of continual change.

Any reader who also looks at the major architectural journals will acknowledge that little attention is paid to housing. The main focus is on commercial buildings or, when housing is given prominence, it is the one-off commissioned building or the institution such as a nursing

³ *Planning, the Market and Private Housebuilding*, Glen Bramley, Will Bartlett, and Christine Lambert UCL, London, 1995

home or hospice. The type of housing which most of us occupy is given scant attention, which seems at variance with the evidence of our eyes that ordinary houses make up the majority of buildings in any settlement. When housing has been explored it is with the eye of environmental determinists such as Alice Coleman who, in her *Utopia on Trial* (1985), discussed the relationship between the design of 'dinosaur' blocks in London and social malaise. While justly criticised by many commentators, Coleman's work does at least reassert the importance of design and our perceptions of space at the neighbourhood level. More recently planners and designers have been exhorted to consider the scope for 'designing out crime' recognising that some design features of the neighbourhood create opportunities for illegalities or incivilities.

In the UK, housing has been at the forefront of central government's political vision to change the delivery of services and to change our perceptions of the role of the state and that of individual citizens.

I approached the Pinto book with some dismay thinking that here is yet another edited collection looking at recent policy changes in housing: After reading it, I conclude that this is one of the best of these volumes being clearly written, tightly focused and drawn together for the reader by critical analyses in the introduction and conclusion by the editor. The book begins examining the local authority sector and here Pinto clearly synthesises the plethora of legislation thrown at it by central government. The next two chapters examine the way in which minor social landlords - housing associations and, to a lesser extent, housing co-operatives - have been encouraged to take a more prominent role by central government but have been faced with financial changes which have, on the one hand, tried to make them into private landlords and, conversely, have given some of the larger associations the same set of problems facing local authorities. Any housing students or housing professionals taking Institute exams will be impressed by the summaries of legislation and the clear commentaries. Chapter 4 by Ricardo Pinto builds on his earlier published work to give a detailed account of the evolution of the Estate Action program. This has been used both to control local housing strategies and to privatise local authority stock through making partnership with the private sector almost obligatory if funding is seriously sought. In spite of these serious drawbacks, Pinto rightly asserts that local authorities have done valuable work both in improving local environments and in changing the management of some estates. Chapter 5 by Alan Murie continues by focusing on the exit routes for tenants ranging from the individual Right To Buy through to collective strategies such as Tenant's Choice at the time of this review, central government had just publicly set aside this Tenants' Choice policy, stating that it had been superseded by other policy instruments. Ironically, all the successful recent mechanisms for exit lie with local authority landlords who have successfully used Large Scale Voluntary Transfer to relabel their stock and transform their housing departments into housing associations. A more limited number have forced central government to repackage Housing Action Trusts into a mechanism more acceptable to tenants and authorities and thus have tapped into large-scale funding, again to remodel environments and management. This underlines one of the main themes of the book: that in spite of central government's ideology and desire to see the end of local authority housing, these same landlords have often been able to use government policy instruments to achieve their own ends. Matthew Warburton's chapter examines the culture and practices of housing management and ably refutes the view that competition in the form of CCT improves both efficiency and quality. He points out that the housing service, unlike "the engine parts for the Ford Fiesta", does not stand still and the

"capacity of the service to change cannot easily be captured in the service specification" (p.201).

The final chapter and the most interesting is attempt to synthesise all these policy changes by looking at a case study of Hackney, one of most deprived and vilified boroughs in England. In this chapter, Keith Jacobs begins a very interesting discussion of the role of tenant participation. Jacobs takes to task those academics who have seen consultation and participation as necessary components of housing management that will make it more responsive and who have seen the design failures of the 1960s as arising from inadequate participation. "It is still naively assumed", says Jacobs, "that had tenants' views listened to, the large scale system built estates would not have been built" (p. 226).

Issues of tenant participation in design, of course, are close to the hearts of those who have worked with new-build co-ops and, in urban regeneration schemes. Stewart & Taylor's book commends environmental and design initiatives for their immense capacity in involving communities and importantly bringing in those very groups who are often credited with destructive feelings towards their environment: children and young people. For these to work, the design professional needs to be happy with accepting community as clients and able to help them build the skills to express themselves. From my own practice experience, architects, were often willing to accept housing officers as the client and had even greater problems taking their instruction from tenants. This might suggest a gap the education of design professionals.

Stewart & Taylor book is not imply a review of good practice, it is scholarly work which grapples with many of the more philosophical issues behind empowerment. Their book takes up these points, exploring with sensitivity and great clarity the barriers that may defeat attempts to really involve tenants such that their views shape the course of the landlord. Much of this discussion centres on what we understand by power and how it is rarely challenged in any meaningful way by tenants' groups. Recent research which I have been involved in demonstrated many of the points that Stewart & Taylor discuss: simply bringing people together to talk and talking of equal numbers and level playing fields masks the fact that all players are not equal. Local authorities (and other powerful players) control discussions literally by setting agendas and sticking to formal rules of business which prevent matters of concern to tenants being raised. On the tenant side, lack of confidence and the sense of failure which accompanies material, political and educational disadvantage effectively keep tenants silent or leave them to be used as a rubber stamp for policies and decisions already made elsewhere. Part of the problem arises from the fear on the part of many local authorities that power is a zero-sum game: that for tenants to be powerful, landlords must lose power and this at a time when local authority landlords feel their powers being chipped away by central government. An equally important issue is that the form of empowerment which many tenants have been offered really constitutes responsibility without the resources-finance and expertise to exercise it. These initiatives include tenant management co-ops and estate management boards. Far from being a means to empower tenants they may simply, represent a backing away by housing professionals at the same time as they set tenants up for failure.

Both the Pinto book and Stewart & Taylor's grapple with future scenarios. Both see social housing as being increasingly the housing of the disempowered. Stewart and Taylor express this concept as existing on four levels:

- isolation - reinforced through personal internalisation of 'failure' and by negative images and stereotypes from outside;
- dependency on services and income planned, provided and managed by others who themselves may be demoralised and controlled by distant bureaucracies;
- marginalization within schemes to regenerate or rehabilitate the area Power flows around and over the community, not through it;
- exclusion - from the basic rights and access to income, housing, employment and services, an exclusion that is often enshrined in political and administrative practice. (p. 65)

In the past this cycle of disempowerment has been identified clearly on stigmatised estates of local authorities on which the most powerless of tenants were allocated property and were then trapped by allocation policies which described them as adequately housed, trapped in joblessness by their address which signalled too many risk factors for employers.

Increasingly we see the same things happening on large-scale housing association new-build estates. The situation of these tenants may be worse because, as Judith Harrison (p. 67 in the Pinto volume) points out, the pressure to achieve value for money is leading many housing associations to reduce their space standards by buying design-and-build packages from the private developers who cater usually for a market where under-occupation is the norm. Not so in the social rented sector where housing is allocated on the *need* for bedrooms. In the past, while council tenants may have been unhappy about services and management from their landlord, there has been a high level of satisfaction with dwellings themselves. For the future, housing association tenants may be in the reverse situation of having responsive landlords but inadequate housing. Issues such as this bring us back to Keith Jacobs's question. While landlords can do more to build capacity among their tenants, the power of tenants is rarely great enough to overturn alliances between powerful players such as landlords and developers. Where tenants' voices have prevailed, as in the original model of the Housing Action Trust, they were backed by their local authority landlords. Other authors emphasise the way the rules of various policies actively constrain tenants' power. Matthew Warburton, in his chapter 'The changing role of local authority housing departments' (pp. 181-205 in Pinto) states that the ability of tenants to get involved in influencing the process of short listing contractors for CCT is constrained by the regulation that authorities must not act anti-competitively. Similarly the timetable for City Challenge and other regeneration initiatives, while purporting to create tenant empowerment, started with such a tight time scale that it was difficult for tenants to have any meaningful input into the five-year action plan. In some cases these large scale initiatives have been the first and only step into empowerment for tenants and, as Stewart & Taylor state, empowerment is not created or sustained by launching tenants into mega-initiatives and expecting them to scramble into the language and style of the power players. Stewart & Taylor conclude that the new emphasis on funding aids the growth of local voluntary initiatives, enabling a diversity of people to get involved and grow in confidence. These small, but growing at their own pace, groups may become effective critics and partners who can challenge the vision of the power players. We are also led into deeper concerns which we have yet to debate as a society,

such as the concept of payment for active citizenship as a means of creating a meaningful sense of identity for those who cannot create this out of waged work. In a society where it is increasingly clear that there are not enough hobs to go round, this is a debate which is gathering urgency.

These are two books which are not ostensibly about urban design but which offer food for thought for all those working with disempowered communities and seeking to engage in dialogue with their residents.

Housing and the Environment: A New Agenda

edited by Mark Bhatti, Jane Brooke and Mike Gibson, Chartered Institute of Housing, Coventry, 1995

Review by Rose Gilroy

(published by the *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* Vol 38 (4), pp 583-584, 1995)

This is one of a series of books produced by the Chartered Institute of Housing intended to provide housing policy makers and housing practitioners with insights from the cutting edge of debates .

This, however should not deter others from reading or learning a great deal from this book. This is certainly not a cook book: a series of good practice guide-lines for practitioners. It presents a scholarly and incremental examination of the inter face between housing and environmental concerns.

It begins by setting out a synopsis of the leading perspectives on the environment, giving quotes and follow up reading for those readers coming fresh to these debates. Mark Bhatti continues this theme by discussing the connection between environmental questions and the production of housing and simultaneously highlighting the lack of connection between housing and the wider debates. This point made in earlier years by Jim Kemeny on the lack of connection between housing and sociology demonstrates the way in which central government's short term thinking has now set the agenda in housing; turning practitioners into fire fighters and researchers into policy analysts. The ability of housing providers to implement long term strategies has been broken by erratic and competitive funding where current programmes are constantly in danger of being overtaken by waves of "next thingism". The agenda set by central government cuts directly across the fundamental need for sustained, long term and cohesive action demanded by those with environmental concerns. We see also the sterility of current housing measures of efficiency and effectiveness through performance indicators which concentrate on a restricted definition of efficiency and ignore the vital interactions between social, economic and environmental factors.

The book goes on to examine a range of responses from evaluations of local authority strategies to ways in which housing design and choice of materials by architects and self builders can contribute to sustainable development. However the extent to which new building can solve our problems is severely limited by lack of capital for social housing and the flattening of the market in owner occupation. The later chapters argue that unless very well thought out the building of new dwellings may simply eat more natural resources. While new property may be better insulated leading to less energy consumption, they eat up resources of timber; of green space; of fuel through transportation and often fuel through increased commuting. For the most part the action that social housing providers may take is limited to investment in existing housing stock.

The most interesting chapters are those by Tim Brown, Jane Brooke and Brenda Boardman who examine local authority strategies and focus on the need for participation and equity. It remains true that the poorest people in our society continue to pay most for their fuel in cold, damp properties and experience the highest level of environmental pollution. The group who may suffer most are older owner occupiers and private tenants who are most likely to be living in pre 1919 property which lack insulation and eat up costly fuel. What is needed is a comprehensive grant aid system which can be systematically used to improve the living conditions in these properties. What is needed before that is a radical change of attitude by central government. Increases in grant aid are not increases in welfare spending for poor people; they would be an investment in the future of all. In these central chapters the writers cogently argue the link between sustainability and housing inequality, putting forward a powerful case for holistic measures that pay attention to the economic and social needs of local communities.

This is a comprehensive and balanced examination of the issues and the possibilities for change. It should be essential reading for developers; for social housing providers; for planners and local campaigners green issues

SECTION 5

RECENT BOOKS ON CITIES AND DESIGN

Planning for Urban Quality: Urban design in towns and cities

by Michael Parker and Gordon Power, published by Routledge, London 1997

Review by Ali Madanipour

(published in *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, Vol pp 19

The book aims to examine the problems underlying and inhibiting the creation of greater urban quality in our environment. To do this, it tries to define urban quality and identifies a need to take stock of the machinery available for achieving urban quality and seeing how much of it is still useful in adapting to a changing context. This is then reflected in the structure of the book, which is organized in three parts. The first part is introductory and short, setting the scene for the rest of the book. Part two concentrates on introducing the town planning framework. It is an outline of the planning system as it deals with urban development and design. It starts from the context and mechanism for design advice, then moves on to the introduction of the statutory planning framework through policy guidance, development plans and development control, followed by a section on conservation and preservation. The development process is touched upon and measures for guidance and control and for obtaining urban quality and enhancement of urban environment are then outlined. The issues of publicity, controversy and education are mentioned and some of the main British debates on urban design are introduced.

The main theme of part three is urban quality. It starts by identifying urban quality as the embodiment of meaning, leading to the philosophy of context and the component factors of development quality. Then public realm, the problems arising from its neglect and decay, and its importance as a basis for modern urban design and quality are discussed. The next discussion is how to analyse situations and find issues and indicators for urban quality. Some case studies are introduced, leading to a series of discussions about modern architecture, design and technology, indicators, generators and criteria for urban quality, sustainability and old versus new. To introduce mechanisms for urban quality in a sustainable future, Urban Design Group and Community Development Trusts are discussed. At the end of the book, under the title, 'Notebook: special considerations', one and a half pages are devoted to women, racial, ethnic, and religious groups.

The text is supported by many photographs and examples provided by the authors and by the LDR (Land Design Research) International of Columbia, Maryland, USA, whose name is mentioned alongside the authors on the book's title page. Despite the use of examples from other western countries, the focus of the book and its targeted audience remain British.

The strengths of the book are twofold: it offers an outline of the British planning system and its dealing with the urban environment and it promotes a new, more positive role for planning. The book, therefore, may serve as a useful introductory text for those who wish to know about the planning system and urban design and their concerns. It offers a catalogue of issues of, and tools to deal with, urban environmental change. It also argues that planning must escape from its image of being too systematised, regulatory and negative, used to stop things happening. Instead, it must regain its previous creative role: enabling, guiding, and

moulding developmental change, a role that urban design is promoting. The authors are well placed to make this argument. They have been professionals in the fields of town planning and architecture with long-standing experience in senior positions in public and private sectors. Even after retirement in 1990, they have continued to be engaged in their professions through writing and consultancy.

The book has a clear technical and professional emphasis. It is written for trainee planners, plus architects and others interested in environmental quality. While this professional emphasis gives the book a focus and direction, it also restrains it from looking into the wide range of concerns and debates that are being discussed beyond the professional boundaries. Therefore, those who expect to find a problematization of the concepts of environmental quality or a contextualization of the nature and role of the various actors involved in spatial change will have to look to more academically oriented books. It is a positive development to argue that planning should not be confined to a negative perspective. It is also important for environmental professionals to acquire a critical awareness of the role of experts and the environment in which they operate.

Environmental Aesthetics: ideas, politics and planning

by J. Douglas Porteous, published by Routledge, London, 1996

Review by Ali Madanipour

(published in *Town Planning Review*, Vol pp 19)

"Why have our public environments become ugly wastelands or banal landscapes? How can psychology and cultural issues influence architecture and planning?". These words introduce this introductory overview which aims to promote environmental aesthetics as a new, interdisciplinary field. The book is essentially a review of literature from various fields relevant to (chiefly visual) environmental aesthetics and an attempt to offer a typology of the material. This typology, which the author had developed in the early 1980s, is based on two main criteria: a quest for rigour, which deals with the question of methodology, and a quest for relevance, which deals with the question of applicability. These two criteria are measured along the two axes of a graph: quantitative research methods are seen as more rigorous than qualitative ones and policy making more relevant than philosophical analysis of the subject. By classifying the literature along these lines, the approaches to environmental aesthetics fall in four areas, as produced by four groups: humanists, experimentalists, activists and planners. After a stage setting introduction, the book is then structured into four parts, each addressing one of these groups.

Humanists are critical observers of the relationship between people and environment and are involved in contemplation and generation of ideas, providing a source of inspiration for other groups. Their approach is qualitative, hermeneutic, non positivist, and dealing with human values. They are on the lowest point of the graph in terms of both rigour and relevance. More rigorous in method, but under-theorised and therefore complementary to humanists, are experimentalists, mainly environmental psychologists who undertake empirical research into the characteristics of the environment and the people who interact with it. Their environmental assessment measures are valuable in linking the humanist intuition with the realm of action. Activists are "conservative radicals, with a strong thrust toward preservation, conservation, and heritage values", mistrusting the ethical foundation of material progress. Citizens' direct action and the demand for public participation are major concerns here,

although action in the aesthetic realm is suffering from "the paralysing problem of elitism". Planners are more pragmatic. They use more rigorous methods than activists and humanists, and are more relevant than humanists and experimentalists. Their work, however, draws upon the other three groups: concepts generated by humanists, techniques developed by experimentalists, and pressures exerted by activists. Although interrelated, there are gaps and failures of communication between and within these four groups. For example, inside planning, there is a large gap between urban and non-urban or landscape issues. Another gap is between the expert methods of assessment and public preference studies, which leads to a gap between planners and the public, as these are used in public policy formulation and implementation. The main issue, however, is not technical or methodological, but how to improve communication between the public, the researchers, and the planners to develop an integrated and long term approach towards environment and its aesthetics.

Despite overlaps and lacunae, the typology of four groups is an interesting one, as it covers both areas of knowledge and action. Notable omissions include a discussion of what philosophers have to say about the subject of aesthetics, as it is a major subsection of philosophy. The book argues strongly against bureaucrats and corporate power for their instrumentalism and lack of attention to environmental aesthetics. It could also address the way these powers manipulate and promote aesthetics for their own gains, as exemplified by the aestheticization of everyday life for commercial reasons. Although the book attempts to strike a balance, non-urban aesthetics are more extensively treated than urban aesthetics. The book rightly rejects the view that aesthetic judgement is entirely subjective. It is not, however, without idiosyncratic remarks or unnecessary generalisations, such as the repeated condemnation of the United States' cult of ugliness. It is hard to disagree with the author's wish that, "an educated citizenry, currently so entranced by the aesthetics of the personal, might well be able to carry this enthusiasm over into a more widespread concern for the aesthetics of the public environment". It is true that aesthetics can be closely linked with ethics. The development of an environmental religion, however, may not be the way forward. Nevertheless, this is a useful introductory overview, bringing together insights from otherwise unrelated literature. At the same time, as the author admits, it has "merely scraped the surface" of the subject.

Building the Public City: The Politics, Governance and Finance of Public Infrastructure

edited by David Perry, published by Sage, Thousand Oaks, California, 1995

Review by Angela Hull

(published in *Cities*, Vol 13 (3) 1996 pp 222-224)

This is the latest (no 43) in the Urban Affairs Annual Review series from Susan Clarke and Dennis Judd which aims to present an interdisciplinary perspective on a common urban theme. David Perry has edited and contributed to the six essays that chart the fitful and conflictive initiatives that comprise public infrastructure policy in the U.S.A. To account for the present perceived neglect of and obsolescence in the nation's 'public' infrastructure, the authors immerse the reader in the institutional politics of the early twentieth century and the 'hard' political choices between social equity and economic productivity made in building the early highways and sewers. They highlight the reticulist and political skills required to overcome the fragmented institutional relationships of city politics to provide the "sinews" of our present more technologically advanced society.

Jameson Doig shows the relentless zeal of Othmar Ammann in building up the organisational and political capacity to span the Hudson river with his bridge design. Doig employs biographical methods to reveal how Ammann first prepared the political ground with local politicians, business people and resident's associations so as to "work through the proper combination of engineering, aesthetic, and political designs"(p.36). Then through the visual and verbal persuasion of his design, he responded to the fears of the local civic groups and political officials.

Robert Mier draws on six years experience with the Chicago administration as Commissioner of Economic Development and Deputy Mayor of Development to illustrate the tensions for a populist, participatory leader like Mayor Harold Washington who comes to power determined to depart from the "historical cozy relationship between city hall and business and labor leadership" and their traditional growth-oriented policies (p73). The test for Washington's nerve came when Chicago hosted the World Fair in 1992. A coalition of citizen's organisations questioned the revenue raising estimates of the Fair's promoters and lobbied for the substantial public subsidy to be distributed into areas of the city and among populations in need. The mayor's call for small dispersed projects with community involvement was firstly slanted to better off neighbourhoods by technical officers and then to large scale sporting projects by the mayor's own cabinet. Meir's analysis, like Krumholz and Forester's (1990)⁴ before him, points to the need to develop consensus, forge broad alliances, fight rearguard actions and find a confidence-building public language to achieve reform.

Claire Felbinger's literature review seeks to unpack the official rationale for federal infrastructure subsidies in stimulating economic development. This infrastructure/ economic development link in American history, underpinned by civil engineers, has skewed federal funds towards new capital projects with little emphasis being placed on the administrative and managerial networks to plan, build, maintain and finance physical infrastructure systems. In her critical analysis of the funding system she seeks to show that the expected economic development payoff of infrastructure investment is negligible for cities, that current policy disproportionately benefits the relatively affluent 'employables' who reside in the suburbs/edge of city and that the burden for infrastructure maintenance falls to the local level. Citing Detroit and Cleveland, she argues that the knock-on effect of this funding system at local level is to defer maintenance, to deprive "non-developable areas" of vital services that protect and enhance their health, safety and convenience, and to promote infrastructure advances in telecommunications in preference to "non essential" wastewater treatment facilities.

James Leigland focuses on the growing role of "special purpose governments" in circumventing public borrowing restrictions in the U.S.A. These bodies have been active over the last two decades as bond banks and development authorities offering loans and subsidies to other government agencies. Though designed for a limited purpose their ability to operate outside of the regular executive state and local government structure has enabled them to creatively use their freedom to negotiate development impact fees and "exactions" or additional facilities from developers. Through their use of revenue bonds they have increased their share of long-term tax-exempt borrowing from 30% to 75%, but more than half of this, claims Leigland, is channelled into private housing mortgages, loans to developers, businesses and students, and not to physical public infrastructure. The 1986 Tax Reform Act has sought to restrict this wider remit. Leigland uses case studies to show that it is not the

⁴ Krumholz, N., and Forester, J., (1990), *Making Equity Planning Work: Leadership in the Public Sector*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

organisational framework that is the key explanatory variable but finances, scale, technology and political leadership to tackle the infrastructure crisis.

Heywood Sanders 'manipulates' aggregate spending figures to unpack the perceived social problem in the U.S.A. of the "looming infrastructure crisis" whose solution offered is usually posed as double or triple infrastructure spending or forfeit future economic growth. He submits that the problem is concentrated in a few states and locales and is a reflection of deliberate choices by these states to rely on federal aid for infrastructure whilst reducing their own spending. This is compounded by the lack of political leadership and initiative by these states in requesting additional funds via bonds or higher taxes for infrastructure maintenance. Sanders suggests that federal aid should be targetted at specific problems and should require a commensurate financial contribution from recipients.

David Perry concludes with a review of the history of the search for a solution to the question of who should repay the debt on infrastructure loans in building American cities. The issue of finance is as important as the issue of technology transfer in the service of a social or economic need. Since the 1930s depression, new public agencies have been used as a "backdoor way" to finance public works through evading debt limits, political dependencies and voter accountability. Citing examples from New York State, Perry asks how far can we continue selling the city to make ends meet? This book has been an absorbing summer holiday read, with lessons still to be learnt by British city administrations.

Building Cities that Work

by Edmund Fowler, published by McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 1992

Review by Ali Madanipour

(published in the *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, Vol pp 19)

What distinguishes this book from a long line of criticisms of the post-war urban development patterns, which created endless dull suburbs and inhuman tower-blocks, is its combination of urban design and environmental concerns. The focus of the book, as inspired by Jane Jacobs, is to unravel, and explain the reasons for, the lack of physical diversity in American and Canadian cities. The author, who stresses the similarities of these different cities, identifies physical diversity as: mix of building age, shortness of block length, concentration of use, and land use mix.

The physical features of the post-war, North American urban environments are easy to identify: the scale of the developments is too large, as exemplified by office and residential high rise complexes and suburban estates. they are de-concentrated, workplaces and dwellings sprawling over the countryside- and are homogeneous: architecturally, socially, and functionally. The first part of the book is an attempt to recount the economic, social, and political consequences of this lack of diversity. Among these consequences are the enormous costs of the development and maintenance of the urban transportation systems and the immature political culture of the new urban areas. Others include the loss of a sense of orientation and personal identity and denying children the possibility of socialisation.

The second part, "Exploring why we built this way", offers some explanations.

Economically, the coalition of the business and labour for growth led to an economic boom in

the post-war period, when large corporations created a landscape of consumption. Politically, the pro-growth stance of local governments, with their strong links with the development industry, gave them an active part in the urban development. Culturally, the sacredness of home ownership and the need to segregate family relationships from the production process were among the main factors shaping the patterns of urban development. The urban form, whose component parts are the huge office complexes, the shopping centres, the industrial parks, and the vast stretches of suburban housing, is the physical expression of the multinational corporations and their flow of placeless, international capital. It is against this background that the author shows a deep mistrust of the large scale political and economic organisations. To be protected from these *large* enemies, therefore, small is the idealised refuge. To build cities that work, what is required is physical diversity, which is only achievable at the local level through "authentic politics", within the sphere of individuals and small groups, "in small scale, diverse spaces where a variety of face-to-face interactions occur naturally"(p. 118). The first step is to gain awareness at the individual and group level, which could lead to new patterns of behaviour and relationships, creating "more civilised cities and a more enlightened level of existence on this planet" (p.200).

The book can serve as an interesting introductory text on the relationship of urban fabric with urban development processes. It is not, however, without its shortcomings. The main empirical evidence, i.e., the case studies of nineteen Toronto neighbourhoods, which are presented through "personal and subjective descriptions" (p. 14), were undertaken in the late 1970s. This has led to leaving out a) the major political and economic changes since then, which could have transformed the outcome of the case studies both for the lived experiences of the residents and their evaluation of these experiences, and b) the post-modern urban development projects, which so often claim to have contrasted the post-war patterns of modernist design. The strength of the argument is further undermined when this absence of recent case studies is coupled with an, almost emotional, absence of a fine-grained analysis of the political and economic agencies. This has then resulted in sweeping statements describing the nation state as "a war machine" (p. 193) and the local government as an organization that performs "conventional politics" with the main function of servicing and protecting the private property (p. 150). Without giving an analysis of the last two decades' fundamental changes in economic and administrative structures and their impact on new urban forms, the book's capacity to call for physical diversity remains limited.

SECTION 6

RECENT BOOKS ON CONSERVATION ISSUES

Conservation and the City

by Peter J Larkham, Routledge, London, 1996

Price: hb £50.00, pb £17.99, pp 329

Review by Tim Townshend

(published in *Town Planning Review* Vol 69 (3) pp 354-356 1998)

Conservation of the built environment is not the narrow specialism that it once was. With over 9000 conservation areas countrywide, covering a vast variety of morphological types, it is an integral part of planning policy and process. Until relatively recently, however, there has been something of a paucity of really well researched challenging texts, examining the role of conservation in and its often uneasy links to, mainstream planning in the UK. A certain exception to this, however, has been the work Peter Larkham, who over the past 10 years or so, has perhaps added more to our understanding of the role of conservation and changing urban landscapes, through a series of publications, than any other individual, or group, in the UK.

Larkham's latest book *Conservation and the City* is set out in three parts; 'The conservation background', 'The changing conserved town' and 'Implications of conservation: ethics, theory and practice'. The introductory chapters of part 1 are basically scene setting, containing material which will generally be familiar to anyone who has carried out modest research in the field. From the second part onwards, however, the work is firmly based on the authors empirical research and insight. Chapter 5, begins the section with a comparative examination of other countries' area based approaches to conservation. In this section Larkham pulls no punches in his criticism of the trends he finds. Compared to other countries the author suggests that the UK appears to have 'greatly over designated' (p131). Moreover, in Chapter 7 through detailed examination of a series of case studies, the author suggests that local policies relating to conservation areas are sometimes elusive and where found are often 'negative' and 'reactive' (p162).

In chapter 10 the author goes on to explore the ways in which new development can be inserted in cityscapes through various means. In particular he examines the increased use of facadism, both in terms of retaining historic facades to disguise new development and in terms of creating pseudo-historic ones, often under the generic banner of 'conservation'. In fact of course many conservationists would argue most facadism has little to do with true conservation; architects equally would claim in many instances it is debasing the creative process; the public on the other hand may well be ambivalent to the process. It is a good example of an issue in conservation about which there is no consensus and no agreed set of ethics, a topic which the author addresses in his last section.

The overarching message which strongly comes across from section 2 is that the conservation system in the UK is one of confusion and conflict, of disparate practices and far from universal ideals. This may appear harsh criticism, but it is undoubtedly a fair reflection of the existing situation. Researchers for sometime have recognised that there is a lack of general agreed ethics of conservation, or indeed any underpinning of policy and practice with a really

sound theory of managing historical townscape. The author uses this latter point to introduce the final section of the book which though only one chapter in length perhaps contains the most interesting debates of the volume.

Larkham begins his analysis of ethics by examining parallels in other fields, art, music and the conservation of mechanical devices. In each he finds a considerable amount of consistency in the use of terminology, for example, restoration, replication, originality and so on, though the definitions vary considerably between the fields. He concludes that ethical concepts derived from other areas of conservation have something to offer the field of the built environment, yet he fails to try and apply these to townscape as a whole, as opposed to individual buildings, which would undoubtedly prove impossibly complex.

The larger part of this chapter, however, is to espouse the morphological approach of Conzen, as a basis for historical townscape management; as set out, for example, in Conzen's study of historical British towns (Conzen, 1966). Conzen's work bases the management of the future of a townscape on its historicity, utilising three basic building blocks; building form, land-use patterns and the town plan. The in-built complexity of Conzen's approach, however, requires an extremely high level of dedicated resources. Given that most local authorities do not even have basic management plans for their conservation areas due to the lack of resources in this field, trying to replicate Conzen's work would be virtually impossible for most areas. Moreover as the author admits though conceptually useful it does not constitute a 'theory of conservation' (p270).

The brevity of this final section is perhaps a little disappointing. Though the author clearly acknowledges the need for a generally approved theoretical underpinning of conservation policy and practice, this chapter perhaps raises more questions than it answers. It is this aspect of conservation which unquestionably needs most urgent attention. Challenging present policy and practice is all very fine and good, but unless it leads towards a clearer philosophical rationale for conservation, then the task is somewhat futile. Indeed, it is somewhat depressing to note that the lack of a clear philosophy of conservation has been a topic of discussion among commentators since at least the early 1950s (Harvey, 1972, p213).

Conservation and the City is a competent work by an established authority in this field. The text is clear and concise and contains many useful illustrations. Although some of the material will not be new to the established researcher, the work is a key text and absolutely essential for students at all levels. The main criticism that might be levelled at it is that the work is too heavily biased towards the examination of current developments and a little light in its examination of theory and ethics. In the future, therefore, it is to be hoped that Larkham continues to research in this area and perhaps in particular to expand on some of the ideas he introduces in his concluding chapter.

Conzen, M. R. G., 'Historical Townscapes in Britain: a problem in applied geography' in, House, J.W. (ed.) *Northern Geographical essays in honour of G. H. J. Daysh*, Newcastle, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, pp 56-78, (1966).

Harvey, J., *Conservation of Buildings* London, John Baker, (1972).

Building Conservation Philosophy

by J. Earl, for the College of Estate Management, Reading 1996

Conservation in the Built Environment

by R.D. Pickard, Longman, Harlow, Essex, 1996

Joint Review by John Pendelbury

(published in the *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* Vol 40 (6) 1997 pp 805-806)

The literature of building conservation has been burgeoning over recent years and yet there has been a surprising lack of texts for students which attempt to examine the philosophy of interventions on historic buildings, or which attempt to synthesise philosophy with the procedural context of the planning system. At a time when building conservation is emerging as an independent profession, combined with a rapid expansion in the number of academic courses in what is seen as a growth area, in their quite different ways these two texts represent timely additions to the literature of the subject.

The slimmer volume of the two, and narrower in its focus, is Earl's highly personal reflections on the philosophy of conservation. Philosophical judgements clearly underlie the actions of those involved in the conservation of buildings. However, though there are commonly cited principles there is no clear philosophical consensus. British practitioners variously rely on such documents as the SPAB manifesto, dating back as it does to 1877, and the Burra Charter, produced in 1982 by the Australian branch of ICOMOS. Earl looks at many of the key issues as a series of discussion points, rather than presenting a definitively stated position as found in manifestos and charters. His overall conclusion is that there is no single 'right' approach and the correct approach in a given situation will derive from as full an understanding of a building or site as possible. Essentially Earl argues for a holistic approach to conservation and against 'skin deep preservation'. He also recognises that works that are not 'good conservation' may have validity. He cites the reconstruction of ruined buildings in Warsaw after the second world war, in an effort to recover the past, as an unarguably acceptable action as part of a process of national healing. Many of Earl's arguments are familiar but there is much to stimulate and reflect on for the experienced practitioner or academic as well as the student. Not least of these is the desirability of critical reflection - with engaging humility he writes 'All philosophical writings, *including this study*, should be read with an extremely critical eye'.

Pickard's text is broader in its scope and more of a traditional text book in style. He attempts to draw together a wide range of aspects of conservation, from the procedural framework of the planning system, through conservation philosophy, current topical debates and the principles of project management. In doing so he has filled something of a gap in the market and done a great service to the student of conservation. The book starts with a number of chapters outlining the conservation system as it relates to listed buildings and at times the book becomes too procedurally focused for this reader. The relationship between planning law and conservation is one area already covered adequately by other texts and it makes this book a little stodgy in places. It becomes a much better read as it develops and deals with themes such as listed buildings at risk, the philosophy and principles of repair and the management of conservation projects. Themes are developed through some excellent use of case study material, such as the regeneration of Wirksworth in Derbyshire or contextual development at Seven Dials, Bath. It is surely these more discursive sections which are more likely to engage the student new to the subject, and it is through covering these themes that Pickard is most usefully filling a vacuum.

There are two weaknesses common to both books. Both texts largely concentrate on the conservation of buildings; the conservation of areas and other aspects of the historic environment, such as parks and gardens are given relatively brief treatment by Pickard and none by Earl. Though it might be argued that these matters are outside the scope of these texts this is still perhaps a weakness as conservation broadens its scope and seeks to more holistically embrace the wider cultural heritage. Secondly, neither author produces a particularly helpful bibliography; Pickard's extensive referencing is chapter by chapter and Earl produces the thinnest of bibliographies. As both these texts are aimed at students a more guided approach to further reading would be helpful. More positively, both texts make extensive use of Appendices to helpfully reproduce manifestos, charters etc. Each book make appropriate use of illustrations to develop points, in Pickard's case (to this reviewer) with a refreshingly northern bias!

Overall, both Earl and Pickard have produced worthy books, both in their different ways filling clear holes in the literature, and both deserve to find themselves high on the reading lists of conservation students.

Politics and Preservation: A policy history of the built heritage 1882-1996

by John Delafons, E & FN Spon, London, 1997

Price not given; pp 215

Review by Tim Townshend

(published in **Journal of Environmental Planning & Management** Vol 41 (4) p 522)

Until very recently there was something of a dearth of really well researched, challenging, contemporary texts relating the conservation of the built environment to the wider UK planning system. This can no longer be said to be the case. Larkham has provided a very competent critique of conservation policy and practice in contemporary cities (Larkham, 1996) and now in *Politics and Preservation*, Delafons provides an extremely detailed account of the progress of conservation legislation through the political process and the way policy has changed to reflect wider social and cultural influences.

The work is deliberately chronological record the progress of conservation thinking and policy from the mid 19th century to the present day. It is during the examination of the post war period that Delafons really becomes interesting, however, and his personal insight into the workings of the civil service and government shine through. One of the most interesting aspects of this period to be included by the author, is a copy of the original instructions given in the strictest confidence to the compilers of lists of buildings of special architectural, or historic, interest in 1944. Extracts of the instructions are appended to the main text and prove highly illuminating to the thinking of those who drafted them, (though it should be noted this material is also covered by Earl, 1996). Though selectivity is stressed in the instructions, particularly interesting are the wide spectrum of historical buildings which are recommended for consideration. Industrial, religious, social, military and agricultural buildings are all included. This does appear to be extremely progressive thinking for this date and well ahead of more general public opinion, which is no doubt partly the reason the instructions were shrouded in secrecy at the time.

There are a number of important themes which run through Delafons work, one which he returns to frequently, is the fact that the development of conservation has really been quite

unrelated to main stream planning. For the greater part since the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, for example, the two government functions have been managed by different departments. Moreover, key players in the development of planning policy have often been quite indifferent, if not actually antagonistic to the cause of conservation. Quoting from Richard Crossman's diaries of the 1960s he reveals how Dame Evelyn Sharp, is portrayed as a 'modern iconoclast' clearly distinguishing between 'modern planning' and 'reactionary preservation' (p94); one might presuppose that many contemporary planners would have shared her views. Even during EAHY, the author suggests that there was a great deal of ambivalence towards conservation from many planners (p133) and as recently as the inception of English Heritage the gaps between the two were very much in evidence (p140).

As has been stated, however, perhaps the most important theme to Delafons work is the advocacy role for conservation taken on by particular politicians, highlighted through every formative stage of conservation legislation. This is interesting in itself, but it may well be that there is a far more important related issue underlying this theme. The basic truth is that conservation in the UK is founded on an accumulation of actions, some individual, some group based, some reflecting widely drawn opinions, others reflecting much narrower concerns. The result is that whilst there has been a profusion of legislation, of government policy and guidance on conservation, combined with a proliferation of listed buildings and conservation areas, there is really no generally agreed set of ethics, or philosophy of conservation, on which these are based. This is a point that becomes glaringly obvious through this text, though perhaps needed more explicit emphasis.

In his final chapter, Delafons challenges the present system of conservation in this country and suggests that it is unsustainable and that a thorough overhaul is necessary. In brief, in his view there should ideally be a rationalisation of listed buildings and conservation areas and clear devolution to the local level. This is perhaps the least satisfactory chapter of the work, not that the authors suggestions aren't in many ways eminently sensible. Certainly the plea for strengthening local democracy and increasing public participation in local conservation found a great deal of favour with this reader. There is, however, a much deeper problem relating back to above points about philosophy. There is surely little point in tinkering with the mechanics of the system, until a really searching and critical examination of the rationale for conservation has been carried out.

Politics and Preservation is an extremely well written work by an authoritative author. Some of the subject matter could easily be a little dry, yet the personal insights into the work render it extremely readable and even quite entertaining in places. There is no doubt that this is a major work in the field of conservation and it is essential reading for undergraduate and postgraduate students undertaking research. Unquestionably, however, there are many conservation practitioners who would also enjoy and quite probably benefit, from reading it too.

References:

- Earl, J., (1996) *Building Conservation Philosophy*, Reading, College of Estate Management.
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SECTION 7

RECENT BOOKS IN PLANNING THEORY AND RELATED CONTRIBUTIONS

Critical Theory, Public Policy and Planning Practice

by John Forester, published by The State University of New York Press, Albany, USA, 1993

Review by Angela Hull

(published in *Cities*, Vol pp 19xx)

This book explores the critical and ethical issues of planning practice. Although not a definitive statement on the subject it represents ten years of hunches about public administration which have born fruit in this text as well as Forester's (1989) complementary text *Planning in the Face of Power*. In this respect it provides a timely and thought provoking analysis of social action in contemporary regulatory structures,

He sets out a critical social theory that informs three areas: research methodology, policy analysis and the praxis of professional planners. He aims to enhance our sensitivities to the structuring process of discourses and their relation to knowledge and power. Throughout the seven chapters this critical theory is underpinned by Habermasian theories on structure and action, and concepts of communicative action and the lifeworld, He seeks to provide a framework to integrate existing ethnographic, structural and historical approaches.

Chapter I offers a critique of contemporary decision making and policy analysis by using Habermas's theory of communicative action as a counterpoint. It is through our speaking and acting together that we make sense of our lives. As we speak, we make four claims on our audience. that we're speaking the truth, that the values we invoke are legitimate, that we are trustworthy, and that our expressive gestures will also be understood. In the absence of coercion, Habermas's hypothesis is that the force of the better argument will prevail. This very neat analysis of communication provides the structure to analyse the social and political effects of those who seek to influence social action whether a public sector or private sector institution, or an autonomous individual.

Chapter 2 extends this analytical framework arguing that theoretical accounts of planning practice must be empirically fitting, practically appropriate, and ethically illuminating. Forester assesses conventional views of planning practice against these criteria finding them lacking. The claims-making structure of communicative action 'organises' and 'disorganises' the attention of others. Research questions should highlight these attention-directing pressures at three levels of analysis: (a) the structural level, where the social capacity to pay attention is concentrated with control of all forms of capital; (b) the organisational level, where the use of mandates structure and change the beliefs of their members and those they affect; and (c) the practice level, within which the daily interactions of planners frame the attention of others. Chapter 3 explores the n-micro politics of planning practice suggesting how planners can become aware of the existence of 'distorted communications' and through their questioning role shape the possibilities for 'good design' and 'right actions'.

Chapters 4 and 5 put some flesh onto the concepts of 'situated rational action' and 'social learning'. Reviewing the contribution from Simon, Weber, Lindblom and Marx on rational action, Forester situates planning practice within a wider institutional-structural context

which curtails rational action. He categorises these bounds as either 'necessary' or 'unnecessary', and 'ad hoc' or 'systemic-structural'. Such distortions to the ideal speech situation could include information deficiency or transmission problems, gamesmanship and deception, monopolistic control of information and creation of need, or the ideological rationalisation of class or power structure. Unfortunately there is very little attempt to unpack these concepts or weight their relative distortive effects. For instance, cognitive limitations, such as personality traits preventing effective communication and random noise are given the same importance as the structural limitations identified by Marx. In proclaiming an important role for chief planners in anticipating and working to counteract such distortions, some indication of the terrain of power dimensions would have been helpful here. Forester, eludes to the institutional pressures which work through the media of power and money, bureaucratisation and commodification, and poses the question of the theoretical framework to be used to understand a given planning situation but, has yet to make the structural links between the state and wider economic-political forces.

In the final two chapters, Forester uses Habermas' theory of society for a deeper understanding of the structural-institutional environment. He links the three dimensions of social reproduction (cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation) to the three structural components of Habermas's lifeworld (culture, society, and personality). Anchored within this structure, Habermas sees the capitalist economic system and the state regulatory bureaucracy as mediating institutions connecting actions to structure and vice versa. These institutions, the 'social infrastructure' as Forester terms them, include hospitals, schools, churches, courts, trade unions, firms, associations etc, serve to institutionalise accepted norms and shape interaction. They themselves, too, are shaped and altered by policy initiatives involving flows of finance, regulatory powers, information, and role assignments. These institutions, with the distorting effects of their use of power, provide the structural context for Forester's normative praxis which seeks to be aware of the structuring of discourse and to promote conditions of democratic discourse and co-operative social organization.

In conclusion, Forester provides us with the beginnings of a framework which integrates the micro-level theories of critical ethnography with the pluralist and institutional analyses. As such this is text which should be read by all decision makers situated within public sector mediating institutions currently being undermined by strategies which seek to curtail community participation. Forester achieves his aim of sensitising us to the pervasive disciplinary structuring of discourses. On a methodological level, I would question the effectiveness, on its own, of a phenomenological approach which relies on interpreting experiential interactions. In order to understand the distorting effects of power a range of empirical and theoretical approaches are required. Critical social theory should now explore the existence of different levels of domination and the distinction between visible and hidden power.

Planning as Persuasive Storytelling: the Rhetorical Construction of Chicago's Electric Future

by James Throgmorton, published by the University of Chicago Press, 1996

Review by Patsy Healey

(to be published in the *Journal of Planning Education and Research*)

In this book, Throgmorton makes a contribution to planning theory and practice on three interconnected levels. Firstly, he advances and consolidates a theoretical position within the 'interpretive' or 'communicative' perspective. Secondly, he provides a rich account of the perspectives and dilemmas surrounding the regulation of utilities provision. Thirdly, he offers an example of the method of 'storytelling' in policy analysis. This book will therefore be of interest to planning scholars and students in planning theory, utilities regulation and qualitative methods in policy analysis. But Throgmorton's ambitions are wider than this, and he has sought to write a readable and accessible book for practitioners and concerned citizens interested in the politics of planning issues and in how the reflective use of rhetoric can 'make a difference'.

The structure of the book follows a traditional case study form. First we have the theory, which tells the conceptual story of the decline of 'modernist planning' and the rise of the 'rhetorical turn'. The story of the struggle between Commonwealth Edison, the monopoly electricity producer and supplier in the Chicago area, and its regulators and the citizens and the City of Chicago, then occupies the rest of the book. To help make this account 'come alive', the characters are illustrated by photographs and sometimes thumbnail sketches. Finally, we are given an interpretation of the story as it illustrates Throgmorton's ideas of the planner as the writer of 'story-making' texts. To remind us that the making of persuasive texts is a complex task, there are regular inserts which discuss the use of particular words and their meanings. In recognition that texts are 'authored' and that the personality of the author intrudes, Throgmorton tells us something about himself and the study and, as he goes along, the writing he is involved in.

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Theoretically, Throgmorton consolidates the contribution he has already made to the 'interpretive turn' in planning theory. He takes for granted that planning work is an active task of the discursive constitution of options and possibilities. Through his previous papers, we have been made aware of the value of the tools of linguistics and rhetorics in analysing such discursive work. In this account, Throgmorton adds more about the context in which such discursive work is done. In a language which has parallels with new institutionalist understanding of social and economic dynamics⁶, he understands this context as a world of cross-cutting and intersecting networks or 'webs of relationships'. In the development of his thinking in this respect, he draws on the literature on information networks (Castells 1989) and the processes of production, validation and diffusion of scientific knowledge (Latour 1987), adding a valuable infusion into the existing 'communicative planning literature'.

Throgmorton argues that we should consider planning as:

a form of persuasive and constitutive story-telling (about the future) that occurs within webs of relationships and partial truths. (p. xiv)

Planners are therefore:

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⁶ see Healey, P. 1997 *Collaborative Planning* London, Macmillan for a summary

future-oriented storytellers who write persuasive and constitutive texts that other people read (construct and interpret) in diverse and often conflicting ways (p. 46).

This idea of planners throwing in carefully-crafted rhetorical products into a dynamic and fluid 'shared-power world' (Bryson and Crosby 1992) of multiple and shifting discourses, attempting to co-ordinate and stabilise the discursive climate for at least a little, will resonate with the understanding of many practitioners and researchers on planning practice.

Throgmorton's notion of the web of relations, however, takes us beyond much of the 'communicative planning' literature's emphasis on how planners do their work, to looking at planning work as it operates within complex and dynamic institutional contexts.

Throgmorton's account gives many insights into the structuring forces shaping the actions of the various actors in the utility regulation story and the way their dilemmas in turn acts back recursively on these wider forces. But I am left with doubts about the tools of rhetorical analysis to capture the nature of planning work. There is much in the story told here which could be handled with the emerging tools of interpretive policy analysis. These focus not just on metaphors and tropes, but on what leads to 'discursive turns' and how new discourse coalitions are built up etc. I also wonder whether the idea of the planner as producers of texts is itself too limiting. In some instances, planners may in fact be merely the 'scribes' of other people's texts, or in instances of collaborative planning work, be involved in complex tasks of collective discourse formation.

The utilities regulation story is told as a form of tragedy of incomprehension and technical incompetence. Energy planners for the utilities company thought their priority was to expand production through major investments in nuclear power and that they could pass on the costs of this to the consumer since the regulation of their rate levels was based on calculations of rates of return. But as levels of energy consumption fell, to the surprise of the company, this meant rapidly rising rates for citizens and businesses who were having a hard time economically anyway. It was also increasingly offensive to many that the company seemed to think that expansion itself was a good thing, when all the environmental arguments were stressing reducing energy consumption by conservation measures. Throgmorton shows us how difficult it was for the company's experts to accept that they were living in a shared-power world, where they could be challenged from many directions, while the citizens and the city of Chicago found it hard to find a persuasive rhetoric to mobilise citizen and business concern and to find a practicable solution to what became a prolonged impasse. This is a fascinating case, unfolded over a long time scale so the discursive evolution can be well-observed. But it is also a case of overt and at times very hostile and public confrontation, told largely through observations of the arenas of interchange between the parties. It would have been interesting to know more about what was going on inside the organisational culture of the electricity company. Throgmorton's account is of the poverty of planners' rhetorical work in this case. This made me wonder whether we would get more insights by observing more routine planning operations, where planners are contributing to maintaining 'storylines' over time.

Finally, what about Throgmorton's own story-telling method? Despite all his thought about the craft, the story reads as yet another tale of 'local politics'. It is only occasionally that the characters come alive, and the deficiencies of their rhetorical strategies become obvious to them. (It is interesting the few times where this happens are what I most remember about the story). Also, Throgmorton's reflective insertions interrupt the flow in what is a difficult story to keep track of, rather than helping the story along. In the end, I stopped reading them.

Maybe it would have been better to 'tell the story straight' and then reflect on it. This emphasises that the craft of 'telling good policy stories' is a very difficult one and we need more experimentation to find models that work.

I hope that my synthetic summary of Throgmorton's persuasive conceptual and empirical storytelling, succeeds in persuading planning scholars and students of JPER that this is a rich and rewarding book which readers will enjoy and be stimulated by on several levels.

The Language of the Environment: a new rhetoric

by George Myerson and Yvonne Rydin, published by UCL Press, 1996

Review by Patsy Healey

(published in *Local Environment* Vol 2 (3) 1997 pp 333-335)

This is an intriguing and stimulating book, which grapples with one of the most challenging issues of our time, the relation between scientific and moral argument in environmental discourse. It does this by using the tools of rhetorical analysis to tease out the dynamics of the interlocking arguments in contemporary texts on environmental issues and the way issues of fact and value are established and contested.

The authors base their work on a collation of texts from newspapers and articles available these days in CD ROM and other forms which enable scanning and processing. This allowed them to identify texts where use was made of references to over 100 words linked to 'environment'. From this mass of material they identify what they refer to as an 'environet' of interconnected linkages and meanings. Their book presents an interpretive account of this 'environet'. The analysis proceeds by three layers of exploration. The first looks at the 'topics' which are discussed, covering resources, population, biodiversity, pollution, global warming and sustainable development. Using extracts from their material, they show the way each topic is 'recreated' in the particular text, and in doing so, calls up references to other arguments. They show in particular how new concepts enter the discourse, and challenge and re-align the old. For example, the concept of 'resources' is being re-shaped within a broader and more integrated meaning than that in established economics and environmental science. New concepts in turn lead to new measurements, new facts and new values. They conclude this analysis by emphasising the fluid and open nature of environmental argumentation in the contemporary period, through which new meanings and practices are created, diffused and absorbed into 'taken for granted' understandings.

The second layer of analysis focuses on the stance or 'ethos' adopted in these arguments. Here they demonstrate how arguments, whether about fact or value, are constructed in relation to the position of the arguer. Science in this perspective is as much socially constructed as is moral argument, in a babel of truth claims, most of which hold some truth for the arguer. The authors insist that there is no ultimate objectivity through which we can escape from this condition. Instead, we have to learn how to listen for and understand the 'truth' in the arguments around us. The third layer explores the mechanics of argumentation - the use of metaphor, irony and association. These devices serve to create new connections and new ideas through which to explore environmental issues, and allow argument to swoop from specific concerns about, say a pollution incident, to a re-assessment of our world views. But this leaves environmental arguments 'deeply irresolvable' (p.181). The penultimate chapter then explores how, through argumentation, it is possible to move from perceptions of crisis

and catastrophe to some way of stabilising different views and moving onwards. This leads to their conclusions. They claim that we are living in a contemporary culture in which our argumentation about the environment represents our culture thinking about itself. Drawing on recent work by Lindblom⁷, they challenge the view that requires a precise answer to every environmental question, the 'answer culture' in which they suggest we are now living. They propose instead that we should move to an 'argument culture', in which we learn to explore and reflect on the diversity of arguments, not expect precise answers.

The answer culture told stories about knowledge saving the world ... The stories are still compelling, but they can only be possible stories now, not necessary stories. We need to add new narratives about modernity, narratives in which the limits of the answers are not fatal to the hopes of progress. in which the answer is partial, or provisional, or contested, yet in which there is still a possible advance (pp. 227-8).

In this conclusion, the authors add to and enrich the growing literature on the 'argumentative turn in policy analysis and planning'⁸, both in terms of method and the substantive analysis of environmental argument. As a contributor to this literature myself⁹, I am very much in sympathy with their 'ethos' and conclusions. However, I am not so sure about the method. The authors in effect extract the texts from the situation of their production, on the assumption that we are living in some kind of unified cultural community within which all these arguments are taking place. My own observation is that we live in more diverse cultural communities, with different systems of meaning and ways of thinking. There are many who do not live in an 'answer culture', but convey meaning and understanding in other ways. Of course, in our crowded, multi-media worlds, we keep encountering each other, but that does not mean we share common frames of reference or ways of arguing. This means methodologically that the analysis of argumentation needs to be specifically situated. Analytically, this can lead to exploration of what happens when people mobilise to change meanings, and what it takes for new meanings to be accepted¹⁰. It should encourage study of the subtle changes in interpretation which happen when particular environmental concepts are 'translated' from one arena to another¹¹. But such reservations merely serve to show how stimulating and insightful the new 'interpretive policy analysis' is turning out to be. Myerson and Rydin are to be congratulated for their innovative contribution to this field as well as for helping us to see more clearly the dynamics of the argumentative forms of contemporary environmental discourse.

Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference

by David Harvey, published by Blackwells, Oxford 1996

Review by Patsy Healey

(published in *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* Vol 25 (3) pp474-476 1998)

⁷ Lindblom, C.E. 1990 *Inquiry and change: the troubled attempt to understand and shape society* New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press

⁸ Fischer F and Forester J. eds. 1993 *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*, London, UCL Press

⁹ Healey, P. 1997 *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies* London, Macmillan

¹⁰ see Hajer, M 1995 *The Politics of Environmental Discourse*, Oxford University Press

¹¹ see Latour, B. 1987 *Science in Action* Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press

This is another major theoretical statement from a scholar who has contributed so much to our understanding of the processes of the production of urban life. In his previous work, he has re-cast Marx's interpretations and methods to produce a re-conceptualisation of the processes of production of the built environment, in the context of the dynamics of flows of capital¹². Since then, he has engaged with the debates about modernity and post modernity¹³, recognising the significance of diversity and particularity but always reminding us of the forces of capitalist production and how these cut across particularities to impose dominatory constraints on the options available to us. His contributions on this theme are often criticised as seeking to maintain a 'totalising discourse' of economic determination in a world of multiple realities

In this new book, he addresses such critics, while moving onwards to encompass social relations with the natural world, and drawing forward his long-standing commitment to social justice and the city¹⁴. The intellectual challenge he takes on is how to acknowledge the significance of particularities and differences, even with respect to the valuing of the natural world, while recognising that there are common generative processes which help to shape these particularities. The political challenge he confronts is how to mobilise across local particularities on the basis of a recognition of these common generative processes in order to confront the sources of injustice in the contemporary world.

He responds to these challenges by returning to his interpretation of the nature of Marx's conception of social process as an evolving dialectics. His use of Marx's method and the way he draws out the humanistic strain in Marx's writing serves to counter the caricatures which haunt much contemporary social science references to Marx's work. Drawing on the work of Raymond Williams in particular, he emphasises the significance of the 'place of being' in which people live. People live their lives in an ongoing flow of relations with others and with natural forces, and through systems of meaning which construct specific meanings of place, space and time. But these social constructions do not merely exist in the realm of discourse. They have a concrete materiality which has the power to shape the worlds of people affected by them. However, such material phenomena should not be understood in the language of objects and 'things'. They are the results of relational processes, and are used and given value in the context of the ongoing flow of social processes. In asserting this relational and process-focused point of view, Harvey makes deliberate links with quantum theory and complexity theory as it is developing in the scientific arena.

The book is organised into four parts. The first presents Harvey's theoretical tools, the core being a chapter on dialectical method, in which he argues for a relational approach to social analysis. What we recognise as things and 'systems' and 'coherences/permanences' are constructed through flows. Because they are constructed through multiple processes, they have inherent contradictions and potentials. Space and time, as conceptions, are constructed in this processual way. Parts of things and wholes of things exist in dynamic relation with each other, and with the potential to break apart because of the contradictions in their constitutive processes. So the relation between 'cause' and 'effect' is not linear but reversible. This provides the opportunity for transformative and inventive behaviour, arising from the tensions between the contradictions and potentials. Phenomena that we recognise as systems,

¹² Harvey D. 1982 *The limits to capital* Oxford, Blackwell, and *The urbanisation of capital* 1985 Oxford, Blackwell.

¹³ Harvey D. 1989 *The condition of post modernity* Oxford, Blackwell

¹⁴ Harvey D 1973 *Social Justice and the City* London: Edward Arnold

whether social or natural, are therefore inherently changing. It is the occurrence of 'permanences' which need explaining, not change. The objective of social scientific research, as of Harvey's life work, should therefore be to find the 'common generative processes and relations' (p.58) which underlie the systems we identify around us. From this position, he then develops a discussion of discourse and of the relations between agency and transformation which has many parallels with the work of Foucault and Giddens.

Part Two reviews environmental discourses, in order to develop a dialectical approach in this area and reject the common opposition of society and nature. Part Three discusses ways of thinking about space and time. Drawing on in particular on Whitehead's relational theory of space and time¹⁵, and Haraway's discussion of cyberspace¹⁶, Harvey shows how 'place' can be considered as a position in a socially-constructed space-time, which also become an entity in the transformation of space-time (p.294). Places exist as 'imageries', institutionalisations, configurations of social relations, material practices, forms of power, elements of discourses and a locus of collective memory. He concludes: 'our future places are for us to make' (p. 326).

In Part Four, he addresses the question of justice understood in a relational world, where there are different socially-constructed meanings of justice. His conclusion is that a conception of 'justice' is universal in human societies. It is just the specific meaning which is constructed differently in different places. He argues that, beyond the celebration of difference and the politics of identity (race, class, gender, ethnicity etc.), there is needed a politics which can 'tell the difference' between recognition of a different identity and recognition of what gives rise to the (often unjust) situation in which that identity is constructed. Only through the latter, can injustices be confronted and challenged. Similarly, he challenges the often narrow base of environmental politics, arguing that instead it is necessary to make connections with the generative processes producing specific environmental outcomes. Both in respect of social injustice and environmental 'injustices', he identifies the underlying generative process of injustice in our age as lying in the sphere of capitalist economic processes. Modernity, in this sense, is still alive and well, and very powerful. In conclusion, he argues that, to confront, challenge and transform these processes, we need not only to build up a political base for mobilisation across our local situations, but also to release our imaginations to construct new utopias of social processes which could constitute an emancipatory dream for our times (p.438).

As always with David Harvey's work, this is a book rich in ideas and dense in argument, illustrated with exemplar stories, some from his own experience, which serve as points of reference in the discussion. Readers are taken through a challenging and deeply human thinking process as Harvey struggles with intellectual dilemmas and political commitments. Above all, this book provides a valuable and clear statement of what it means to think relationally and why a focus on process is central to this. It is also a very helpful contribution to current debates on space, time and place. Many readers will take issue with some of the arguments and may wish to express their commitments in different ways. Some will find little new in the environmental discussion, apart from the way Harvey draws this into his relational, dialectical framework. Others will wonder why no connection is made to Giddens' work¹⁷,

¹⁵ Whitehead, *A Process and Reality* New York (publisher not given by Harvey!!)

¹⁶ Haraway, D 1991 *Simians, Cyborgs and women: the reinvention of nature* London: (publisher not given by Harvey!!)

¹⁷ eg Giddens A 1984 *The Constitution of Society* Cambridge, Polity Press

which has many parallels. The book could also have done with a careful sub-edit. But these caveats do not detract from its significance. It should be widely read and argued over by all of us in the urban and environmental field.

Essential Injustice: When legal institutions cannot resolve environmental and land use disputes

by Benjamin Davy, published by Springer-Verlag, Vienna/New York, 1997

Review by Michael Benfield

(published in *Town Planning Review* Vol 68 (4) pp 518-519, 1997)

Rarely is one privileged to review a seminal work, yet this is what lawyer Davy delivers. Well written, his easy going, engaging style makes light work of a truly heavyweight analysis. Meticulous explanation, use of relevant examples, illustrations and modelling, excellent cross referencing and voluminous annotation gently guide the reader through a complex web of wide ranging but closely interconnected concepts to ensure clarity and consistency of argument. If anything this may be a fault, sometimes appearing to verge on repetition before revealing further nuance or relativity.

With political, judicial and regulatory institutions perceived as failing to 'balance interests' in land-use, development and other arenas of social conflict, 'planning' is increasingly seen by many as lacking purpose and unable to respond to accelerating social, industrial and economic change.. Using the single, but massive, case study of the East Liverpool (Ohio) hazardous waste incinerator, Davy demonstrates how orthodox planning criteria - concerned with economic, technical, legal and risk issues - bog down in 'expert' opinion at the expense of communication between stakeholders. His somewhat unusual methodology - analysis of media references during the marathon 15 year dispute - explains how the grievances of a small, disadvantaged, fairly remote community mushroom into concerns adopted by the Clinton/Gore Presidential campaign and spill into subsequent national issues. As the protagonists 'talk over one another's heads', he shows how 'dumped on' local residents use the 'energy of injustice' to resist implementation of the legitimate development permit, 'whatever it takes'.

Progressively unpacking the different forms of power in play, Davy links his American findings with legal systems, NIMBY, LULU and similar contests in the European Union. Highlighting inadequacy and confusion in both 'orthodox' institutions and prevalent concepts of 'participation', 'mediation' and 'discourse' in dispute resolution, he differentiates 'rationalities' from 'interests' to show how environmental and planning systems perform inefficiently, unjustly and uncertainly. Adapting the 'Prisoners Dilemma' as an analytical tool, he argues that, as positivism replaces justice with law, the utilitarian and contractarian ideas used to capture notions of 'public interest' as a manageable pattern of social action, provide no place for (re)distributing 'burdens'. While differing concepts of justice may support the strong, the most or the poor, he sees the unequal distribution of these burdens, rather than controversial unequal distribution of goods, as the medium which is presently unravelling the fabric of society. Inevitably, he suggests, devotion to any particular concept of justice, which implies rejection of other ways of life, rationalities and justices, delivers such injustice.

To address this *Essential Injustice*, Davy suggests the need to break with the conventional search for purity and certainty in justice. By enlisting anthropology, tribal warfare and cultural theory to examine present day myths, truth, trust and Cicero's passive injustice, he exposes the illusion of 'grand schemes' to promote justice. Instead he favours minor schemes which avoid injustice and encourage stakeholders, as common victims rather than champions, to appreciate and respect other justices and rationalities. Seeing the 'social contract' as permanently under negotiation, he apportions various aspects of this between Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, promoting 'Junk Justice' - that which remains when other forms are rejected - as a route to achieve the new sensibility required.

Presented in a form equally suited to academic and professional consumption, Davy's insights will advance practical, theoretical and philosophical debate at all levels across a wide range of disciplines.

APPENDICES

1 About CREUE (Centre for Research on European Urban Environments)

Director: Patsy Healey

CREUE focuses on **Cities, Institutions and Urban Policy** throughout Europe, with specific emphasis on urban regeneration, planning and development processes, governance issues, transport and planning policy, environmental review and auditing, the everyday life experience of health, housing and discrimination, community development, social exclusion and EU spatial policy.

Where to find CREUE:

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PLANNING SYSTEMS AND EU SPATIAL POLICY

CREUE's work in this area ranges from studies of strategic spatial planning and urban management, and the context of EU policy, to work on the operation of planning systems, particular areas of spatial policy and property development processes.

CREUE has examined innovations in spatial plan-making practices; the relations between planning systems and housing development; the developing institutional context for integrated transport approaches and the negotiation of development obligations. CREUE has published major texts on EU spatial policy and the design of public space.

Recent projects:

- Development plans and the regulatory form of the planning system (ESRC).
- A comparative review of the experience of medium-sized cities in Europe (European Foundation).
- The institutional structures for transport (Rees Jeffreys Road Fund).
- The spatial distribution of housing (DoE).

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GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

CREUE has developed a distinctive 'institutionalist' approach to urban governance and planning, linked to developments in urban political economy and communicative planning

theory. This has informed research projects and led to the publication of key texts, including 'Managing Cities' and 'Collaborative Planning'.

CREUE emphasises detailed work on community development initiatives, strategic planning processes the enabling work of local authorities and urban regeneration projects and strategies.

Recent projects:

- An account of the Cruddas Park Community Development Trust. (Baring Trust).
- A review of economic, social and environmental conditions and enabling opportunities for Sedgefield Borough Council (SBC).
- An exploratory study of institutional capacity and city centre regeneration. (ESRC)

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SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND EVERYDAY LIFE

CREUE has undertaken extensive work on social exclusion, focusing particularly on the neighbourhood level. Within this, team members have looked at the implications for health, housing, employment, family formation and community regeneration.

Within its extensive work on urban regeneration, CREUE has been particularly concerned with understanding the impact of changing social, cultural and economic forces on everyday life in contemporary urban neighbourhoods, with an emphasis on issues of gender, race and age.

Recent projects:

- Evaluation of the York regeneration initiative (Joseph Rowntree Foundation).
- Black housing needs (Banks of the Wear Housing Association).
- Young single mothers and independent living (Joseph Rowntree Foundation).
- Business disinvestment and marginalised neighbourhoods (Joseph Rowntree Foundation).

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RESEARCH AGENDAS

CREUE aims to undertake policy-relevant research on and develop an understanding of the processes of change in urban regions in the European context, and the institutional processes through which governance and planning strategies are developed and carried out.

- New institutional forms of regulation and development promotion.
- Socio-spatial differentiation, lifestyle and everyday life in neighbourhoods.
- Strategies for improving quality of life and environmental sustainability in cities and districts.
- Interlinking urban regeneration, economic competitiveness and sustainability objectives.
- Gender dimensions of community development.
- The built form and social and cultural life.
- Social and community dimension of housing.

- Youth in disadvantaged communities.
- Social capital promotion through urban planning strategies.

CREUE MEMBERS

Mark Baker, Mark Bevan, Rose Gilroy, Angela Hull, Ali Madani-Pour, Claudio de Magalhaes, John Pendlebury, Suzanne Speak, Matthew Steele, Tim Townsend, Dick Williams, Barry Wood.

DOCTORAL RESEARCH

CREUE welcomes research students and involves them in research seminars and projects relevant to their interests. Recent doctoral projects include:

- Michael Benfield: Politics, markets and rules in European Planning
- John England: Methodology and application of retail impact assessment
- Vahid Ghomashchi: Social & economic dimensions of urban regeneration
- Yaghoub Moussavi: Urban Planning and Social change: the case of Iran
- Ozdemir Sonmez: Urban renewal and conservation
- Soon-Tak Suh: The Institutional Capacity of the Planning System in Korea
- Catherine Peizerat: A discursive interpretation of the development and planning of business sites

2 Books published by CREUE colleagues, 1995-1998

Patsy Healey, Stuart Cameron, Simin Davoudi, Stephen Graham and Ali Madanipour eds 1995. *Managing Cities*, London, John Wiley

Patsy Healey, Michael Purdue and Frank Ennis 1995. *Negotiating Development*, London, E&FN Spon

R H Williams 1996. *European Union Spatial Policy and Planning*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing

Ali Madanipour 1996. *The Design of Public Space*, London, John Wiley

Patsy Healey 1997. *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*, London, Macmillan

Patsy Healey, Abdul Khakee, Alain Motte and Barrie Needham 1997. *Making Strategic Spatial Plans: Innovation in Europe*, London, UCL Press

Ali Madanipour, Judith Allen and Goran Cars 1998. *Social Exclusion in European Cities*, London, Jessica Kingsley

Ali Madanipour 1998. *Tehran: The Making of a Metropolis*, London, John Wiley