Appendix 4:

Architecture >< Community
AHRC-funded Connected Communities Symposium   AH/J501146/1
University of Dundee, Monday 12 September 2011

Oscar Marzaroli: *Gorbals, with Southern Necropolis Beyond*, 1964

The aim of this symposium is to present our review of how the humanities and social sciences disciplines view architecture as it relates to communities or the idea of community, and then to discuss this view with representatives of those disciplines.

The topic relates to a short scoping study we are conducting that is part of the AHRC's Connected Communities programme.

We are also interested to plot areas of future collaborative research both generally, and also specifically in order to write an application for a Demonstrator Project for the AHRC (but this requires the participation of three teams already involved in the Connected Communities programme).

Each invitee will be invited to present a ten-minute introduction to their research and how they see possible connections to, or collaborations with, architecture.

Neil Burford / Thomas Deckker / Lorens Holm / Charles Rattray
5 September 2011

Arts and Humanities Research Council

Programme

0900	coffee introduction to our research project

10.00	guests' ten-minute briefing:
	    introduction to their subject
	    reflections on our research
	    relationship of their subject to architecture

1200	discussion
1300	lunch
1400	consideration of potential common interests and future projects (15:30: tea)
1630	concluding reflections and way forward
1700	drinks at Dundee Contemporary Arts (located between the University and the train station)

Architecture >< Community: narratives of love & loathing

The enduring phallic grandeur of the World Trade Towers united a community of people in their resistance to the expansion of western capital and its values. Images of their demise became a rallying point for a geopolitical community that sought to defend those values. Even before they were built, the Towers galvanised local residents, politicians, and architects in opposition to their development because they were to displace a thriving ethnic community and its cottage industries. Recent development plans in lower Manhattan have demonstrated that they remain the site for the articulation of community identities and geopolitics. Buildings bind symbolic communities to their identities and are party to their formation and dissolution. Although it is almost never mentioned in public debate, individually and collectively we develop powerful affective relations to places: we love them or hate them – especially if we live there – and this engenders a sense of community. The building procurement process – brief-writing, finance, design, construction – can become a lightening rod for these powerful sentiments.

Despite its salient position as the form-giver and image-maker of our social environment, architecture is rarely discussed in debates about communities, their identities and the ties that hold them together. Marshall McLuhan quipped that fish only learn what water is when they are beached; we never notice our ambient environment until it starts to change. Not only is architecture under-represented in academic strategic research funding frameworks, but also there is a lack of investment in architectural input to decision-making at policy level. There is a disconnect – a lacuna – in the discourse of communities, and that lacuna is architecture.

This AHRC funded project, in the Connected Communities program, aims to investigate our perception that architecture's relationship to subjects commonly involved in the consideration of community (or communities) is noticeable by its absence, and to do this by reviewing the literature on architecture and communities in disciplines of the humanities and the social sciences *other than* architecture.

Stage 1 studies the literature on the role of architecture as symbol, identity, and process, and will be guided by reference to the work of great social theorists (e.g., Simmel, Benjamin, Foucault, Lefebvre, Fredric Jameson, *et al.*) who look at the impact of cities and their institutions on social formations. It will focus on discussions of buildings and key places in the public eye (icons like the World Trade Towers, the Scottish Parliament building, St. Paul's Cathedral, Highbury & Islington, Elephant & Castle, Edinburgh New Town).

Stage 2 reviews a post-war neighbourhood as a 'worked examples' of community connectivity and relations. IJburg, near Amsterdam, is a recent large-scale development and a quasi-independent new environment as opposed to an addition to an existing one. It has received particular attention in the arts and social science literature due to its ambition. It was planned by interdisciplinary teams of social scientists, economists, planners, artists, and architects and took Edinburgh's eighteenth century New Town as one of its models.

We define architecture as the spatial environment. Architecture is the art and practice of forming space, and the built environment is ineluctably spatial. This project implicitly argues for the reintroduction of architecture to a central position in debates about the built environment. Other disciplines' considerations of a built environment tend to miss its essential character in terms of space, form, texture and organisation; in other words they tend to miss its overall intelligibility.

When one approaches questions of well-being in communities this failure to see the link between social and spatial formations becomes critical.

Neil Burford / Thomas Deckker / Lorens Holm / Charles Rattray
24 August 2011

Arts and Humanities Research Council

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

Participating Panel

AHRC scoping study research group

Dr Neil Burford (CI)	Architecture	University of Dundee
Thomas Deckker (RA)	Architecture	University of Dundee
Dr Lorens Holm (PI)	Architecture	University of Dundee
Charles Rattray (CI)	Architecture	University of Dundee

Project Symposium

Prof John Dewhurst	Economics	University of Dundee
Prof Anne Douglas	Art	The Robert Gordon University
Dr Donald Houston	Geography	University of St Andrews
Dr Tim Martin	Architecture	De Montfort University, Leicester
Dr Mary Modeen	Fine Art	University of Dundee
Dr Alan Rowan	Clinical Psychology	St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin
Dr Rebecca Sweetman	Archeology	University of St Andrews
Dr Dorian Wiszniewski	Architecture	University of Edinburgh

Project Network

Dr Richard Baxstrom	Anthropology	University of Edinburgh
Dr David Bell	Psychoanalyst	President, Brit Psychoanalytic Soc
Claire Blencowe	Geog. Science	University of Bristol
Elspeth Clements	RIBA Council	
Dr Abby Day	Anthropology	University of Sussex
Prof Nick Fyfe	Geography	University of Dundee
Mark Hackett	Architecture	Belfast Urban Forum
Prof Gerry Humphris	Health Psychology	University of St Andrews
Dr. Lieven Jonckheere	Psychology	Hogeschool, Gent
Dr. George Lambrick	Archaeology	Oxford Archaeology Unit
Naomi Millner	Geog. Science.	University of Bristol
Anna Minton	Writer and Journalist	
Prof Jenny Pearce	Peace Studies	University of Bradford
David Riley	Psychoanalyst	Institute of Psychoanalysis, London
Prof Michael Rustin	Sociology	University of East London
Dr Johan Siebers	Philosophy	Lancaster University
Prof Valerie Walkerdine	Sociology	Cardiff University
Prof Jan Webb	Sociology	University of Edinburgh

Participant Introduction Statements

Dr Donald Houston – *Geography, University of St Andrews*

Dr Donald Houston is an urban geographer focusing on the relationship between the built environment, well-being, poverty and inequality. His work deals principally with geographic differences across the built environment at the spatial scale of city and neighbourhood levels rather than of individual buildings. His work centres on how the built environment contributes to poor health and unemployment. It considers the relative balance between suitable jobs and the number and distribution of people with suitable skills at geographic, planning and urban levels. A second strand concerns environmental justice in relation to welfare inequalities such as flooding and its affect on human welfare. It investigates flood mitigation measures predominantly at urban and town planning scales such as managing flow routes for water or determining the spatial and sectional distribution of building programme within the urban environment to reduce risk to human welfare.

Dr Alan Rowan - *Clinical Psychology, St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin*

Dr Alan Rowan is interested in the neglected possibilities that arise from taking an interdisciplinary look at the notion of community. These might range from thoughts around how architecture is used/put to use/is likely to be used - or not - in the 21st century to exploring architecture through a range of metaphors drawn from outside its immediate field (not reducing it to any of these). Referring to Michael Foucault's Heterotopias, he asks what sort of associations of nearness will continue to function and be productive in the future. Questioning sanctified spaces and their traditionally thought of relationships, namely: public vs private, family space vs social space, cultural space vs useful space and leisure space vs work space, he identifies that the traditional boundaries between these areas are changing. Such spaces are increasingly mixed together in new relationships e.g. work space and family space resulting in heterogeneous spaces that are not reducible to each other, creating new heterotopias which allow for the reading of more meaningful spaces of which architectural space itself is one.

Dr Tim Martin – *Art, Architecture and Culture, De Montfort University, Leicester*

Dr Tim Martin is interested in a number of interdisciplinary areas covering philosophy, language theory, art history and architecture, providing new insights through psychoanalytic studies into the works of major artists and architects. He sees architecture as a discipline that embodies something that can be considered to be utterly impossible. On the one level it is courageous in terms of the scale of its ambitions and on another it is readily recognisable that these ambitions can never be fully realised. Architects deal with this conflict by making it their business not to think about or fully understand/engage with the totality of issues that might impinge on it. Rather architecture actually encourages one not to think about (all) things too deeply. The unconsciousness of architecture has been the historical success of the profession and this distinguishes it from the arts because artists tend to take things quite seriously.

Dr Dorian Wiszniewski – *Architecture, University of Edinburgh*

Dorian Wiszniewski runs the PhD research by design symposium. His main research interest is philosophy in architecture and community. He sees community not as a physical form but metaphysical. Its protean nature means it is continually shifting and changing its character and form at any given moment. Referencing 'Open Societies' (Karl Popper 1945) gives a critique of totalitarianism. We currently operate a version of a closed society model which assumes tribal factions which can be considered as closed 'interior rooms' which do not share a common language or philosophy and which cannot communicate to each other. In his forthcoming book *Architecture, Ellipsis and Community* he proposes that community cannot

be understood without a pre-qualification. These have been defined as *Borderland* Community; *Extraterritorial* Community; *Unavowable* Community; *Narratological* Community; *Open* Community; *Heterological* Community; *Ecosophic* Community.

Borderland Community develops the working of architecture and community from Jurgen Habermas' communicative principles of *inter-subjectivity* to propose means for encouraging and making flexible limits.

Extraterritorial Community develops Émmanuel Lévinas' notions of *alterity* and develops the necessary virtue of coming to terms with architecture and community as non-place (non-formation) as well as place (formation).

Unavowable Community progresses from Maurice Blanchot's suggestion that we must maintain the communitarian exigency yet with the apparently contradictory understanding that community is an unachievable end and, therefore, affirms community and architecture as partial, insufficient and indefinite.

Narratological Community takes Paul Ricoeur's philosophy of existence as a form of *narrativity* to develop ideas of how architecture and community may be conceived as complex inter-woven narratives (where the serial arrangement of narrative, and hence architecture and community, is not always straightforwardly linear).

Open Community is developed from Giorgio Agamben and considers architecture and community to be *incessantly emergent*, therefore, proposes how architecture and community can be considered so as to counteract latent tendencies for determining insides and outsides and consequent privilege of inclusion and debasement of exclusion.

Heterological Community takes Ricoeur's narratological impetus a step further through ideas generated by Jacques Rancière, and proposes architecture and community as generators of *surplus*, a plenty that can provide much (but not enough) for both exiting communities and communities not yet formed.

Ecosophic Community reminds us of the urgent need to conceive of architecture and community from deep seated, specifically located ecological relations between environment and community. However, it also proposes that we do this whilst working to stimulate that which is most necessary to sustain: past, ongoing and progressive dimensions of human subjectivity.

Prof Anne Douglas – *Art, The Robert Gordon University*

Prof Anne Douglas is a visual artist with a background in sculpture, currently responsible for establishing practice-led doctoral work in the visual arts focusing on the changing relationship of the artist to the public realm. Rather than making objects of art, this work forges new relationships and projects with other fields such as art in ecology, art in social and cultural practice and art in issues of democracy. In this sense art and architecture share a condition of establishing the difference between art practice as a practice and art practice as a research discipline. Her recent work with musicians shares similar issues concerning composition and performance. It takes (research) through practice to establish experimental forms of practice and embed this within a context for this thinking. In particular it looks at the overlap between music and visual art in relation to score. It takes practices from the domain of music and develops visual practices that respond to this. What becomes important is the idea of movement and mobility – this necessitates relinquishing a hold on physical materials and the object, but engaging more with the focus of creativity in the development of processes. The danger of relating art to the public sphere and community is that you lose the centre of the art – it is always described in relation to the other disciplines. The question becomes one of how to re-centre what art is around the processes that are central and unique to the discipline. Otherwise art becomes anything without the object or infrastructures (museums and economic systems) that attribute value to the object. The work with musicians looks at an area where there is no object, just processes, codes and symbolic systems which are

different stages of interpretation. The urban plan of Ijburg is very like a development score – where different architects take on the ownership and interpretation of the different components which is aligned to contemporary music. 'Identification' as opposed to 'identity' is about a process. It's the point at which you engage with the symbolic system. Erecting symbols and images means there is a tension between what is material and what is open to interpretation. It raises the question of how constraint and freedom in architectural practice are managed.

Dr Rebecca Sweetman – *Archeology, University of St Andrews*

Dr Rebecca Sweetman is a dirt archaeologist, (she digs!), working on archaeological excavations in Crete and teaching Minoan archaeology. Architecture figures in the research in relation to urban spaces, houses and art within houses in order to develop an understanding of identity and community. The work in Crete is not constrained by pre-existing historical knowledge which gives the freedom to interpret it from a new perspective. This is particularly apparent when considering the archaeology from the perspective of the locals rather than Rome. The principle focus of the architectural related research is how the architecture figures within the larger urban landscapes of Crete. Research in urban spaces considers structuring issues such as the sociological relationships between patron and client versus patron and family members to physical structures such as different public/private spaces. The work also investigates the nature of continuity and change when the province becomes part of the global Roman Empire and the relationship of the spaces within the broader network society and the spatial relationships across the island as well as the fluidity of spaces within the houses. The development of religious architecture figures in terms of how this is used to define community in physical settings establishing boundaries of communities which are not just physical but also ritual processes. Evidence from the architecture and topography of 1st century Christian churches shows the continuation of pre-Christian religions was a more organic and peaceful process managed by democratising change.

Mary Modeen – *Fine Art, University of Dundee*

Mary Modeen is an artist, academic and Senior Lecturer in Fine Art and Art and Philosophy at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee. She is a Co-Investigator on the Poetry Beyond Text: Vision, Text and Cognition team. Her role on this project has been to conduct creative and interpretive experiments, commission new creative works and curate exhibitions. She authored the exhibition publication, bringing a curatorial and critical perspective to the questions of perception and interpretation. Her research has several threads, combining studies in perception as a cognitive and interpretive process informed by philosophy and literature. Similarly, her teaching is interdisciplinary in approach, and she has taught at every level in the undergraduate and postgraduate programme. She led the Art, Philosophy and Contemporary Practices course here in this faculty for seven years (2003-10). Modeen supervises PhD students who typically combine interdisciplinary interests as well. As an artist, her work takes the form of printmaking, artists' books, and many other media.