

ISUF President's Report

In his last President's Report, Michael Conzen noted that he was relinquishing his responsibilities 'into the experienced hands of Giancarlo Cataldi'. If I had read these words last year, before accepting the Presidency of ISUF, I would have felt even more diffident. In fact, my hands are 'inexperienced' and require the understanding and patience of all members. Fortunately, ISUF has been under expert guidance to date, and enjoys good health. I hope to live up to my predecessor's expectations and, with the help of Council, maintain our association's excellent, widely acknowledged levels of attainment.

ISUF owes much of its international credit to two aspects of its operations that have kept abreast of one another and are complementary: the journal *Urban Morphology* and the annual conference. The former, in particular, in the course of 18 years of punctual presence among journals on urban studies, has been characterized by its typically British sober appearance and its editorial line, always oriented towards fostering and increasing interdisciplinary and cross-cultural exchanges among the various schools that form urban morphology's doctrinal nucleus. Due to their importance, Jeremy Whitehand's editorial comments deserve to be collected in a special issue. I wish to praise and thank him and all his colleagues wholeheartedly, in the hope that *Urban Morphology* can continue to keep up the high profile that it has meritoriously and laboriously achieved in the field.

Annual conferences serve a vital function, not only in facilitating communication – this year between members from some 50 countries worldwide at the annual conference in Porto – but in promoting face-to-face contacts that stimulate comparative thinking in ways still not achievable by electronic communication alone. If anything, we have to (paradoxically) worry about the increase in the number of participants. It was the biannual symposia of the early days of ISUF that many felt allowed more thought about urban morphology's theoretical and disciplinary contents. Naturally, the financial advantages of the positive 'population' trend have enabled us to have available additional funds to promote projects and other initiatives that are already proving to be of great value. Some 10-15 per cent of our budget has been allotted not only to the general organization of conferences and the website but also to special projects and Task Forces on topics of wide interest.

Two of these initiatives still have to be completed: Morphopedia, which for various

reasons has yet to take off fully, and the Task Force on Research and Practice, which, based on the interim report of Ivor Samuels (2013), is in the process of concluding its work, focusing on major new objectives, such as the ISUF manifesto or charter, the comparison between various university syllabuses, the good practice catalogue and the urban morphology manual. One of the two special projects that have just been completed, the preliminary study for a repository of urban tissue by Karl Kropf, acknowledges urban tissue as a fundamental component of our discipline. Vitor Oliveira's comparative study of urban form re-energizes comparisons of urban morphology's different approaches, applying in this case several different approaches to the same urban area.

My proposal of initiatives to be pursued over the next 4 years, 2014-17, is based on the assumption of the need not to disperse forces but to concentrate them, together with available funds (10-15 per cent of the annual budget), on a single wide-ranging project, to which the ISUF Charter, with its principles and objectives, serves as an introduction. This project arguably completes and implements previous initiatives. It especially involves national networks (but also researchers working individually) in documenting the 'histological' morphological characteristics of their own geographical areas. It will fulfil the aim of producing on the web an *illustrated* Morphopedia consisting of an open, geographically ordered repertoire of planimetric (not photographic) images, accompanied by brief captions in English. From the organizational standpoint, this initiative could be co-ordinated by a steering committee consisting of the Council and those in charge of national networks. Publication on the web would be subject to the approval of this committee, and the authorship of each contribution would be acknowledged. World coverage could, over the years, turn the illustrated Morphopedia into a unique repository.

Reference

Samuels, I. (2013) 'ISUF Task Force on Research and Practice in Urban Morphology: an interim report', *Urban Morphology* 17, 40-3.

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Twenty-First International Seminar on Urban Form, Porto, Portugal, 3-6 July 2014

At the closing ceremony of the Twenty First International Seminar on Urban Form, ISUF President Giancarlo Cataldi (University of Florence) remarked on the globalized nature of the organization. With participants in Porto heralding from Asia, Australasia, Europe, and North and South America, he highlighted how urban morphological study, whilst frequently emphasizing local urban structures and evolutions, had in recent years grown to such an extent that its international range was unequivocal.

Attracting speakers from almost 50 countries, ISUF 2014 was opened by presentations by two researchers associated with urban studies at the University of Porto, Vítor Oliveira and Paulo Pinto. Together revealing the historical and contemporary transformations of Porto following its Roman

origins, they revealed to a large audience (Figure 1) the ‘metabolism’ of the city, and how its form, function, built fabric and history have become intimately entwined as Porto evolved to become Portugal’s second largest city. The subsequent plenary session comprised papers on different approaches to the study of urban form, presented by Jeremy Whitehand (University of Birmingham), Jürgen Lafrenz (University of Hamburg), Giancarlo Cataldi, and Bill Hillier (University College London). Issues such as cityscape management, the form of the cultural landscape, spatial formation, and relationships between urban structure, function and theory were explored (Figure 2): all of these were topics that were further addressed in numerous papers as the conference unfolded.

There were many speakers from Brazil and



Figure 1. Part of the large audience at the opening session of the conference. Photograph by Ana Natalio.



Figure 2. The discussion on different approaches to the study of urban form. Photograph by Cláudia Monteiro.

Portugal, and considerable attention was given during the conference to such topics as Portuguese and Brazilian typomorphology, urban plans, and urban thinkers and ideology. Stael Alvaranga de Pereira Costa (University of Minas Gerais) and Teresa Marat-Mendes (Lisbon University Institute) discussed the need to be fully alert to the development of urban knowledge and intellectual paradigms, so as to classify built environments and the processes that affect their form. In the case of rural Portugal, Marat-Mendes examined the union between geography, geology and culture in the design, evolution and classification of house types. Politics and power as agents greatly affecting how urban space can be created and laced with distinct meaning were noted by many scholars within the Portuguese speaking-world and beyond. Pelin Özden (Istanbul University) considered political attitudes to planning in Istanbul, and Joyce Silva, an employee of Sao Paulo City, gave insights into the creation and implementation of a new master plan within Brazil's largest city. In contrast Paulo Silva (University of Aveiro) drew attention to the topics

of governance and citizen activism by showing how the re-use of urban spaces enables citizens to 'intervene' in the formation of the built character of cities.

Urban layering was a theme that recurred in many presentations. Ayşe Kubat (Istanbul Technical University) highlighted how different political and cultural circumstances have left marks on the built fabric of Istanbul. Such a theme, often with regard to landscape and traditional culture, was also evident in papers by Chinese contributors and papers concerned with the Middle East, and no doubt will be prominent at the ISUF conference to be held in Nanjing, China, in 2016.

Whilst the majority of conference participants were academics, the topic of planning practice was addressed by a number of speakers. Karl Kropf (Built Form Resource and Oxford Brookes University) described an ISUF-funded project to establish a repository of urban tissue. Seeking to identify core attributes within various urban places that could, for example, facilitate the use of urban morphology as a tool to help urban planners more



Figure 3. Ivor Samuels introducing the plenary session on research and practice. Photograph by Pedro Oliveira.

effectively create policy, Kropf welcomed feedback on the implementation of the project.

The final plenary session, conceived and introduced by Ivor Samuels (University of Birmingham) (Figure 3), explored how urban morphological research can contribute to planning practice. The papers by members of the ISUF Task Force on research and practice were well received. Unfortunately there was limited time available for contributions from the floor on how urban morphology as a distinct intellectual tool currently influences 'real world' urban design practice and how it should do so in the future. The explanation by Vítor Oliveira of historical core integrity in Porto, and by Michael Barke (University of Northumbria) of challenges in relation to property character and ownership in Newcastle, UK provided most appropriate bases for discussion. The explanation of house typology in Gujarat, India by Nicola Scardigno (Roma Tre University), and the account of use and perception of local design character in Alpine France by Laurence Pattacini (University of Sheffield) offered further opportunities for exploring how academia and real world practice could be more effectively united. As Barke and Samuels noted, how urban morphological research is presented is likely to have a significant effect on its adoption as a

planning tool.

This highly successful conference, for which much praise is due to the Organizing Committee, witnessed two important landmarks: the formal recognition of the work of Jeremy Whitehand on urban morphology, as shown through the publication of a new book; and the creation of the Porto Charter, a draft document clarifying for a wider audience the aims of urban morphology from the perspective of ISUF. The Charter is likely to provide the basis for future discussion in *Urban Morphology*.

Judging by this conference, the omens for ISUF are good. The agenda is broad and challenging, including the place of urban morphology in education, the links between different approaches, and the relationship between research and practice. These, and doubtless many other topics, will be further explored in the conferences in 2015 and 2016, in Rome and Nanjing.

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ISUF business meetings, Porto, Portugal, July 2014

Meetings of the Council and Editorial Board of ISUF took place on Wednesday, 2 July in Porto, immediately before the ISUF 2014 conference held at the University of Porto. A General Meeting of ISUF took place during the conference. This report summarizes the principal matters covered in the three meetings.

President's report

The President, Giancarlo Cataldi, acknowledged that the high international standing enjoyed by ISUF owed much to two aspects of its operations. The first of these was the journal, *Urban Morphology*, for which he particularly thanked the Editor, Jeremy Whitehand, and the team of people who helped him. The second aspect was the annual conference. Participants from some 50 countries had registered for the Porto conference. The steadily increasing membership of ISUF had enabled the promotion of a number of projects and initiatives. Two of these remained to be completed: the Morphopaedia, and the Task Force on Research and Practice. One of the two special projects just completed had been reported on at the conference: the preliminary study for a repository of urban tissue led by Karl Kropf.

A wide-ranging project for the period 2014-17 was proposed. The project, using the ISUF Charter as a starting point, would complete and implement the initiatives worked on over the last few years. With the help of the regional networks as well as individual researchers, it would involve documenting the 'histological' morphological characteristics of a range of geographical areas. The aim was to produce, on the web, an *illustrated* Morphopaedia.

It was reported that ISUF Council had awarded honorary life membership to Michael Conzen, Gian Luigi Maffei, Jeremy Whitehand and Susan Whitehand.

Secretary-General's report

The Secretary-General, Kai Gu, thanked members for re-electing him for a second term. In discussion of the progress of the Task Force on the Morphopaedia, it was agreed that items should be peer reviewed and each submission selected for the website should be treated as a publication. Jeremy Whitehand indicated that it would be possible to utilize the journal to publicize the contents of the

Morphopaedia. To expedite communication between members more generally, a listserv had been set up – <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/ISUF>.

Vitor Oliveira, his colleagues and volunteer helpers were thanked for a very successful conference.

Treasurer's report

The Treasurer, Michael Barke, reported on the sound financial position of ISUF. The cost of the journal was very competitive and the number of subscribing libraries continued to grow steadily. A number of projects and initiatives had been funded, including several stemming from the work of the Task Force on Research and Practice.

Thanks were expressed to the Webmaster, Richard Whitehand, for his efficiency and swift response in dealing with clients.

Editor's report

The Editor, Jeremy Whitehand, thanked Ian Morley who was stepping down after 5 very successful years as Book Review Editor. He will be succeeded by Pierre Gauthier. Thanks were also expressed to Jean-Michel Roux on completion of his term as a member of the Editorial Board. Karsten Ley was welcomed as a new member of the Board.

The size of the journal and the mixture of types of contribution had remained largely unchanged in the last few years. The size of the Viewpoints section had increased in recent issues, with 26 contributions to that section spread over the last 3 issues. The authors contributing to all sections of the journal have continued to be widely spread geographically and from many different language areas. The majority of full-length articles continue to be by authors for whom English is not their first language. Quality control takes up a great deal of editorial and refereeing time.

The Editor recorded his thanks both to an outstanding editorial team and the many dedicated referees. Efficient refereeing during the period 2013 to 2014 meant that the mean time-lag between the receipt of an article from an author and the communication of a decision to that author was only 3 weeks. The mean time-lag between the receipt of the revised version of an article and its publication was just under 5 months.

Webmaster's report

The Webmaster, Richard Whitehand, reported that usage of the website continued to increase. The website as a whole received approximately 2000 unique 'visits' per month, many of which related to the journal.

So far this year viewings of the conference page were averaging about 550 per month, a significant increase on the previous 2 years. Viewings of the glossary page (about 450 per month) had also increased, but those of the bibliography (about 270 per month) had changed little. A significant number of the approximately 200 libraries subscribing to the journal had not registered for online access, despite the publicity that had been given to the fact that this was available to subscribing institutions at no extra cost. Online open access was currently available for all issues of *Urban Morphology* up to and including 2005. In the course of 2013 the most downloaded articles

averaged over 150 downloads per month. The journal online overview page currently averaged 700 viewings per month.

Future conferences

Giuseppe Strappa invited members to attend the 2015 conference, which would be held from 22 to 26 September at the Faculty of Architecture, 'Sapienza' University of Rome. The main theme of the conference is 'City as organism: new visions for urban life'. The conference for 2016 would take place in Nanjing, China.

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Turkish Network of Urban Morphology: Foundation Workshop

The first meeting of the Turkish Network of Urban Morphology (TNUM), hosted by the Centre for Mediterranean Urban Studies at Mersin University, Mersin, Turkey took place on 11 April 2014. The main purposes of the meeting were to facilitate the sharing of studies concerned with urban morphology; to discuss the possibilities of developing collaborative studies of urban form at the national level among researchers in different fields of knowledge and institutions; and to broaden studies at the international level through co-operation with other regional networks and the central body of ISUF itself.

Since it was the first meeting of the Network, it was termed a 'foundation workshop'. Many fruitful discussions took place during the meeting. Researchers shared their studies in the first part of the workshop, and the future of TNUM and possible course of action were discussed. Three aspects may be highlighted. The first is the organizational structure of the Network. It was agreed that the Centre for Mediterranean Urban Studies would act as the home of the secretaryship of TNUM. The researchers who took part in the workshop have been formed as a steering committee, of which the chair is Ayşe Sema Kubat, from the Department of Urban and Regional

Planning at Istanbul Technical University. Her deputy is Tolga Ünlü, from the Department of City and Regional Planning at Mersin University and Director of the Centre for Mediterranean Urban Studies.

A committee was formed to produce a bibliography of studies on urban form in Turkey. For that, the paper of Ayşe Sema Kubat on 'The study of urban form in Turkey', published in *Urban Morphology* (Kubat, 2010) was taken as the main body of knowledge to be elaborated. It was agreed that the first Symposium of TNUM will be organized at Mersin University, on 22-23 October 2015. It will concentrate on approaches and perspectives in urban morphology.

Reference

Kubat, A. S. (2010) 'The study of urban form in Turkey', *Urban Morphology* 14, 31-48.

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Portuguese-Language Network of Urban Morphology: Report

This report describes the main activities of the Portuguese-Language Network of Urban Morphology (PNUM) between July 2013 and July 2014. In 2014, after organizing annual conferences in Porto, Lisbon and Coimbra, the Portuguese-language group faced a greater challenge of collaborating in the organization of the Twenty-First International Seminar on Urban Form. This year's ISUF conference took place in Porto between 3 and 6 July and contained a record number of papers. Over 550 abstracts were submitted. Almost 400 presentations, from 50 different countries, were included in the conference programme, comprising 80 parallel sessions structured in ten main themes, and five plenary sessions. The plenary sessions included presentations on: i) the urban form and structure of Porto; ii) a book dedicated to Jeremy Whitehand (Larkham and Conzen, 2014); iii) different approaches to the study of urban form – Conzenian school, German morphogenetic tradition, Muratorian school, and space syntax; iv) an ISUF project on a repository of urban tissue; and, finally, v) the work of the ISUF Task Force on Research and Practice in Urban Morphology, including the Porto Charter and four case studies developed under the umbrella of the good practice catalogue, in Porto, Newcastle upon Tyne, Ahmedabad and Saint Gervais Les Bains. A description of ISUF 2014 is provided by Ian Morley (Chinese University of Hong Kong) in this issue of *Urban Morphology*.

In 2015, PNUM will face another great challenge. For the first time the annual conference of the Portuguese-Language Network will take place outside Portugal. With the general theme 'Urban configuration and the challenges of urbanity', it will be held in the city of Brasilia, on 25-26 June. It will include five main sub-themes: i) recent urban transformations – new impacts, new challenges; ii) social inequality in cities; iii) urban configuration and cultural heritage; iv) the modern city legacy; and, finally, v) total urbanization: *metapoles*. The organizing committee and the scientific committee of PNUM 2015 will be chaired, respectively, by Gabriela Tenorio and Frederico de Holanda of the Universidade de Brasilia.

In December 2013, a major new project of PNUM was launched, the *Revista de Morfologia Urbana*. Indeed, the *Revista* is one of the major elements for the consolidation and development of

the Portuguese-Language Network, bringing to the debate in urban morphology a number of researchers that until now, due to the language barrier, were not publishing in scientific peer-reviewed journals. The two first numbers of the *Revista*, published in December 2013 and July 2014, include papers from Portuguese and Brazilian researchers on studies of 'regular' ('planned') and 'irregular' ('spontaneous') historical urban form; the application of fractal geometry in the study of urban areas (focusing on the fragmentation of the urban fabric); a new method, *Morpho*, for urban morphological research and planning practice; the study of the informal urban forms of Maputo, the capital of Mozambique; and an assessment of the Preservation Plan for the Urban Complex of Brasilia recently prepared for the Brazilian capital. These two numbers of the *Revista* also included the Portuguese translation of two influential papers, originally published in *Urban Morphology*, 'British urban morphology: the Conzenian tradition' (Whitehand, 2001) and 'Saverio Muratori and the Italian school of planning typology' (Cataldi *et al.*, 2002). As in the case of *Urban Morphology* a number of viewpoints, book reviews and notices complete the contents of the *Revista*.

One of the issues that has been part of the debate in both PNUM and ISUF conferences is teaching urban form. In the next year, the Portuguese-Language Network will continue to explore this issue through the launching of the first PNUM Workshop on Urban Morphology. The workshop will take place in the city of Porto, at the end of the first semester, and will be hosted by the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto. The workshop will be developed in conjunction with ISUF 2015 in Rome and PNUM 2015 in Brasilia. The theme of this 1-week workshop, designed for students, researchers and practitioners, is 'Different approaches in the study of urban form', a theme that has been an object of intense debate in ISUF 2014. The main morphological approaches will be presented and then participants will be invited to make their 'morphological choices', applying one of these approaches in the analysis of a particular area in the city of Porto. It is our goal that the workshop, the *Revista* and the annual conference have a central role in the activity of PNUM in coming years, contributing to the promotion of the study of urban form in Portuguese-language countries.

References

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the Conzenian tradition', *Urban Morphology* 5, 103-9.

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Change of Book Review Editor

Dr Ian Morley has completed his term as Book Review Editor of *Urban Morphology*. His successor is Professor Pierre Gauthier, Department of Geography, Planning and Environment, Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve W.,

Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3G 1M8 (E-mail: pierre.gauthier@concordia.ca). Future correspondence concerning book reviews and books intended for review should be sent to Professor Gauthier.

ISUF 2015: City as organism: new visions for urban life

The Twenty-Second International Seminar on Urban Form (ISUF 2015), hosted by the Faculty of Architecture of Sapienza, University of Rome, will take place in Rome, Italy, from 22 to 26 September 2015. The theme of the conference is 'City as organism: new visions for urban life'. Topics to be covered include:

- New and historical landscapes
- Infrastructural networks
- Modern constructions and Mediterranean identity
- Urban growth and fringe belts
- Contemporary design for historical cities
- Urban aesthetics and new developments in urban design
- Eco-cities
- Urban morphology and urban regeneration
- Reading and designing urban fabric
- Urban form and meaning
- Urban knots
- Architectural heritage preservation methods

The organizers and the Council of ISUF invite participation by interested academics and professionals. Abstracts of proposed papers should be submitted by 15 January 2015. Authors will be

notified whether their paper has been accepted by 1 March 2015. More information is available on the conference website (<http://rome2015.isufitaly.com>).

Post-conference excursions will take place in Rome (E42-EUR), Hadrian's Villa (Tivoli) and to the historical town of Todi.

The Conference Scientific Committee comprises: Giancarlo Cataldi (University of Florence, Italy), Michael Conzen (University of Chicago, USA), Kai Gu (University of Auckland, New Zealand), Ivor Samuels (University of Birmingham, UK), Jean-Francois Lejeune (University of Miami, USA), Vitor Oliveira (University of Porto, Portugal), Piero Ostilio Rossi ('Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy), Jeremy Whitehand (University of Birmingham, UK).

The Conference Organizing Committee comprises: Giuseppe Strappa, Chair ('Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy), Alessandro Camiz ('Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy), Paolo Carlotti ('Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy), Anna Irene del Monaco ('Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy), Matteo Ieva (Politechnic of Bari, Italy), Marco Maretto (University of Parma, Italy), Nicola Marzot (University of Ferrara, Italy, and TU-Delft, The Netherlands), Dina Nencini ('Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy), Fabrizio Toppetti ('Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy).
