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International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture & Urbanism
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and



TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE GROUP

After the Crisis: Is This a New Era for Traditional Design?
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PRESENTATIONS

Ruqayya Tofa, INTBAU Nigeria

Traditional Nigerian Architecture and Design

There is a very weak link between Traditional Architecture and Contemporary Modern Architecture in Nigeria. Although Nigeria is a vast country with 32 states and a countless number of tribes, one cannot agree that basic distinction on its architecture is between the North and South Regions. In the North, the strongest influence came from Islam whilst in the South influence came from the return of ex-slaves (mainly from Brazil) and colonisation. However, both styles of Traditional Architecture used local materials such as earth, wood, stone and thatch (for roofing). The climate, human physiology and geography led to the development of Curvilinear conical and mud roofed structured in the North and Rectilinear thatch roof mud houses in the South.

Nowadays, Nigerian Architecture is characterised by the post-modern buildings of the 1990's and a sprawling new Nigerian Architecture that is taking shape due to the introduction of new building materials mainly imported from China. The beautiful circular shapes apparent in Hausa Architecture with its domed roofs, thick monolithic walls and decorative plasters have been replaced by a rectangular concrete prototype with imported roman column replicas that have no structural function and only act as decorative elements adorning the entrance of the buildings. Of course it will be most difficult to roof a circular building with corrugated metal sheeting. There are no longer courtyards in the middle of Northern Nigerian Buildings where the family or colleagues can gather round in the shade to dine or meet or children to play in. There are no longer gardens or land surrounding the houses and public buildings of the South where children can ride their bikes or play with their friends in. Nigerian Buildings no longer give their occupants a chance for rest or simply enjoy nature within their personal space. Traditional Nigerian Architecture is now visible in the planning and layout of the building where high ceilings and toilets adjoined to every room are accepted as a common practice in building design practice. A situation an INTBAU member describes as the bush man in us. Presently, in Kano State, the heart of Northern Nigeria, there is a group of the newly rich with traditional titles, with connections to traditional rulers or the proud Hausawa (people of the Hausa Tribe which can mainly be found in Northern Nigeria, Niger and Ghana) who have taken the famous Symbol called Zanko and have directly translated it into modern concrete buildings and which many now incorrectly refer to as Traditional Nigerian Architecture.

So what is the Future of Traditional Nigerian Architecture? Since its inception in 2008, INTBAU Nigeria has been working to find avenues that will lead to the revival of Traditional Nigerian Architecture. After the completion of 3 Events all of which were unsuccessful due to the fact that these events had to be free in order to get a significant participation. The ongoing project with the National Commissions for Museums and Monuments since it hosted a West African Meeting to 'Harmonise the West African Tentative List for UNESCO World Heritage Sites' has come to a halt. It seems we have to face the difficult truth that there is no significant interest by The State, The Traditional Rulers or The People to Conserve, Regenerate and Preserve the estimated 90% destructed site of the Kano Walls and Associated Sites.

This Landmark which was once revered by neighbouring countries and which added to the greatness of Kano City in ancient times lies fallen around the entirety of Kano's old city. The National Commissions for Museums have not been able to raise the money that

will make this project possible. Nobody Cares. Many do not know It's History or Significance. There are currently only six Traditional Buildings of World Heritage Standard that remain standing in Kano. The sixth being a series of gates which form a part of the Kano Walls and lead to particular areas in the old city.

So what is the Way Forward? Based on the previous evidences, it is clear that the Conservation of the Kano Walls which is probably the most significant Nigerian Architecture we currently have is not going to be possible. The way forward which a lot of our INTBAU Members agree with is to Target the 'New Build'. The current issues of Climate Change have put Sustainable Building in the forefront of all Architects' and Builders' thinking. Our Mission is now to target Students of Architecture and a few Professionals with interest in Traditional Architecture and Design to shift the focus unto the Essence of Traditional Building. Hence the Materiality (Earth, Wood, Stone and Thatch) and the Principles (Privacy, Space, Comfort) guarding the designs of Nigerian Traditional Architecture. INTBAU Nigeria is currently working with Department of Architecture, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria to Propose a Centre for Research into Natural Building Materials and Technologies. Meetings are also ongoing this week with The Nigerian Institute of Architects to see whether we can partner to organise Building workshops using Traditional Materials so as to encourage a New Nigerian Architecture that is an innovation directly formed from the Traditional.

Christine Franck, INTBAU USA

My dear friends and colleagues,

I wish I could be with you today, but it is a good sign I could not be, since a lecture to over 200 architects in Boston meant I could not make a late evening flight to London. Indeed, while the years beginning in the fall of 2008 have been terrifyingly slow, over the last 6 months, there has been a palpable optimism that we will recover.

Although the unemployment level among architects remains an astonishing 24% (according to the AIA's chief economist) the architects I just lectured to all reported being busy. Margins and schedules are tighter, but work proceeds. The luxury residential market is back on its feet entirely due to many on Wall Street making record earnings. However, the vast housing and development market remains extremely slow due to lack of lending and credit. Institutional projects are picking up again, but slowly, as many institutions have seen the value of their investments decrease. Yes, things are moving ahead.

Hand in hand with that though, is the recognition that the post-recession world will not be the same. And this is a good thing, for the excesses of the boom years of the 1990s and 2000s were unsustainable. As traditional architects and urbanists, we are uniquely poised to offer solutions to what we can now see as the last baroque hurrah of this excessive, disjointed, dysfunctional modern life.

There are significant shifts occurring in America's economic, cultural, and social life that seem almost to be reversing most of the last half century. To my mind, these are some of the trends most critical in their impact on architecture and urbanism:

1) Economic-based Cultural Shifts

As Americans settle into the realization that the recovery from the Great Recession will be long and slow, there is an increasing sense that the "American Dream" of each successive generation faring better than their parents through hard work, is less possible. This general view coupled with the loss of faith in homeownership as a path to wealth has shaken the assumptions of middle class America.

However, hand in hand with that has risen an increasing pride in austerity, and what is, even now, a belief in the possibility of success through hard work. This "puritan work ethic" at the root of American culture, seems to be reasserting itself in a positive way. There is among the middle class a rejection, for now at least, of the trappings of wealth. Wall Street wealth is now distrusted in favor of common sense Main Street wisdom.

2) Economic Shifts Impacting Housing

Tightening credit has limited homebuyer choices and indicates a shift toward renting rather than owning. New homebuyers are focused toward smaller housing options since they can't finance as much as in the past. Indeed, still limiting development is the simple fact that "nobody is lending." And when banks do begin lending again, common wisdom is that it will never be the same.

Anxiety over future finances has homeowners scaling back, even seeking out homes with land for gardening.

Adult “boomerang kids” un-able to find work moving home to live with their parents, coupled with grandparents who’ve lost the value of their savings are trends increasing multi-generational households.

We should view these as positive cultural developments.

3) Economic Shifts Impacting Commercial Development

The commercial credit crisis looms large in the next five years. Short-term commercial loans made at the height of the boom from 2005-2007 were based on over-inflated values. According to the Congressional Oversight Panel, \$1.4 trillion in commercial real-estate loans will expire and require refinancing; 50% of these are currently underwater. When commercial properties fail, the economy will contract further, job losses will occur, storefront and office buildings will deteriorate and the banks serving these sectors will risk failure.

A potential solution and future market may be the redeployment of office space for housing.

4) Economic Shifts Impacting Planning and Jobs Patterns

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the American economy has undergone a fundamental shift since the end of WWII from an economy based on manufacturing to service industries. In the 1970s, 48.8 million jobs were service providing, while only 22.2 million jobs were goods-producing; a ratio of 2.2:1. By 2005, this gap had widened to a ratio of 5:1, with 111.5 millions jobs being service-based and only 22.1 million being goods-producing. The Recovery Act allocated over \$100 billion in grants and tax cuts toward investments in manufacturing.

Though architects and urbanists should assume the US will retain a manufacturing base, it is likely to be a new model of smaller, compact plants dealing in advanced technologies, surrounded by clusters of small firms that service them.

5) Demographic Shifts Affecting Architecture and Urbanism - Aging

In 2009 12.8% of the American population was 65+; by 2050, 21% of the population will be. For this population critical issues will include accessibility, options for “aging in place” and adaptability of buildings, and ease of access to public transportation.

6) Demographic Shifts Affecting Architecture and Urbanism – Increasing Urbanization

82% of the US population lives in cities and their surrounding suburban areas as of the 2008 census. That is projected to increase in coming years. In Foreclosing the Dream, Professor William H. Lucy explains that the trend toward dispersed, suburban life is turning toward an urban future.

Indeed, our commonly held assumptions about where Americans live and work are outdated. Most still see America as suburban, with those suburbs populated by a wealthy white majority and cities inhabited by poor ethnic minorities. However, a Brookings Institution study of 2000-2008 census data, The State of Metropolitan America (May 9, 2010) indicates instead that for the first time in history a majority of all racial and ethnic minorities in metro areas live outside of the city center in the inner suburbs. Likewise, the majority of those at or just below the poverty line now live in the

suburbs. This will put increasing pressure on public services, such as mass transit, which are largely non-existent in our suburban environments.

This re-urbanization trend is also examined in John McIlwain's Urban Land Institute report: Housing in America: The Next Decade. He observes, "The age of suburbanization and growing homeownership is over...coming decades will be the time of the great re-urbanization as 24/7 central cities grow and suburbs around the country are redeveloped with new or revived walkable town centers."

7) Cultural Shifts toward Environmental Awareness

Increase in oil prices a few years ago caused one of the first increases in public transportation ridership. But Americans have short memories, the minute the oil prices went back down, so too did use of public transportation. Convincing Americans of the value of public transit remains a challenge, and though we may not like it, America remains a car-obsessed culture.

Increases in energy costs, coupled with decreases in household income, as well as Federal stimulus packages aimed at assisting homeowners while supporting environmentally sound choices has caused greater environmental awareness among nearly all Americans.

The Federal Government, as well as many institutions such as universities have adopted strict energy policies and/or requirements that their buildings meet certain LEED and/or performance levels.

Summary

In sum, while there are many issues affecting the future of architecture and urbanism, I view the above demographic, economic, cultural, and environmental shifts as those which will change our built environment the most and for the better. Most if not all of the positions we take as traditional architects and urbanists are uniquely suited to solve the above challenges.

I think, quite simply, that we must seek facts and argue not philosophy but fact-based solutions. We should waste no time arguing old negative arguments about modernism, but get about the business of understanding the problems we face and position traditional architecture and urbanism exactly where it ought to be – in service to our fellow citizens.

Best wishes to you all on a bitterly cold New York morning,
Christine G.H. Franck

Michael Mehaffy, INTBAU USA

In the written version of this paper, I present an argument that can be outlined as follows:

1) The present economic events are not simply contingent circumstances of history, to be tactically exploited by those working with traditional design. Rather, they are part of a much larger historical challenge: the growing state of disorder in the environment generally, and the built environment specifically. (For example, recent research shows it is not a coincidence that the global financial crisis began in the sprawling US suburbs. The design of those suburbs was championed by, among others, Le Corbusier, in his 1935 book *Ville Radieuse*.)

2) This unfolding disaster – what some have termed “the long emergency” - is the inevitable fallout of unsustainable industrial methods of production and resource use, and the economics that govern them. Buildings and urbanism are by no means the only aspect of this crisis, but they are integral to it, as is their design and production.

3) This crisis therefore presents an urgent professional imperative that requires our leadership, and our ability to establish the usefulness of traditional resources for the challenges at hand. The crisis may yet be edifying. (As Samuel Johnson put it, “when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.”)

4) This in turn requires our ability to make accurate and useful theoretical connections between traditional design and other fields of inquiry into related challenges (economics, technology, ecology, health, complexity science, etc). I stress that this is not mere theory as self-justification of an aesthetic regime, but theory as a useful professional problem-solving tool. (An analogy is the theory of cancer cell growth which guides the administration of chemotherapy, through a traditional scientific process of trial, error and improved efficaciousness.)

5) This situation in turn requires us to return to the scene of the crime, as it were – and examine, with updated insights, the defective theory that still serves as the operating system of the current building professions.

I spend the bulk of time in the paper on this last point, because I do think that with all the common accounts of design in the last century, an important, even crucial, part of the story is missing.

We can think of this missing part of the story as “the misplacement of aesthetics.” This misplacement implies a superficial, deficient concept of design – one that does not grasp the true essence of design as *transformation*, but self-limits to design as a peripheral kind of *draping* of an aesthetic garb – say, like a painting, over the mere canvas of cities.

To summarize the argument, there is an ancient view of architectural art as a kind of articulation or ornamentation of the natural, largely straightforward structures of settlement. This view applies well to almost all of the great buildings and cities of history (e.g. the great cathedrals are in essence simple vaulted structures.) But it was replaced about a century ago with another view of architectural art, as a kind of giant sculpture or visual composition – an instance of visual culture, regarded as in a gallery.

I argue that this separation arose as the result of an industrial product design and marketing regime, that saw itself draping an exciting aesthetic package over an industrial structure largely determined by engineers and bankers and others. Designers glorified this limited aesthetic specialty as a great fine art, using the form language and technology of modern building – but it was nonetheless an abstracted art. It was not the seamlessly integrated craft of articulated ornamentation that it had been heretofore. (Indeed, “ornamentation” was ideologically banned -- and this was not a coincidence. It had indeed become superfluous, leaving designers to pretend that this, like other profound limits, was a great virtue, a form of honest authenticity.)

But the result was to cripple the broader organic problem-solving power of architecture, its “collective intelligence,” and to relegate it to a peripheral aesthetic packaging exercise, dressed up as something much grander. This was a dangerous delusion. It only made architects complicit in the destruction of humane habitat and its replacement with life-destroying (and unsustainable) machinery.

It follows that the recovery of this more humane (and more ecological) habitat is serious problem-solving business – on the order of medicine or ecology. And like those scientific disciplines, it must now rely on the power of traditional evolution, refinement and pattern.

This will set us on a path of exploration of many new ideas, alongside many very ancient ones. It will represent a transformation of buildings, of the architecture profession, and at its deepest level, of human technology. It will be a return to the ancient, but equally, an adventure into the unexplored. Given our daunting challenges, and the fortuitous promise on offer, we had better get started.

Gabriele Tagliaventi, Italy

Living in Jurassic Park

Every time I cross the Channel by Eurostar I have a strange feeling. Arriving to Britain gives me the sensation of landing in another planet. I live today split between Italy and France. One week in Bologna one week in Paris. Both countries represent the conventional EU status in terms of architecture.

I write these notes after our project has been selected from the Bologna Football Team as the Masterplan to develop a 15 ha site including a 35,000 seats stadium. However, I cannot be blind. Britain looks to me the Land of Freedom. There is the Prince, the Prince's Foundation, TAG, INTBAU, a strong Tradition. There is Poundbury, a new Poundbury and a series of imitations of Poundbury. In France nobody even imagine that Traditional Architecture has a stand in the contemporary world. The most successful town-planning operation, Val d'Europe, is run by Americans: Disney. Still, even in VDE, all public buildings are Modernist. Even if the architectural style is Traditional – for the time being – all institutional buildings must be Modernist.

Then, there is a kind of fantastic exception in Plessis Robinson, but that's done by an incredibly courageous man: Mayor Pemezec.

Then, nothing.
No place for Traditional Architecture.

I participated in an architectural conference in Paris and people were quite amazed by me. I think they liked me because they thought I was playing a joke. They don't even imagine that an architect can design Traditional buildings today. How could it be? How could it be when 100% Public buildings are Modernist? How can you run an office when all social housing projects must be Modernist. All schools, hospitals, museums, libraries, municipal Halls, etc.
100 %.

Recently, the Russian Orthodox Church was forced to organize an Architectural Competition for the design of the new Cathedral in Paris. We were selected among the “invited” ones. Then we discovered the story behind. The site for the new Cathedral is close to the Eiffel Tower. Right in the center of Paris. The Russians bought the site for 25 millions Euro and tried to get a building permission for a Traditional Orthodox Church. The French Department for Historic Monuments told them: “forget it”. It must be “contemporary”. That's why they were forced to organize the Architectural Competition accepting that the winning entry should be Contemporary. That is: Modernist. We didn't know the story behind.

All the 20 architects invited by Nicolas Sarkozy to design the Great Paris are Modernist. They all call for hundreds new skyscrapers. On the Left side, the Mayor of Paris has recently won his battle to legally have new skyscrapers in Paris.

That's France.

Italy is in a complete chaos. Because Chaos dominates, Traditional Architecture has a stronger voice in the media. Also because of the mess we created in the last 20 years.

However, all the municipalities carry on Modernist policies. They want skyscrapers as a sign of Modernity, Richness, Development.

Last week, the Municipality of Milan has approved the Strategic Plan calling for 50 new skyscrapers to be built before 2030. The Municipality of Rome wants to demolish some of the horrible slab-urbia built in the 70s, while, at the same time, announces new skyscrapers as a sign of Renaissance in the periphery.

What are the challenges?

1. the cultural one. Modernism leads and dominates. Modernism has succeeded in establishing itself as the expression of the contemporary society.
2. the economic one. In a Recession time Skyscrapers are perceived as the sign of Renaissance. Very difficult to beat. Of course, no doubt about style. When they talk about skyscrapers they assume the style is Modernist.
3. The political one. EU is carrying on a policy that aims at creating ONE market. ONE unified market in a land subdivided into 27 countries finds Modernism as the perfect common ground. The simplest way to express the new political union. The most efficient one.

How can we fight? By stressing the economic values of Traditional cities. The virtues connected to concepts like compactness. By stressing the ecological issue. But Continental Conventional Modernism has managed to integrate the ecological issue within the general discourse. You put green roofs, you put wooden panels over the concrete façades, and that's it. By attacking the "Star System" because it becomes politically incorrect in a Recession time.

It is long way to Tipperary. I believe that all those who are interested in Traditional Architecture should invent new ways to approach the public. At least in the Continent. The Anglo-American way works perfectly in the Anglo-American world. Not in continental EU. The Old Continent is deeply rooted in his Conventional Modernism. We need intelligence, cleverness, courage. Ultimately, true innovation.

Ozgur Dincyurek, INTBAU Cyprus

An Overview of the Traditional Architecture of Cyprus

One of the most important issues of today's discourse is environmental problems, which become the new realm of the world. The ignorance of environmental values that are ranged from local to regional scales in both design and construction processes, burdens the inconveniences of the "contemporary" settings. Locality bears particular values in terms of natural, built and cultural context that constantly shape the local identity throughout the ages. Exclusion of this set of values in the development of the built environment, in conjunction with the consumer oriented approaches of global trends, is mainly ended up with an unsatisfactory living milieu. The lack of environmental and socio-cultural aspects especially in the building design is the vital issue behind the questioning of existing understanding and its product; living context. In this respect, building tradition bears the opportunity to be learned from its experienced, developed and evolved architectural solutions.

Under this scope, in order to understand the current position of the traditional architecture of Cyprus, the failing of the process of traditional architecture of Island should be particularly mentioned.

Beginning with the changing norms of the colonial administration in the first half of last century and consequent emergence of modern architecture in the Island, Cypriots witnessed the continuous degradation of their traditional architecture. Especially after 1950's, the new construction of traditional buildings is negligibly observed. The continuity in traditional building activities radically ended as a result of modern social values and new building activities. New forms of architecture, which blended with new materials and technologies, are randomly emerged in the traditional fabric and silhouette.

The early years that modern materials and techniques were imported to Cypriot architecture witnessed many successful modern building forms. However, after 1960s these improvements were replaced with mainly inappropriate designs in the cultural and natural context within the pluralistic approach.

Besides the mentioned changes due to the influences of global trends and developed construction technologies, which are commonly experienced throughout the world with different intensities, Cyprus also struggles with other vital difficulties. The Island is faced with a political dispute that toughens the revealed problems resulting with the severe threats on traditional architecture [1]. As a result of the conflict for over a couple of decades between the communities resulted with the division of the Island. The socio-cultural and also historical center of traditional settlement is separated by the border and turned to no man's land.

Afterward the traditional centers of almost all urban settlement in general but capital Nicosia in particular are abandoned by the locals, and mainly settled by the transnational immigrants. The changing demographics in the traditional sectors accelerated the declining process and increased the public ignorance. Segregation between the transnational immigrants and locals spatialized through the traditional urban quarters. Locals developed their new urban centers which have no connection to their traditional quarters and even have no reference to their traditional architecture. Therefore,

traditional urban centers and also rural settlements shared the same consequences such as dereliction and deterioration.

In the last decades, traditional urban settlements of the Island are taken in the agenda of the international bodies such as UNDP, EU and USA. Series of revitalization projects are implemented in the traditional urban settlements by the sponsorships of mentioned bodies. The hope for the reunification of Cyprus is supported by the international parties in the form of revitalization of traditional urban centers which would be possible gathering areas for the separated local communities. In such cases, the projects are limited by only a point in the settlement which cannot be effective enough while the surroundings physically and socially keep on decaying. On the other hand, development of building industry due to the economic growth threatens the last traces of traditional architecture in rural settlements. In addition to political ambiguities, lack of public awareness and legislation for conserving the traditional architecture worsen this situation. In the recent years, the particular supports and encouragements for the renovation of the traditional buildings are observed in the traditional rural areas within the concept of eco-tourism. However, these attempts might not be enough for stopping the deterioration process because of weak administrative, social and financial supports.

Cyprus, the center for growing tourism attraction in the Mediterranean basin, is faced with the threat on her unique natural and traditional environments unless appropriate precautions are proposed. While answering the increase in the building demands for housing and tourism purposes; conservation and continuity of traditional environments have to be considered primarily [2].

In brief, the responsibility of designers is to find the ways of analyzing and interpreting the past building traditions for the continuity of the tried, developed and evolved design principals in the traditional architecture. Doubtlessly, the past experiences suitably respond to the cultural and environmental needs of the context. Hence, climatically responsive, environmentally sensitive, socio-economically adaptive, culturally conscious building forms can be created [3].

References:

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Aura Woodward, INTBAU Romania

Over the last decade or so as the Romanian economy has become stronger (prior to the financial crisis Romania had an 8% annual growth), the vast majority of developments were private and non-traditional, which is to say either modernist steel & glass office premises or residential blocks of flats similar to the “communist model”. There were very few public commissions. At the same time traditional landmark buildings were under threat of demolition, particularly in the capital, Bucharest, to clear the ground for new “modern” developments (in the Romanian context modern = modernist). There were many media reports about dubious fires which destroyed some traditional buildings.

Within this context, the civil society has become more organised and coherent in advocating better protection of traditional settlements but very rarely the discourse has gone towards building new traditional places. In some cases, such as the Rosia Montana example, the public pressure was extremely successful in preserving local architecture and traditions. Rosia Montana is a two thousand year old village in Transylvania with major gold and silver resources. The local heritage includes intact Roman gold mining galleries and remarkable examples of traditional architecture. A Canadian company wanted to extract the remaining gold and silver which would have involved destroying the village and its local heritage.

Over the last 5 years in particular, the public opinion seemed to have shifted towards traditional architecture and urban design projects partly due to the poor quality of the new “modern” developments and partly due to successful regeneration projects of old places which became once again very popular. Prior to the global financial crisis, there were two major traditional residential projects near Bucharest; one to be developed by Andres Duany’s firm and the other by Leon Krier and Samier Younnes. My understanding is that both projects are on hold.

The city of Sibiu, in Transylvania, has become a success story of restoration and regeneration of traditional places. Sibiu became the Cultural Capital of Europe in 2007. Among the new developments, Alireza Sagharchi’s project in the Danube Delta is significant. The project was awarded a Europa Nostra prize. Last but not least, the schools of architecture in Romania remain focused on modernist architecture at the undergraduate level. There are a few MA programmes in restoration and heritage – such as those offered by the Ion Mincu Institute in Bucharest and the Faculty of Architecture in Cluj.

Joe Drew, INTBAU Ireland

The Current State of Architecture in Ireland

Modernism dominates, as far as Large Retail Developments, Office Blocks, Public Buildings, Schools, Hospitals, etc are concerned. Private housing continues to be traditional, except for large apartment blocks designed to maximise irregular sites, plot ratio and profits. The biggest development in Belfast is the Titanic Quarter, mainly Modernist except for any existing buildings which will be preserved.

In Dublin, the docks have seen proliferation of boxes, including a new Conference Centre, which has three blank walls and a glass frontage with a sloping bottle-like front.

Examples of Mod buildings are the extensive hospitals built in Northern Ireland and the new Teachers Training College in Limerick (<http://www.mic.ul.ie/president/tour/default.htm>). There have been a few developments in Traditional Style in Belfast (Queen Anne's Square), Lisburn (Lisburn Square) and Dundalk (The Marshes Shopping Centre). In the case of the latter, I spoke to the Planner for the area to see if an enlightened policy might exist and was disappointed that the Planner had little interest in the appearance of the building. There are some small signs of improvement in design, e.g. the new Library in Queens University Belfast.

The position of and attitude to traditional architecture and urban design with the rest of the profession and the public

The profession is mainly Modernist with a minority of young architects who feel disappointed with the current state of things. The public is generally indifferent but can be motivated, as in Bangor NI to defend the seafront from development. An example of indifference was the recent submission of a paper by INTBAU Ireland to the Belfast Telegraph in praise of Traditional Architecture. The reporter expressed interest but the article was not published.

The principal social, political and economic drivers of architecture and urban design

The principal drivers in NI have been Government led initiatives for urban redevelopment, school buildings and hospital buildings. Financing has been mainly PFI / PPP with a perceived need for fast track design/construction. In the Republic the main driver has been property development. Most shopping centres have been Modernist along with most Government sponsored buildings such as new Department Blocks.

There is now a pause due to the economic downturn. However, while the pace has changed the culture has not. One of the Republic's most attractive towns Kilkenny is in danger of modernism. An opportunity is thus to appeal to tourism as an important sector in the economic revival.

Both the Republic of Ireland (RoI) and Northern Ireland (NI) have published Government policies on architectural design. The RoI text is commendable but all the illustrations are Modernist. The NI text is also commendable but does not include illustrations. Both Mods and TAs use identical language but mean entirely different things.

Changes in the position of architecture, society, politics and economics in the last decade

Since Mod has resulted in the ubiquitous box structure (from commercial to ecclesiastical buildings), removal seldom causes an outcry (except for DOCOMOMO). The recent removal of Churchill House a typical 60s tall office block in Belfast had a large audience for its demolition, mainly for spectacle, not for regret.

The current economic difficulties should be beneficial to TA, since it builds for permanence, quality, and whole life cost.

Most economic recoveries must advance on the basis of a large no. of small businesses rather than a small no. of large businesses. Return to TA is the best way forward economically, as it values heritage and culture and can grow incrementally. Traditionalists have big answers in small projects (street by street - plot by plot).

Projected future developments that would affect the position of traditional architecture and urban design

The current Government policy of applying 0% VAT on new build and 20% VAT on re-use is a policy of destroy and replace, a sure-fire means of killing local character, destroying heritage and replacement by concrete and glass boxes.

INTBAU should now make representation on Government VAT policy. This culture appears to obtain right across Europe so representation at EU level might be appropriate.

The issues that seem to be most significant at the moment and for the future

Selling Traditional Design and Culture is necessary. The general public is concerned with employment. We therefore need to link TA with craft skills, local maintenance and local employment.

We need simple means of persuasion spelling out principles very clearly. There are some excellent books available but they are targeted at the architectural profession which will not change unless a different tune is directed to the piper. Therefore persuasion must be aimed at the public, employers, clients, church authorities, etc.

How traditional architecture and urban design should position themselves to establish their position and their distinction from mainstream architecture and urban design

There are a number of options:

- Try to join with the Modernists and pretend there is little difference in the hope that traditional architects may pick up some scraps.
- Mount campaign in favour of TA with the object of winning the intellectual argument.
- Join with the Mainstream, deliberately carry out 'Modernist-type' designs but include traditional characteristics so that the overall appearance of this design is superior to the blank walls normally associated with Modernism. This would permit a gradual return to true architecture over time.

Alireza Sagharchi, TAG Chairman, UK

UK Architectural Scene and Prospect for Traditional and Classical Architecture and Urbanism

A)

The UK profession much like in the United States is one of the major exporters of Architectural professional service, notwithstanding the big European i.e. Spanish/French “starchitects” the British Architects. After the US normally dominate the commercial/public commission outside of the UK. Economically this sector has suffered greatly from the downturn with many firms closing or downsizing.

B)

The current situation in the UK is much like elsewhere when corporate modernism is the mainstream for commerce with the “so called cutting edge and innovation star architects who” get the larger/public commissions. Ideologically modernism dominates the institutions like RIBA and educational establishments with the former gradually being accepting of other approach such as Traditional Architecture whilst the Universities or Colleges are completely closed to such alternative, and are entirely engrossed in a self-obsessed abstract modernism.

C)

In the past decade there has been a distinct shift in the public mood away from the mainstream modernism. In major projects the public has become much more vocal in expressing their dissatisfaction. The Chelsea barracks and the rejection of the Richard Rogers scheme was a particularly prominent case in which the public view prevailed.

D)

Two factors affecting the Architectural profession have emerged which have and contributed to the success and sustained growth of those of us who practice Traditional architecture.

- 1) In proportion to the number of modernist/mainstream practices traditional firms as have enjoyed greater success relative to their number, in securing high profile or large projects outside of the UK. Almost all of the larger practices like Adam Architecture, John Simpson & Partners, Quinlan Terry, Porphyrios Associates, my own firm Stanhope Gate have secured major commission in Europe, US and the Middle and Far East.
- 2) The UK market also reflects the same but in a smaller scale where Oxford and Cambridge colleges, some large scale development and mainly private residential Clients prefer to commission Classical Architecture for their projects. Traditional Urban Design and Sustainability led developments also adopt the same approach with the Duchy of Cornwall being the major client base for Traditional practices.

The future for Classical and Traditional Architecture in the UK therefore seems rather hopeful, the emergence and success of TAG in the RIBA, the expansion of INTBAU and the prominence Princes Foundation has provided a focal rallying point for the practitioners.

E)

On the political and legislative front the present government's move to abolish the Architectural Review Committees and instigate locally led decision making on major development is opening a new chapter in the emergence of Traditional and Classical Architecture. Where we have found a natural ally in the public and their distaste for top down ratifications of projects or approvals by so called panel of experts which are normally dominated by Modernists.

F)

The principal tactic adopted by TAG in this case is to call for inclusive and pluralistic approach to commission of projects and we have been successful in driving the traditional agenda forward by having a presence through TAG/INTBAU and other bodies within major institutions such as the RIBA. This has enabled us to present the alternative.

Ultimately and in practice the success of our approach has also been partly due to trying to engage in dialogue with our Modernist colleagues and looking for a greater convergence of ideas and finding common ground. We believe this will enhance our position and ensure that we can occupy and share the same platforms that were dominated by the mainstream accepted practice.

Ralph Boom, INTBAU Germany

To be fairly honest – there is no real issue of traditional architecture in this country. Yes, they have ‚reconstructed‘ the Frauenkirche in Dresden and the surrounding quarters ... under protest. They started a discussion to also reconstruct (the facades) of the Stadtschloss in Berlin ... and stopped it.

But there is no one really and seriously talking about traditional architecture as being an alternative or even something one could possibly think of doing today. This is very unlike the discussions happening in England, the USA or even the Netherlands. In my Dutch home country people, developers and even municipalities do, for commercial reasons at least, consider a traditional building style as something attractive.

Here in Germany people don't even know that they do have an option! As no one talks about it, developers haven't even realized that they could sell their houses better, faster and for a higher price if they would build them in a traditional style and authorities who are stuck in the 70's and 80's as they are trained in such a matter, cul-de-sacs and single story family houses in suburban structures are still the thing to do.

And then there are the architects ... the worst 'species' of them all. Educated at universities and schools of architecture where 'Bauhaus' is still considered to be the highpoint in architectural history, who continuously try to reinvent the wheel, who MUST do something 'new' and 'different' every time and seem to be completely disconnected from their own heritage and 'Heimat' because they have to be 'authentic' (THE fashion statement of the last decennia) and environmentally conscious and therefore produce a built environment that is made of so called solar powered, recyclable buildings that disintegrate after a lifespan of about 30 years ... when they are written off.

Isn't that sad??!

Strangely enough one could say 'the people', if asked, do actually like traditional and even classical architecture a lot. That is at least my personal experience over the last ten years. Therefore I keep saying that I do build just for those and NOT for the professionals. The architectural profession HATES it ... and me for producing it! ☺

Luckily the economic and political climate is very good in Germany. The crisis lasted for about one year in 2009, the year after everyone recovered and this year the economy is running again like mad. Combined with a very low mortgage rate and the fear of a big recession that will go hand in hand with a devaluation of the Euro the building industry is also doing quite well again too. People tend to invest in bricks rather than anything else anymore and are particularly looking for sustainable houses ... for what they think sustainable means.

This is also a strong way in for traditional architecture as I feel it. People, not architects, are again looking for their heritage and for sustainable solutions to their daily living conditions. They want healthy food from organic farm shops, secure neighbourhoods and a cosy, traditional house with wooden floors, high ceilings and shutters on the windows that is running on regenerative energy.

All that can be done today without any problem at all. All the required building materials are around and if one does not make TOO much 'noise' it can even be done without too

much struggle with the local authorities. The same is true for traditional urban design. You just need to convince an investor/developer that he is able to sell better if he builds what people want and then he will fight it out for you! ☺

We are just in the process of applying this technique in order to get planning permission for an entire new 'historic' village with about 400- 500 houses, a village centre with a wedding chapel, a market- and town hall, a small harbour with lighthouse, lots of restaurants and small shops for local and organic goods (something people nowadays are really crazy about) and just outside the village a castle that will house a hotel. Doesn't that just sound wonderful?!

Within this ever faster and uniform world people and especially young families, IF they are asked, are looking for their roots, are becoming more aware of their heritage, their 'Heimat' ... the place they belong to. To me this is OUR way in! And as soon as Tradition is 're-established', even in the smallest projects, no one can deny it any longer.

Scott Strachan, INTBAU Australia

Greetings from Australia,

I'm sure you will all have heard the cliché "Australia is riding on the back of a Mining Boom" ... well you're right! ...and our recently acquired Prime Minister and Her Tax Officials know it!

I recently hosted a Luncheon of a number of unnamed luminaries who work within the property and building space (Professionals / Builders / Developers) and was surprised to see some truly long faces...

Having quizzed these Gentlemen continuously... the optimism once shared seems to have dissipated at a formidable pace even post GFC...How so? Well I was astonished to be on the receiving end of the age old complaint - "hold ups with Town Planning! Objections to our Development! We are losing millions fighting battles over height controls, it's ludicrous"!

Well as it happens the subject matter was one of Melbourne's Iconic Hotels, namely "The Windsor" in Spring Street Melbourne CBD – a very good example of "where Australian Architecture is today"

Quote (from the Windsor Hotel Developers) ..."Melbourne's Windsor Hotel has announced a \$260 Million re - development proposal aimed at securing the future of Melbourne's only 19th Century Grand Hotel. Highlights of the scheme include a new 25 storey curtain wall glass tower and the replacement of the corner 1960's addition"

I would encourage readers of these notes to view the attachments and can I now say the Former Minister for Planning Justin Madden (Architect by background) approved the Scheme as designed by Denton Corker Marshall.

Has the world gone mad? The scheme as presented in no way complements its neighbours in the first instance being the State Parliament House which is opposite - nor has there been any meaningful consultation with the General Public - as the Minister "called in" the Permit! ...I'm sure you are wondering how my luncheon progressed?

Well – I'm a taller man 6ft 3 and Scottish by Heritage - so it was on! Gentlemen Gentlemen - I proclaimed! Using the Windsor Hotel as an example of Planning Policy gone wrong - do you realise that if we lived in Paris we were likely to be on the receiving end of a car bomb? Nonsense! ...was the reply! Have you ever heard of "Plan B"?

Well without boring you - the luncheon did prove successful - to me anyway, as I established with those that are at the core face of the industry the following;

1. A recognised Tertiary Course is Vital to create the Acorn of Knowledge in Classical Architecture - but it takes a lot of "Google" hits to find same in Australia.
2. To raise an "attitude" which dare I say it - is asleep in this country we need to speak! It's not just the National Trust who should be leading debate....I personally wouldn't

mind seeing a headline one day "*INTBAU Slams Project as a Gross Overdevelopment*" or similar.

3. And if my Developer Friends could see an upside to a Plan B i.e.; being a more sympathetic Architectural Solution... that improves their Economic Modeling - then we will be in front.

4. "Lead by Example" well we have all heard this before - but we need to show that people respond well to Tradition and Greenfield Sites can be transformed - and work financially, IF project initiators dare to be wild.

There is room to offer the 5 star Green Building Rating - but! Our power will only ignite if it is legislated and we need to lobby to prove these initiatives up - "our" Architecture will then fall into place. And that other famous line will be heard "see..! it works"

Unfortunately - without too many Traditional Architecture Projects on the Ground in Australia – it's a hard road to plough...having said this, it is my view that collaborative Mentor Relationships should be encouraged and I have done this with the National Trust – specifically in Victoria Australia.

The Former Minister Garrett (Environment and Heritage) was a strong advocate to our cause and helped initiate the (Former) Rudd Government Stimulus Package for Heritage Buildings which transformed many wonderful and needy buildings in Australia as a whole - a great result...but can I say, the Victorian Branch is distributed AUD \$250K from the State to look after its buildings! Quite ridiculous...

Money IS the root of evil when it comes to Heritage and Traditional Architecture in this country...though we are fortunate to at least have collaborated into a voice and it is with pleasure I associate with the INTBAU cause.

Kindest Regards and with Best Wishes,
Scott J Strachan

Naomi Lane, INTBAU Canada

The Current State of Architecture in Canada

High rise glass condominiums in city centres and sprawling suburban family homes anchored around big box retail development continue to dominate the landscape, although there is talk of densifying the suburbs.

In between these two extremes within the city centres lie traditional family homes (ex. Toronto) and duplex/triplex (ex. Montreal) typologies that have been renovated and personalized according to taste. In certain neighborhoods in Montreal, an urban planning advisory committee decides on what modifications can be made to the buildings so as to ensure visual continuity and heritage considerations.

There is a growing interest in heritage conservation and an understanding that maintaining the historic elements of a building in a renovation/adaptive re-use project will increase the site's value. New individual and large scale constructions are interested in LEED classifications (although it is not always easy to convince the client of investing in this commitment) however large expanses of glass and hi-tech 'sustainable' options predominate over traditional considerations.

The position of and attitude to traditional architecture and urban design with the rest of the profession and the public

The profession is mainly modernist with occasional eco-tendencies and considerations for the environment. However there is little discussion about traditional building approaches (although Heritage Canada gave a conference in 2009 on the relevance of building conservation to sustainability). The Building Code and even the LEED criteria doesn't encourage a true investigation of what is innately sustainable, as the profession is dominated by suppliers, standards, lobbies, etc. This situation incidentally also ostracizes the smaller and less politically powerful network of craftsmen and trades people, who generally tend away from public, bureaucratically laden projects towards small scale private ones.

Changes in the position of architecture, society, politics and economics in the last decade

During the recent economic downturn, the government provided tax incentives for home renovations and the restoration of privately owned heritage buildings. However government laws and regulations regarding municipal height restrictions, the protection of classified buildings, etc. seem to be far too easily manipulated by coercive developers and rely on public outcry for direction rather than a strict, well-selected committee of knowledgeable and committed professionals who have good design, sensitive urban planning and traditional considerations at heart.

How traditional architecture and urban design should position themselves to establish their position and their distinction from mainstream architecture and urban design

INTBAU's Traditional Skills Training Workshops are an excellent way to at once highlight the importance of skills training and the need to preserve, whilst also trying to make the case for craftsmanship in new construction. I think that the key roadblock is thinking that 'traditional' only implies conservation work, pastiche constructions, etc. INTBAU needs to encourage new build that can be contemporary in design but with a sense of place and scale, is innately sustainable, uses recycled materials, with traditional wall:window ratios that includes craftsmanship and that takes the time to create beautiful details. This requires that craftsmen and tradespeople be at the forefront working hand in hand with architects and designers.