

President's Corner 會長的話

The state of cities is now a central point of concern. Over the past six weeks I have participated in several very different panel discussions at various Symposia, and attended several others, all concerned in one way or another with issues that interface strongly with urban design in the context of city policies as a whole. Critical urban design considerations that might have previously been taken as independent issues need now to be discussed in a more comprehensive context covering economic, social and regenerative aspects of urbanism.

Benjamin Barber – a Senior Research Scholar at the City University of New York and an adviser to political and civic leaders around the world, stated at the recent Nobel Laureates Symposium in Hong Kong that power and sovereignty has shifted from nation states to cities. What might be termed the 'Social Contract' between governing bodies and communities is a central part of legitimate authority, but while much political and even educational effort goes into transmitting knowledge, the resolution of urban problems seems to be related less to what we know, but rather what Governments or Institutions choose to do or prioritise.

Making decisions in the face of different issues and values requires legitimate authority that can resolve difficulties without discord. City government therefore needs to be about cooperation and reconciliation of stakeholder concerns in the interest of city betterment while being responsive to economic and social needs. I was reminded of this while participating in an AIA Symposium on the 'Cultural Triangle', orchestrated by Dr Sujata Govada – the 'district within a district' which contains the Police Married Quarters, Central Police Station and the Central Market, but also marked by the URA orchestrated Graham Street / Peel Street scheme which effectively bisects the area. The revelation of discord at the top of the URA and the resignation of its Managing Director in early April, coincided almost precisely with the closure of more than 60-70 small businesses within the latter area, prior to its redevelopment. It reminded me that in November 2007, Hong Kong's Urban Design Alliance, the predecessor of the HKIUD comprising representatives from various professional institutes (architectural, planning and landscape), wrote a four-page letter to the URA Chairman, copied to the URA Chief Executive and the Secretary for Development, pointing out a range of joint concerns. Chief among these was the fundamental mission and direction of the URA's 'renewal' agenda in the light of

its wholesale redevelopment approach to this area on the hill slopes to the south of the CBD. This also reflected the firm recommendations of the Bauhinia Foundation Research Centre, that district planning principles, particularly as they are applied to older areas, should allow for vibrant clusters to be maintained precisely because of their mix of uses that represent well used enclaves, attractive to both residents and visitors alike. Almost eight years later, this project, orchestrated almost entirely through a 'top-down' approach is now proceeding.

The result of this and other large-scale redevelopment schemes is that our urban area is becoming increasingly uniform and undifferentiated. We are losing not just older buildings that fail to meet their full plot ratio potential, but entire streets and small neighbourhoods, and the businesses and communities that go with them.

While much more remains to be written on this subject, there is surely a salutary lesson here, that while the preservation and adaptive re-use of the Central Police Station, Victoria Prison and PMQ are acting to positively underscore the established character and mixed use identity of this part of Central, the characteristic matrix of ladder street connections and older uses within Graham Street and Peel Street are now to be replaced by development at an entirely different scale and level. Spatial continuity will be replaced by object building, multi-ownership by single ownership, and urban scale by monumental scale.

Perhaps the overall message, somewhat reinforced by the current indeterminacy with regard to the fate of the Central Market, is that the 'Triangle' as a whole should have been examined and planned in a holistic way at the very beginning, rather than as a series of different and largely unrelated projects. This might have better reconciled the many benefits, community priorities and even legitimate redevelopment opportunities in this unique part of Central.

A second point of urban design reference was a Public Seminar held at the Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning at HKU, centred around a research project funded by Government's Central Policy Unit – Land Use Changes in Response to Economic Restructuring in Hong Kong. The research team was headed by Jimmy Leung, the Ex-Director of Planning. All guest speakers on logistics, manufacturing and creative industries as well as the research team's presentations clearly indicated that industrial stock is a valuable asset for the Hong Kong society due to its affordability, flexibility and accessibility. Affordable industrial space has provided a breeding ground for innovative activities which should enhance Hong Kong's competitive advantage, so before old industrial buildings reach the stage of inevitable demolition or conversion into office accommodation, the remaining value of these buildings should be maximised in the interest of society. It is suggested that the conversion or redevelopment of old industrial buildings facilitated by Government should therefore be considered more prudently – Hong Kong needs more space for investment in technology and creative industry, which is now being constrained by the lack of 'industrial' space and commensurate high rents.

The underlying message is that as urban designers we need to be aware of many aspects of urban policy – both proposed and committed – and to participate as fully as possible in deliberations that stem from this, no matter how long it takes.

Peter Cookson Smith

President

Recent Events and Meetings / 近期活動及會議

AIA Hong Kong - The Cultural Triangle



Dr. Peter Cookson Smith, President and Mr. Charles Li, Vice President (External Affairs) attended the AIA Hong Kong - The Cultural Triangle on 14 April 2015.

Guest critics for the Msc Urban Design Program final Review





Dr. Peter Cookson Smith, President was invited as one of the guest critics for the Msc Urban Design Program final Review at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The 4th Nobel Laureates Symposium on Global Sustainability

The Nobel Laureates Symposium was held in Hong Kong on 22-25th April 2015. The subject was 'Changing Climate, Changing Cities' – the fourth in a series of Symposia that goes back to 2007, and the first time this has been held in Asia. Nine Nobel Laureates, scientists, academic researchers, government and private representatives in their respective fields met to address fundamental challenges for cities. This is set within a world of rapid climate and socioeconomic change, in a situation where global average temperatures are set to rise four degrees Celsius by the end of the 21st century.

The event was co-organised by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, and the Asia Society Hong Kong Centre. It was the result of two years planning under a Steering Committee headed by Hans Joachim Schellnhuber from the Potsdam Institute, and Ronnie C Chan, Co-Chair of the Asia Society.

Dr Peter Cookson Smith sat on the panel on Cities, Climate and Civilisation on Day 1, and gave a presentation on The Asian City Context and Planning Challenge.

At the conclusion of a series of panel and presentation sessions a Memorandum was agreed, signed by all Laureates, and endorsed by attending representatives which included the Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design. This is shown on the following pages.



Left Photo: with Ada Yonath – Nobel Prize for Chemistry, 2009

Right Photo: with Geoffrey West – Former President of Santa Fe Institute and Council of World Economic Forum



Left Photo: with Sir James Mirrlees – Nobel Prize for Economics, 1996

Right Photo: with Christine Buckner; Christine Loh – Under Secretary of the Environment, SAR Government; KS Wong – Secretary for the Environment, SAR Government; Ada Yonath; and Geoffrey West



Left Photo: with Peter Doherty – Nobel Prize for Medicine, 1996

Right Photo: with Benjamin Barber – Senior Research Scholar at City University of New York, and Professor Emeritus at Rutgers University



Left Photo: with Brian Schmidt – Nobel Prize for Physics, 2011

Right Photo: with Hans Joachim Schellnhuber – Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research



Left Photo: with Saskia Sassen – Robert S Lynd Professor of Sociology, Columbia University, NY
Right Photo: with Penny Sackett – Former Chief Scientist, Australia; Christine Bruckner, AIA; Geoffrey West; Saskia Sassen; and Ronnie Chan

Changing Climate, Changing Cities

The Great Urban Transformation

Memorandum

from the 4th Nobel Laureates Symposium on Global Sustainability

Hong Kong: 25 April 2015

We are at a watershed moment. Climate change poses an immediate threat to the safety of our home, the Earth. If we act now, we can seize the opportunity to transition to a safe, sustainable future. Cities have been major contributors to human-induced climate change. As hubs of innovation, they can take the lead in its solution.

As 9 of the world's 10 largest urban areas are in Asia, and half of the fastest-growing urban economies are in China, we have chosen to meet in Hong Kong to discuss the challenges and opportunities presented to all cities by climate change.

Economic development has lifted millions of people out of poverty and offered even more prosperity to many. However, explosions in consumption, population and urbanisation are placing enormous pressure on natural resources and social structures alike. **We stress that a sustainable future requires reducing the impact of urbanisation on climate and ecosystems by respecting the limited resource capacity and restorative capability of the Earth.**

In order to safeguard citizens, economic assets and supporting ecosystems, cities need to adapt to the climate change that is already underway. **We urge cities to map the risks to which their citizens are most vulnerable, to reduce those risks where it is possible, and build resilient social and physical structures where it is not.**

As powerhouses of creativity and action, many cities have already become the first responders to climate change, leading the nations of which they are part. We support the urban collectives that have developed to share knowledge and experience, and allowed cities to have even greater impact by catalysing and empowering similar responses elsewhere. **We challenge all city governments, innovators, and the private sector to work together to unlock necessary resources and enable evidence-based local action to limit further man-made climate change.**

Sensible climate mitigation and adaptive measures inevitably have co-benefits: energy efficient buildings reduce costs and provide greater comfort; reducing reliance on fossil fuels can dramatically improve air quality and thus human health and quality of life; successfully addressing climate risks increases business investment and job opportunities. **We encourage weaving sustainable practice into the complete fabric of city life, so that cities will become more efficient, healthier and more prosperous.**

Cities do not and cannot exist in isolation. They are part of global, interdependent networks that connect them to each other, to rural communities, and to the natural world. **We advocate increasing the sustainability of urban interconnectedness by moving towards economies that reuse resources in a continual cycle.** Doing so will increase the value of materials and re-manufacture, stimulate new business models and jobs, and reduce environmental pressures on an already stressed planet.

The cities of tomorrow are forming today. Whether regenerating from old, historical sites, rising up as planned new cities, or assembling into informal settlements precipitated by economic and political failures, these urban areas will be home to another 1-2 billion people by 2050. Managing this great transformation in a manner that supports sustainable development and is adaptive to change and new learning is a central challenge of the first half of our century. **Whilst it is crucial that all cities employ sustainable and adaptable practices as they continue to grow, we make a special plea for innovative effort, resources, and political leadership focussed on improving the infrastructure that serves the urban poor and most vulnerable.**

Climate change action by urban and regional areas occurs more rapidly and economically when supported by higher jurisdictions that clearly enunciate and act on ambitious, long-term climate policies. This makes national and international action critical. An average global temperature rise of more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels would cause a dangerous increase in climate change impacts, including weather extremes and sea level rise unprecedented in the history of human civilization. **We challenge nations to adopt and meet national targets consistent with the internationally-agreed 2°C guardrail.** This will require reducing the net flow of greenhouse gases from humans into the environment to nearly zero by about mid-century. Cities can be pioneers in this process, and many already are – by enacting plans for local greenhouse gas reductions that are sufficiently ambitious in magnitude and speed.

Without strong action, all the world's citizens will bear the brunt of dangerous climate change. Yet our message to you is not one of despair, but of hope and resolve. Many cities are in the vanguard of a new vision for sustainable, healthy, and responsible living. Working together in growing urban networks, they are exhibiting leadership in swift, effective climate change action.

We challenge national political leaders and policymakers to heed the call – not only from leading scientists and economists – but from their own cities and citizens – to generate a strong, equitable, and science-based agreement at the UN Climate Summit in Paris, in partnership with mayors, business leaders and civil society. This will require turning words and principles into practical policies and actions. It will require cooperation amongst scientists, politicians, civic leaders and citizens. It will require not just setting targets, but meeting those targets in the near-term and throughout this century. It will require assisting, engaging and empowering societies whose economic and social circumstances prevent them from mitigating and adapting to climate change on their own.

For our part, we will use our passion and skills to support efforts to limit and manage climate change. We will work with you to build a legacy that will be felt for centuries: The legacy of instituting healthy relationships with the natural systems that support us all, to create a world that is more sustainable, more prosperous, and more humane. The future of humanity depends on it.

HKIUD Meetings Calendar (April)

四月會議

Date	Time	Meetings	Venue
22/4 (Wed)	6:30 pm	PAC Meeting	Vice President's Office

Upcoming Events and Meetings / 活動及會議預告

HKIUD - HKU: Urban Design Dialogue Sharing Session on 18 May 2015

HKIUD
Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design

URBAN DESIGN DIALOGUE

URBAN DIVERSITY

A Sharing Session

The HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF URBAN DESIGN cordially invites you to join the **Urban Design Dialogue Sharing Session** co-organised with the **University of Hong Kong** on 18 May, 2015 (Monday). This will be the first of a series of upcoming sharing sessions seeking to build a platform where HKIUD members can share their experiences and views. Event details are as follows:

Date: 18 May 2015 (Monday)
Time: 7:00 – 8:30 pm
Venue: Room 820, Knowles Building, HKU (32609, walking distance from HKU MTR Station Exit B1)

Agenda:

1. Opening Remarks, Prof. Chris Webster, Dean, Faculty of Architecture, University of Hong Kong
2. Urbis Limited: Landscape and Urban Design, Mr. Sandy Duggie and Mr. Alan Macdonald
3. Architectural Services Department: Stanley Waterfront – Connectivity and Diversity, Ms. Alice Yeung
4. Hong Kong – Barcelona Urban Exchange Proposals, Mr. Steven Lee, Mr. Tony Ip and Ms. Casey Wang
5. Q & A

Moderator: Dr. Peter Gordon, 2015, President, HKIUD

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) equivalent hours: **2.0000**

Free Admission: Spaces limited and pre-registration required. HKIUD will be responsible for a flat service fee per attendee.

HK members who are interested, please register at our Registration Office, Mr. Cheryl Lee at 2025 2100 or email to cheryl.lee@hkuid.org on or before 10 May 2015 (Friday). Appointment required and by informed consent.

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5. Q & A

Moderator: Dr. Peter Cookson Smith, HKIUD President

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) equivalent hours : **2 hours**

Free Admission. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. RSVPs will be accommodated on a first come first served basis.

For more details, please refer to the event attached poster. All members who are interested, please register via our Administrative Officer, Ms. Cherry Lau at 2530 8135 or e-mail to cherry.lau@hkiud.org on or before 12 May 2013(Tuesday). Successful registration will be informed separately. Thank you.

RICS Hong Kong Annual Conference 2015 - Building Hong Kong's Capacity for Sustainable Growth – What can be done to stay competitive?

Grand Hyatt Hong Kong,
1 Harbour Road,
Wanchai,
Hong Kong
Early Bird Registration until 31 Mar

Home About RICS Conference Programme Speakers Registration Sponsors Supporting Organisations Post-Event Gallery Information for Travelers Venue

RICS Hong Kong is organizing the Annual Conference 2015 with the theme “Building Hong Kong’s Capacity for Sustainable Growth – What can be done to stay competitive?” which will be held on 21 May 2015 (Thursday) for which HKIUD is a supporting organisation. Details are as follows:

Date: 21 May 2015 (Thursday)

Venue: Grand Hyatt Hong Kong

Time: 0900-1700

Address: Grand Ball Room, Grand Hyatt Hong Kong, 1 Harbour Road, Wanchai

[More](#)

BEC EnviroSeries Conference on 21 May 2015



Business Environment Council (“BEC”) would like to invite HKIUD members to the EnviroSeries Conference with the theme on: Embracing Natural Capital in a Densely Built Metropolis: Challenges and Solutions for Achieving Environmental Sustainability that will be held on 21 May 2015 at JW Marriott Hong Kong.

The online registration is opened (<http://bec.org.hk/events-current/bec-enviroseries-conference-2015>) and HKIUD members could enjoy a 10% off discount by entering the co-organizer code "beces2015c1" while filling in the online registration form.



The Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce and Hong Kong Science & Technology Parks Corporation are partnering with the Business Environment Council, Hong Kong Green Building Council and Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design to organize a forum, with an aim to identify the strengths and opportunities that drive Hong Kong towards a smart city. Event Details are as follows:

Date and Time	2015/06/11 09:30 to 13:30
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Venue

Charles K Kao Auditorium, Lakeside 2, Hong Kong Science Park, Shatin

[More](#)**HKIUD Meetings Calendar (May)****五月會議**

Date	Time	Meetings	Venue
6/5 (Wed)	6:30 pm	Council Meeting	Immediate Past President's Office
21/5 (Thur)	6:30 pm	MEC Meeting	Immediate Past President's Office

Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design Limited

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