THE URBAN HISTORY GROUP
Annual Conference

RISKS, HAZARDS AND
URBAN RENEWAL, 1666-2000

University of Reading
30-31 March 2006

Abstracts of Papers
Conference Programme

Thursday 30 March

11.00     Registration
11.00     Editorial meeting (Urban History) – Editorial Board members only
1.00-2.00 Lunch (not included in one-day package)

2.00-3.45 SESSION 1
Chair: Bob Morris

Harold Platt (Loyola University of Chicago)

Mark Clapson (University of Westminster)
URBAN DISPERSAL AND ITS SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES: TOWN PLANNING, SOCIOLOGY AND THE ENGLISH WORKING CLASSES, 1945-80

3.45-4.15 Tea

4.15-6.00 SESSION 2
Chair: Simon Gunn

Rebecca Madgin (University of Leicester)
MANAGEMENT OF PLACE: PEOPLE, POLICIES AND POLITICS, CASTLEFIELD 1970-90

Angela Davis (Department of Continuing Education, Oxford University)
DESTRUCTION OR RECONSTRUCTION? WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNITY AND URBAN LIVING IN OXFORD C. 1945-70

Molly O’Brien Castro (Université Paris 7)
ON THE PRIVATIZATION OF INNER CITIES: THE BRITISH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENTS’ URBAN POLICY, 1979-mid-1990s

6.00-6.30 Business Meeting (ALL INVITED)
6.30-7.00 Reception (sponsored by Urban History, published by Cambridge University Press)
7.00-8.00 Dinner

8.15 AFTER DINNER LECTURE
Chair: Richard Rodger

Vanessa Harding (Birkbeck College, London)
PLAGUE AND AFTER: URBAN GOVERNMENT IN DENIAL?

9.15     BAR
Friday 31 March

8.00         Breakfast

9.00-11.00    SESSION 3
Chair: Helen Meller

Utku Balaban (State University of New York at Binghamton)
**THE GREAT ANACHRONISM: URBAN RENEWAL BY ‘PEASANTS’**

Isabelle Mity (Université Lille III)
**CRONOS DEVOURING ITS CHILDREN: URBAN RENEWAL AND THE DISCOURSE ON DEGENERATION IN GERMANY AT THE TIME OF URBANIZATION**

Shaﬁ Noor Islam and Margaret Frackowiak
**FLOOD AND RAIN WATER LOGGING IN DHAKA MEGA CITY: AN ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD IN BANGLADESH**

Lanre Davies (Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria)
**URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN LAGOS 1920-1955: REPLANNING OR DISLOCATION?**

Luigi Di Sarno (University of Naples), Amr Elnashai (UIUC, Urbana IL), Marina Carter (Edinburgh University)
**DEALING WITH EARTHQUAKES: URBAN RENEWAL PROGRAMMES IN 18TH C EUROPE**

11.00-11.30   Coffee

11.30-1.00    SESSION 4
Chair and Discussant: David Green (King’s College London)

Miles Glendinning (Scottish Centre for Conservation Studies)
**THE CONFUSION OF MULTIPLE REDEVELOPMENT: PALIMPSEST, PLANNING OF THE GORBALS, GLASGOW C.1900-2006**

José Maria Cardesín (A Coruña University) and Íñaki Mendizábal (Architect, Ferrol City Council)
**URBAN REGENERATION AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN THE SPANISH CITY OF FERROL**

DISCUSSION

1.00-2.00     Lunch (included in conference package)

2.00         Conference ends
URBAN RENEWAL AND THE REVOLT OF THE ECO-POPULISTS: 
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON NEIGHBORHOOD MICRO-HISTORIES, 1965-1990

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My paper will examine a pivotal turning point in the history of the city. During the quarter century following World War II, rural migrations and soaring populations created both mega-sized “shock cities” and massive environmental problems. This was paradoxically the very time when urban planning and its professional experts were at the zenith of their influence. Moreover, their prestige rested on an extraordinary consensus on rebuilding the city in modernist styles of tower blocks, functional zoning, and super highways. Beginning with the uprising in the Watts district of Los Angeles in 1965, however, a revolt of neighborhoods against their renewal schemes spread rapidly across the Americas and Europe. The violent explosion of poor peoples in the streets sparked not only an insurrection of more affluent green activists against the modernist project but also an implosion of planning theory and self-confidence within the profession.

What is especially striking to me about this story is the way in which it repeats itself throughout the cities of Western Europe and the Americas stretching from Toronto to Buenos Aires. I am equally impressed by the lack of an adequate explanation for such an unprecedented common experience on a global scale. These social movements took on a seemingly baffling variety of forms that seems to defy analytic coherence. What can armed insurrections in the United States’ racial ghettos against the police, rent strikes in Glasgow against unhealthy public housing and squatter resistance in Mexico City against eviction from green-belt zones have in common? What links hip-hopers in Queens, New York, with their counterpart, “O Rappa,” from the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, and Toronto’s “Ghetto Concept”? They all shared a vision of the urban village in which local attachments and community participation were highly valued.

My paper will examine several case studies of these neighborhood mobilizations in order to illuminate their linkages and their impacts on the subsequent course of urban renewal and planning. In the quarter century following Watts, the common threads stringing together the revolt of the eco-populists were identities of place. Strong social and emotional attachments to a locality brought them together in defense of their sense of place against urban renewal plans imposed from the outside. It is here in the micro-histories of the neighborhoods that we will ultimately find the common threads of daily life at the street level that bind together the ghetto rappers, green activists, and community builders in the colonias populares [irregular settlements]. I will look at neighborhood mobilizations in Los Angeles and Chicago, Mexico City and Rio de Janeiro, and Glasgow and Roubaix. Contrasting the vantage point of the street corner against the Olympian blueprints of the planners will go a long way towards creating a more balanced and inclusive framework for understanding representations of place. From the point of view of the working class quartier, environmentalism is most often defined in terms of home, neighborhood, and work place. In fact, the perspective of looking at the city one street at a time has been a persistent counterpoint in planning theory stretching from Vienna’s Camillio Sitte to Copenhagen’s Jan Gehl. In short, environmental and comparative perspectives on the history of urban renewal will make a contribution to the larger and more important public discourse on the future of the city.
URBAN DISPERSAL AND ITS SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES:
TOWN PLANNING, SOCIOLOGY AND THE ENGLISH WORKING CLASSES, 1945 TO 1980

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The planned dispersal of people and employment from congested cities was at the heart of the reconstruction of the built environment from 1945, and it continued throughout the period of comprehensive redevelopment and urban renewal that began during the late 1950s and came to an end in the 1970s. In both the government’s new and expanded towns programmes, and in slum clearance and redevelopment policies pursued by local authorities, the social experiences and consequences of the ‘decanting’ of the working-classes remain at best partly understood and at worst misconstrued.

Using sociological studies undertaken during and since the 1940s, some of which took important cues from American social science, this paper will assess the impact of dispersal upon working-class communities in both the ‘inner city’ areas that were subsequently redeveloped, and in the new housing estates and neighbourhoods of the decanted working classes.

And focusing upon patterns of social evolution and social change in both planned and older relatively less-planned housing environments, this paper will address the following conference questions: what were the effects of dispersal on different urban communities over time? What evidence was there of its social, cultural, political and psychological impact? And were social and urban problems resolved by dispersal as an element of ‘reconstruction’ and ‘renewal’ or just moved on, like the residents?

The following themes emerged in the sociologies of internal migration: the disruption of extended families and the deterioration of local communities in the ‘traditional’ working class areas; the increasing conservatism and materialism of the dispersed households; the alleged soullessness of the council estates and new towns; the ‘new town blues’ and ‘suburban neurosis’ of women; and the demise of the inner city and the inner Victorian and Edwardian suburbs as their human capital, the younger working-class households, moved away to the peripheries, leaving behind a residual white population, and marginalised immigrant groups.

However, it will be argued that the wider historical picture is more nuanced than was (and still is) often supposed by cultural critics. Considerable improvements in housing standards were enjoyed by the great majority, although these were not evenly spread across the country. Furthermore, millions of households experienced varying degrees of gain and loss through dispersion. And the objective and subjective quality of life in all residential areas varied for many reasons, including the age and location of accommodation, popular and unpopular design, economic factors, and fluctuating or relatively static demographic profiles.

In conclusion, the paper will also examine how the findings from the years from 1945 to 1980 are currently addressed in debates about and plans for our current ‘urban renaissance’, a renaissance that is supposedly correcting the failures of reconstruction and ‘urban renewal’ in earlier decades.
MANAGEMENT OF PLACE:
PEOPLE, POLICIES AND POLITICS, CASTLEFIELD 1970-1990

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How do cities develop regeneration strategies as their traditional industrial base experiences terminal contraction? The management and incorporation of industrial history in the urban future is at the heart of this paper. Widespread decay and dereliction of former powerhouses of the industrial revolution blights the socio-economic, environmental and political urban landscape. Numerous agencies and actors influence this highly contentious decision over how to renew these historic places. This paper will convey how the decisions shaping the future of the historic urban landscape were formulated and implemented. The complex web of influences, competing factions and conflicting interests involved in making these decisions will be shown through an analysis of the renaissance of Castlefield situated in inner city Manchester.

Castlefield was an important location during the industrial revolution. Transport links originating in Castlefield ensured that Manchester became the marketing and distribution centre of the industrial revolution. Britain’s first cut canal and first passenger railway station were situated in Castlefield. As a result of these two milestones the area built up an impressive array of warehouses, canals, goods sheds, locks, railway lines, viaducts, which are now the physical legacy of the prosperity of industrial Castlefield. These physical remnants of the industrial era have influenced the rise, decline and eventual re-invention of the area. Castlefield became a decaying backwater and a virtual no-go area in the 1970s. The industrial environment was in a state of disrepair. This reflected a nationwide inner city problem and resulted in a desperate need to breathe life back into a once prosperous area. Castlefield successfully achieved this through the restoration and re-use of its industrial heritage.

The management of Castlefield’s renaissance was influenced by central government through the setting up of an Urban Development Corporation (Central Manchester Development Corporation), local government through the city council planning department, public and private investment, entrepreneurs, numerous architects and developers as well as pressure groups. Within these potentially disparate groups there was a common aim: the rebirth of the area but implementation of this aim was the subject of much debate.

Using textual analysis of planning documents, newspaper articles and interviews with key protagonists the paper will illustrate how the different interests were managed and combined to secure the incorporation of the historic built environment in the future urban landscape.
DESTRUCTION OR RECONSTRUCTION?

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During the course of the twentieth century family structure was under going many changes. Social and geographical mobility which were increasing as the century progressed meant the breakdown of old communities and the development of new ones. Families in new suburban estates were thought to be more privatised, because there was no sense of neighbourhood, which in turn left women lonelier and more isolated than they were in traditional urban communities. Using Oxford as a case study I will examine the ways in which women were affected by the changes. I will be basing this paper on thirty oral history interviews with women who were living in Oxford at this time. They are equally divided between those who lived in traditional, working-class urban neighbourhoods and new suburban estates to compare women’s experiences of living in both types of community. There were also a number of social surveys and community studies undertaken in Oxford at this time, such as the Barnett House Survey [1938, 1940] and John Mogey’s study of St Ebbe’s and Barton [1956], to which I will also refer.

Throughout the 1950s and much of the 1960s, decentralization was actively encouraged by planning policies which favoured the comprehensive redevelopment of run-down areas of the inner city. Demolition in St Ebbe’s began in 1962 and was completed ten years later, with its population being rehoused at Cutteslowe, Barton, Rose Hill and Blackbird Leys. The built environment in the two areas was very different. In the city centre areas, the houses were packed tightly together. Small terraced houses, with little private outside space meant the residents spent more time on the street. The community in the old areas was also stable with houses passing down the generations. Houses in the new estates were usually semi-detached with gardens to the front and back; which meant that physically the families were further apart.

In their study of family and kinship in Bethnal Green and a new suburban estate at ‘Greenleigh’ East London in the mid 1950s, Michael Young and Peter Willmott [1957] highlighted the isolation women could feel, separated from kin on new estates. Mrs Prince, one of the women interviewed, told them, “When I first came I felt that I had done a crime, it was so bare.” However in Oxford, unlike the situation Willmott and Young described in London, the majority of people re-housed came from the same original communities; it was the same people lived in both the old areas and the new estates. In this paper I want to investigate whether moving as a community reduced the experience of dislocation that women experienced in new estates, or was it the estates themselves, rather than the inhabitants, which created these problems.
ON THE PRIVATIZATION OF INNER CITIES: THE BRITISH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENTS’ URBAN POLICY (FROM 1979 TO THE MID-1990S)

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During the 1970s-1990s, developed countries, among which Britain, experienced deep urban changes owing to the alteration of world trading patterns, the emergence of a highly mobile finance capital, the entry of developing countries on to the manufacturing stage hitherto hogged by advanced economies, and the increase in the service sector, distinguished by its dual labour market. Thus, a pattern of profound uneven urban development was introduced in the country. It resulted in growing regional and individual economic inequality, the apparition of core and peripheral workers, and the marginalization in society of groups such as women, immigrants, the mentally ill, the handicapped, the unskilled, and the under-educated. Government policy came in for criticism in *Gilding the Ghetto*, the Community Development Programmes’ summary, which was published in 1977. In fact, the report argued that poverty was not confined to inner urban areas characterized by a pathology of families caught in a “cycle of deprivation”. Instead, poverty should be seen as a profound structural social and economic problem. Consequently, as external factors and not people were responsible for deprivation, the CDPs could only propose cosmetic answers to deprived urban neighbourhoods, especially as they were given no funds to specially devote to social provision. Since the CDPs were mere placebos, then the urban programme was a deception. Politicians are somewhat powerless when confronted with many social events, as these events are the product of economic forces and economic decision-making within an international context, then they can not help the poorest sections of the community in any situation. Obviously, this was the case with the high unemployment levels which resulted from the international economic recessions in the 1970s and 1980s for instance. Still, political leaders are in a position to apply pressure and avoid the disastrous consequences that can arise from economic forces. For governments which refused to accept that structural inequality, which is inherent to capitalism, was to blame, the easiest solution was to launch such programmes, without digging in the far-reaching consequences of urban deprivation, and eventually to hand the problem over to the market. The evidence argues that this cultural economic revolution, attempted during an economic slump, in the end caused the failure of the conservative inner-city policy initiated after 1979, all the more as recession provoked additional social problems. Extra funds were not spent on social welfare when they were essential, inner-city policy failed and the rate of poverty rose, hence it may be said that it was naïve on the part of the government to assume that the private sector would bring about a revival of these areas in need, and that the Enterprise Culture would substitute for the so-called dependency culture. So, private solutions to public problems? That is the question.

Sources
Charlot, Monica (Ed.), *Britain’s Inner Cities*. Paris: Ophrys-Ploton, 1994. (Chapters by Timothy Whitton, Simon Bugler, Michael Parkinson, Susanne MacGregor…)
FLOOD AND RAIN WATER LOGGING IN DHAKA MEGA CITY:
A ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD IN BANGLADESH

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Dhaka city was first located on the north bank of the river Buriganga and historically it became the capital of Bengal in 1608 and experienced continuous growth both in size and population over the century. At present the area of Dhaka city 401 sq.km (Islam, 1995) and population to be approximately 9.5 million. The locational importance of Dhaka city (in 17th century) indicating the urbanisation process as had been generated in those days. The medieval Dhaka and its typical urban issues were not however dealt with details of the growth of population, housing, transport, social interaction, hazards, municipal government-health and sanitation. The surface of Dhaka city is almost flat. The major part of the city lies between 20 and 25 feet above sea level and it is free from flood (normal flood level being 18 feet). Only small parts of Dhaka lying in the north, east and south west are inundated during the rainy season. During the abnormal floods as of 1954, 1955 and 1962, inundation water enters well into the heart of the city. Dhaka is an old town and is known to be in existence since the 7th century A.D. It history may divided into the following periods; Pre-Mughal Dhaka-before 1608, Dhaka under the Mughals 1608-1764, Dhaka under the British —1764-1947, Dhaka under Pakistan period —1947-1971 and Dhaka after independence since 2000. The greatest development of the city took place under Shaista Khan (1662-1677 and 1679). The city then started for 12 miles in length and 8 miles in breadth and is said to have nearly a million people. The European settlers came in the late 17th century. They were largely Portuguese, Dutch, English, French and German.

Due to rapid unplanned and unregulated urban expansion, Dhaka city now suffers from problems of floods, drainage and sanitation of rain water. The situation has turned very worse in recent years both in the old city areas and new parts. Unwise closure of natural and old artificial drainage and navigational canals has aggravated the situation. Main streets now go under a meter of water after every heavy monsoon rain. Dhaka received 120 mm of rain in 5 hours on 15th September 1991. The topographic condition of Dhaka city most parts are vulnerable to annual flooding during the monsoon months. At the abnormal floods nearly 75% of city area goes under water. Such experiences were happened in 1954, 1987, 1988, 1998 and again in 2004, the latest floods were more severe. During those time the settlements of the poor are the worst affected. The floods caused colossal economic loss to the city, create water pollution, environmental degradation, damage of roads and communication and also affect the drinking water supply system, sanitation and health of the poor. The severity of monsoon rain and floods has intensifies partly due to political unrest, unplanned urban development activities, and inadequate urban planning. After the 1988 flood a city flood protection embankment has been constructed but at present it is creating water logging. The impact has so far been more negative than positive, since it has caused water logging inside the embankment area. The number of pumps to drain out rain water from inside has not been adequate. Flooding and rain water logging will continue and it is one of the future environmental risk for sustainable city management and environmental hazards for the Dhaka mega city. The master plan of Dhaka city should consider under interdisciplinary approaches and it should implement within considerable time frame. Dhaka city conspicuously suffers from the absence of an elected city Government. Scope for direct democratic participation of the people in urban planning, Governance and management is nearly nil at present. This situation needs to be immediately changed for any possible improvement in the situation of urban problems in Dhaka mega city. The objective of this paper is to understand about historical city flood hazards and negative impacts on city environment and physical development in Dhaka city. A critical analysis on ecology and economical behaviour and make recommendations for mitigation of natural hazards in Dhaka city.
URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN LAGOS 1920-1955; REPLANNING OR DISLOCATION?

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Much of the discussion on urban development in colonial Lagos has centred on the benefits of planning or replanning of Lagos. Not much has been done on the totality of the consequences of the ‘replanning’ of Lagos to the detriment of urban development in post-colonial Lagos.

This paper, therefore, fills this vacuum by bringing out some aspects of the dislocation imposed on colonial Lagos, which have subsequently become permanent features of post-colonial Lagos. The paper brings out the benefits, costs, gains and losses; as well as evidence of social, cultural, physical, political and psychological effects of such exercise.

It is only by means of a detailed analysis of urban development in Lagos in the period under study as undertaken by this paper that can we adequately address the critical problem of urban planning in a mega city like Lagos in the 21st century.

THE GREAT ANACHRONISM: URBAN RENEWAL BY ‘PEASANTS’

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The aim of this critical inquiry is to discuss the implications of the fact that multistory housing in Turkish cities is the result of the efforts by the squatter settlement dwellers/migrants, rather than the outcome of a state or corporation-led macro strategy. Thus, multistory housing in Turkey reflects the spatial aspects and tensions of both conventional highrise development and vernacular architecture.

The transformation of the dominant perception about the highrise development over the last forty years signifies two periods. Until the 1980’s, this form of dwelling remained a privilege for the middle classes, since government’s attempts to absorb the rural-to-urban migrants in highrise housing projects failed: to dwell in an apartment became the sign of adaptation to the city, an unreachable target for the migrants for two decades.

The rural-to-urban migrants had been promised to become part of the urban texture for more than twenty years, if they could move from their squatter settlements to the apartment buildings. However, as former migrants produced ‘their highrise development’ during the 1980’s by converting their squatter settlements into five-to-ten story apartment buildings without any government support, multistory housing began to be regarded as the cause of social problems and ceased to be the sign of adaptation to the city. In this sense, the highrise development in Turkey has gone along with the gradual shift of the dominant discourse that implicitly presents the transformation of the squatter settlements into modern multistory buildings as ‘a great anachronism’: apartment buildings, which were supposed to be the dwelling of the modern nuclear families, now house ‘peasants’: rural-to-urban migrants excluded from the middle-class urban space.

Architects contributed to a slight portion of these structures only, so these buildings mainly reflect the imagination of their dwellers. Unlike in many other cases, we do not see a tension between the ambitions of centralized planning and the expectations of dwellers, because dwellers themselves made the decisions about the interior design, inasmuch as their knowledge of civic engineering and the size of their parcel allowed them. In other words, we have a case here that combines the highrise development with some aspects of the vernacular architecture. By resorting to the author’s ongoing research, this inquiry focuses on how the use of spaces and interior designs of these apartment buildings changed during the rural-to-urban migration. The presentation will give some hints about what makes ‘the Turkish apartment’ different from its cousins.
The rapid urbanization of Germany exacerbated the risks inherent in urban life. From the 1860s to the 1880s, the growth of cities, accelerated by the founding of the Empire in 1871, the lack of housing and the strong concentration of people in preindustrial urban structures provoked epidemics such as cholera or typhus and gastrointestinal and respiratory diseases which led to an explosion of the mortality and morbidity rates. The importance of the urban morbidity and mortality compared to the rural rates is known as the “urban penalty”. From the 1870s onwards, the fear of an explosion of the social and moral order due to the spread of diseases and physical deterioration of the urban population impelled many influential members of the urban middle class to seek to improve society in general. Physicians like Max von Pettenkoffer or Rudolf Virchow, engineers, municipal officials emphasized the connection between public health, the welfare of the state and the maintenance of moral order and tried to find a solution to the challenges posed by the city. The public health movement was born. Advocates of the sanitary reform helped to elaborate a vast network of water supply and drainage system, of hospitals and organisations for child care and concentrated on the housing question. German urban renewal and city planning offer a special case of what has come to be known as bourgeois social reform, a reform conducted not by the state but by the cities and their administration of local notables in order to guarantee social harmony and moral cohesion.

Paradoxically, urban renewal and the public health movement coincided with a radicalisation of the discourse on cities. In fact, the rapid transition from a rural to an industrial and urban society provoked a crisis among the intellectual bourgeoisie, which spread an anti-urban ideology based on the urban and rural dichotomy and on the dangers of city life. Cultural pessimism and its major expression, social Darwinism invaded the minds and led to a biologisation of values. Moreover, in spite of the efforts made by the public health movement, the sanitary reform wasn’t able to cure the city from all its evils. The persistence of a strong morbidity, especially by the poor, convinced eugenic publicists and physicians that the urban population was decaying in quantity and quality. According to them, urban renewal and medicinal science were contributing to this process by improving the living conditions of the poorest and prolonging their life expectancy. As they continued to reproduce in large numbers, they were multiplying their kind, thus spreading their diseases. By disturbing natural selection and violating the laws of evolution, civilisation was at least destroying the quality of the race and enabled a greater proportion of the unfit to reach maturity at the expense of the fit. To eugenic physicians like Alfred Ploetz or Wilhelm Schallmayer, sanitary reform was a source of racial degeneration and should be counterbalanced by a rational selection which would replace the natural selection and prevent the strong from being overwhelmed by the weak.

After analysing both the public health movement and the eugenic discourse, we shall discuss the specificity of the German case by comparing the situation in France and Great-Britain, where urbanization had the same effects on the health of the urban population as in Germany. In Great-Britain, the 1880s witnessed the popularity of the theory of urban degeneration, which aimed at explaining the persistence of chronic poverty. The eugenic movement led by Francis Galton stressed the negative consequences of sanitary and medical improvements but the eugenic discourse never reached the level it had in Germany. Instead of biological and hereditary degeneration, English physicians were speaking of a transitory deterioration of the urban population. In France too a discourse on urban degeneration began to surface in the 1880s but the belief in public health and the strong problem of depopulation prevented the mentalities from adopting the biological and eugenic discourse. The rhetoric of degeneration at a time of urban renewal is one of the aspects of the particularly strong cultural pessimism of the German middle class compared to its western neighbours. It contributes to a better understanding of the systems of representations and the mentalities in Germany throughout the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century.
DEALING WITH EARTHQUAKES: URBAN RENEWAL PROGRAMMES IN 18TH CENTURY EUROPE

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The study of towns rebuilt after historical earthquakes provide interesting insights into the development of seismic engineering knowledge and the difficulties of translating design innovation into practical building laws. This paper looks at two case studies of urban renewal programmes in the wake of destructive earthquakes to illustrate these questions. The city of Noto in Sicily was destroyed by an earthquake in 1693, which also killed approximately 3,000 people. Its surviving citizens responded rapidly, succeeding in raising considerable sums for its rebuilding. A decision was made to relocate the city to a flatter rocksite some 10 kilometres away and to rebuild it with a new layout. In 1755, the earthquake and tsunami which devastated Lisbon prompted the creation of a radical ‘Pombaline architectural plan’ of wide avenues and broad boulevards. However, the new city that was built was itself only a compromise solution: other proposals had included moving the city to a new location, and redesigning the whole of the urban area affected. As these case studies show, 18th century reconstruction endeavours in the wake of earthquakes provide fascinating information about strategic decisions on urban relocation, planning and economic restructuring which this paper will explore in greater detail. The examples given serve to demonstrate that many innovations in housing design and urban planning have occurred as a result of government intervention in the wake of destructive earthquakes. While the understanding and assessment of these examples is dependent on surviving historical sources, much more work can and should be conducted in this field.

PLAGUE AND AFTER: URBAN GOVERNMENT IN DENIAL?

Vanessa Harding
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One of the defining features of early modern urban life was the recurrence of plague epidemics; the ending of the age of plague in c. 1670 is sometimes seen as one of the thresholds of modernity. The experience of epidemic disease on that scale had helped to shape urban government in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, posing new challenges of risk and resource management and requiring the exercise of new powers. It may also have forced urban rulers into a more inclusive understanding of urban community, when all were in danger and the actions of any individual had an impact on the majority. But their responses were still often tardy and reluctant; despite some panic measures, they resisted the demands for activity and intervention laid on them by central government, and rapidly resigned the responsibilities they had assumed, once an individual epidemic had died down. This attitude was shared by the people, who, as Defoe noted, could be reckless in the face of the epidemic and once it began to decline ‘cast off all apprehensions, and that too fast’, including recolonising areas used for plague burials.

This paper will consider both the aftermath of plague epidemics, particularly in London, and the period after the effective end of plague. Later seventeenth-century Britons could not know that plague would not strike them again, and their thoughts and actions were more influenced by the past than the future, although, as noted above, this was a legacy of ambivalence.
THE CONFUSION OF MULTIPLE REDEVELOPMENT: PALIMPSEST, PLANNING OF THE GORBALS, GLASGOW C.1900-2006

Miles Glendinning
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Taking Glasgow’s renowned Gorbals area as a case study, and drawing on research for a book on postwar mass housing (*Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland*) with Stefan Muthesius (Yales 1994) this paper will focus on the multi-layered traces left by the 20th-century’s successive waves of invasive, ideologically driven urban redevelopments in major industrial cities. This palimpsest-like pattern, often consisting largely of shattered fragments, presents severe problems of assessment and policy-formulation for planning and heritage agencies (something that especially concerns the speaker, who works in a research and teaching unit specialising in architectural conservation), but it poses equal problems of interpretation for urban historians, by denying them any consistent body of built-form evidence to draw on.

URBAN REGENERATION AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN THE SPANISH CITY OF FERROL.

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Here we present an experience of collaboration between two teams who had previously worked independently on the same city. The first, the “Urban History Workshop”, is composed of researchers from the University of A Coruña, trying to develop multimedia tools in order to make easier the analysis and public discussion of their research on urban history and sociology. Their more recent achievement was the website “Ferrol Urban History”, which analysed three centuries of history of the city, since its foundation by the Spanish monarchy in the Age of Enlightenment. The other team is the “Bureau for the Rehabilitation of the Historical Centre of Ferrol”, a group of architects working for the city council, who are assigned to the supervision of the process of urban regeneration of the historical centre of the city: the neighbourhoods of La Magdalena, which was designed by military engineers in the 18th century, and “Ferrol Vello” (Old Ferrol), the pre-18th century town.

Collaboration between both teams on a new common project aims at sharing know-how and tools. Historians and sociologists are very much interested on three kind of resources that the architects’ Bureau holds: (i) their data base, containing valuable information on the many old buildings of the downtown; (ii) the close relationship they have established with the inhabitants of those buildings being restored, making easier for social researchers to access their oral and written memory and, finally (iii) the works of rehabilitation, that might also be understood as a kind of archaeological prospecting, producing valuable historical knowledge on the architectural history of the city, as they expose to view the insides of the buildings.

Architects and urban planners also recognise that the “Urban Studies Workshop” provides three kinds of important resources: (i) valuable knowledge on the historical development of the city and its architecture; (ii) analytical tools allowing to a better understanding of the buildings and their inhabitants, either at present or in the past; and (iii) know-how in designing multimedia tools, particularly websites.