



# Visual Planning and urbanism in the mid-twentieth century Conference

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## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

### **The Legacy of Camillo Sitte from Civic Art to Visual Planning**

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### **Some personal reflections on Thomas Sharp**

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### **Thomas Sharp as a figure in the British planning movement**

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Aidan While & Malcolm Tait. Department of Town and Regional Planning. University of Sheffield

- **Transatlantic encounters, “black sheeps” in the islands - a comparative study of the ideas of Thomas Sharp and Uzô Nishiyama.**

Andrea Yuri Urushima. Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies Kyoto, Japan.

### **Townscape in Sharp's Town and Countryside**

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A thoughtful reading of *Town and Countryside*, published by Thomas Sharp in 1932, discovers the origin of perceptible principles that 30 years later were developed by the *townscape* movement.

Nevertheless there is no doubt that the context in which Sharp presents his book is very different from the one faced by the *townscape* movement. In 1932 Sharp responds to the loss of rural character caused by new developments that were starting to spread on the countryside without any control. Even though in the sixties the bet of the *townscape* movement reports and tries to solve the monotonous and the formal poverty of urban space of most new urban developments.

The paper analyses the proposal exposed in *Town and Countryside*, in which Sharp identifies the necessity of recovering the role given to two practises that he considers forgotten in developments of post war period; *landscape design* and *civic design*.

As it is explained in Sharp's text, *landscape design* makes it possible to set up appropriate relations between new elements that are going to be included in landscape and the surrounding in which those are placed. On the other hand, according to Sharp's approach, the function of *civic design* is the creation of different urban scenes that give the physical framework for the development of civic life.

This way, it is shown that the attention paid to the urban form of new settlements can not be reduced to visual or perceptible matters. Rather, the attention must be paid to a wider and more complex reality, the one of the "cultural" landscape, that's to say, the way in which nature is transformed by human action.

But, precisely, is Sharp's integral approach about urban development the one that allows to attend to *townscape*, understood as an integral

part of landscape, in an operative and effective way. Above all, because every landscape reflects human trace and actually the suitable criteria for the human action in the city is not essentially different from the criteria applicable in the country.

Finally it is concluded that the attention to townscape is only possible with the care to territory, so that townscape is a part of landscape, avoiding the breaking off and the separation between city and country.

## City reconstruction in Italy after World War II.

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This paper offers a contribution from Italy to the wider debate on the future of cities following World War II, when major problems of reconstruction were being faced. After so much devastation in this country, radical intervention was required in cities loaded with historical significance. At the same time suburban areas were becoming subjected to growing migratory pressure, making clear the need for strategies to restore socio-economic and cultural life.

Problems of townscape called for ideas on how cities could be reshaped while maintaining their historical dimension and geographical context. These critical conditions and consequent urgent need for action proved a stimulus to Italian architects and planners in seeking alternatives to the idealized planning criteria of the Modern Movement and other radical models, favouring a variety of solutions in historical contexts of such diversity.

Mention is made of some prominent figures and their writings on certain cities - Ernesto Nathan Rogers, *Esperienza dell'architettura* (Experiences in architecture, Turin, Einaudi 1958); Saverio Muratori, *Studi per una operante storia urbana di Venezia* (Lessons gained from the history of Venice, Rome, Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1959); Ludovico Quadroni, *Quattro lezioni su Roma* (Four lessons on Rome); Giuseppe Samonà, *L'urbanistica e l'avvenire delle città* (Town planning and the future of cities, Rome-Bari, Laterza 1959) - together with a review of some of their most important achievements - the Torre Velasca in Milan by Rogers; the designs for the "Barene di San Giuliano" residential district at Mestre by



Muratori and by Quadroni; the INAIL building in Venice by Samonà -

In conclusion we will argue that, in the aftermath of World War II, awareness was growing among Italian architects of the need to promote a unified approach to architecture and town planning, of the need for a structural as well as a functional and morphological view of city reconstruction, of the need to appreciate how design could express a new conception of style when applied to the fulfilment of structural needs.

### **The English focus on the visual mirrored in four German examples**

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For the purpose of placing the English focus on the visual and ideas such as townscape in a broader European context and tradition of urbanism, I attempt to diagnose the kind of typical mixture that co-exists within such focus: the German *stadtbild* discussion applied to English pastoral imagery. Instead of analysing that mixture at the basis of the English translations of books from the *stadtbild* discussion, I propose to look at the presence of a such mixture in German practice, where the taste of English architecture and theory played a role: once in the neo-Palladian taste of the architecture in the cityscape of Kassel in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the other in the Gothic revival in the 19<sup>th</sup> century cityscape of Cologne. It has my attention how Camillo Sitte treats both examples in his well-known book. Both historical cities have been, as Exeter, heavily bombed during the Second World War, and plans have been designed that may be compared directly with those of Thomas Sharp, because of the similar contextual modernism, in attitude a mixture of traditional and modernist sensibilities, aiming to create a city image that unites fragments of the past with additions from the present. The architectural strategies of Rudolph Schwarz for Cologne, of Werner Hasper for Kassel, and of Thomas Sharp for Exeter may be seen as three different results based on similar premises of the visual role of modern architecture in a cityscape with historical fragments: to connect and to create intimate urban spaces, in stead of the CIAM manner of straight contrast in open space. The results show important parallels with what Colin Rowe defined later on as 'Collage City'. The parallels may be interpreted at the base of certain notions from the past, in which the English focus on the visual coincides with examples in the German practice of making cities.

## **Gaston Bardet and French Opposition to CIAM's Rational City**

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This paper will present Gaston Bardet as one of the most vigorous opponents to Le Corbusier's ideas on urbanism and the new orthodoxy on city design championed by journals like *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui* and *Techniques et architecture*. In sharp contrast to those widely publicised images of the reconstruction, like the photographs of Perret's rebuilding of Le Havre or Lurçat's transformation of Maubeuge, that show the centres of French cities emerging rebuilt and 'modernised' from the ruins of war and the decay of earlier periods, Gaston demanded an accommodation with older traditions of French urbanism and a recognition of the need to conserve the best of past work. In journals like *Architecture Française* and *Urbanisme*, he and his supporters presented an alternative approach to the 'rational town' of CIAM. Instead Bardet urged the cause of a broadly based approach that looked to not just to French examples but to Sitte, to Anglo-Saxon writers on town design like Unwin, to Sharp's work on Durham and to regionalists like Mumford. The paper will conclude that it was this approach (still largely ignored by architectural historians), rather than CIAM's rational city, that was most influential in shaping the reconstruction of French cities after WWII.

**Brutal enemies? Townscape and the ‘hard’ moderns**

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The planning discourse in which Sharp played so central a role defined not only the 1940s reconstruction schemes of many English towns, but also shaped attitudes to the city for the following generation. This paper will explore the appearance in the 1950s of two internationally significant responses to the planning theory of the previous decade: the Townscape movement and The New Brutalism. Long assumed to be entirely opposed to each other, Andrew Higgott’s recent book *Mediating Modernism* hints at similarities and relationships between these alternative visions for the city. This paper will investigate these relationships, their shared and individual debts to Sharp, and their shared and individual reactions against him and his contemporaries. It will ask whether it might be possible to consider the work of prominent ‘hards’ like the Smithsons and Lasdun as a sort of Brutal Townscape.

**Neo-Realism: Urban form and *la dolce vita* in post-war Italy.**

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Following the Second World War damage to Italian urban centres meant that their reconstruction was a priority. The level of destruction in cities such as Florence, led to a renewed interest in the actuality of historical models, free from the propagandistic purposes to which urban heritage had been put under fascism. As well as its cultural value, there was a recognition of the potential for tourism which carefully restored and promoted historical environments could attract. Research and observation in the Italian context was divided between those who concentrated on appearance and those who claimed to see beyond that to the underlying structure. The universal models favoured by the older generation of modernists, and the intuitive approach of townscape would be critiqued by those who claimed a more thorough appreciation, produced by the adherents of Team 10 in their analysis of urban form influenced by contemporary anthropological research. As with townscape, the gaze which conditioned their work was essentially that of the outsider (with the exception of their Italian member Giancarlo de Carlo) with the organic nature of traditional environments standing as a representation of a more authentic life than that available in the contemporary planned world.

**Visualizing the historical city: planners and the representation of Italy's  
built heritage, 1950s-60s**

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The preservation of historical cities was one of the key issues of Italy's planning debates of the 1950s and 1960s. The accelerated modernization of the country gave to contemporary observers the impression that Italy's built heritage was at risk. Strong campaigns against the damages caused to the Italian landscape by the economic boom were promoted, often from different points of view, by journalists, professionals, historians, and administrators alike. These debates had an especially interesting impact on Italy's architectural and planning culture. Many Italian architects who proclaimed their fidelity to the design "method" of the "modern movement" had to look for ways to adapt the analytical tools of modern planning to the preservation of the historical cities.

Visual culture had an important role in such a process. The discussion about the historical cities made extensive use of visual media: drawings, films, and photographs. These could be used to illustrate the physical traits of the historical cities, to describe their key features, or to single out bad examples of contemporary architectural practice that were deemed to undermine this visual landscape. Images had a strong evocative power and were given great prominence in several publications on the subject. This visual discourse, taken as a whole, traced a portrait of Italy's urban past that was rooted in previous historical and visual traditions but also contributed to a re-definition of discourses over national identity.

**The Development of Townscape as an urban design and  
conservation pedagogy: *The Architectural review and the work of  
Thomas Sharp.***

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The Second World War brought up many challenges as well as opportunities for architects and planners due to the need for reconstruction and the demand for historic conservation in urban environments. War damage and consequent growth combined with the pressures of a modern, technology-driven society. New strategies and pedagogical positions developed in order to solve emergent planning problems. The history of modernist planning and architecture largely concentrates on strategies of drastic restructuring aiming to increase the “functional performance” of the city; such as those conceived by the CIAM congresses and pioneering modernist utopias, while recent work on post-war histories focus largely on the work of the “neo-avant-garde” like those of Team X, the Situationists, Archigram etc.

My PhD thesis titled “Shaping “The Second Half Century”: *The Architectural Review* 1947-1971 focused on the leading role of AR, in the formulation and dissemination of “Townscape” as an urban design pedagogy for British reconstruction. Characterized by an emphasis on cultural continuity, the periodical aimed to formulate an attitude towards the environment to be emulated by architects as well as the man on the street via several polemical campaigns. Taking the “picturesque” as a conceptual springboard, the periodical’s earlier effort set out to redefine Englishness with reference to urban and rural planning, and to ways of perceiving it. AR also hoped that “Townscape” could assure the endurance of specific “ways-of-life” by being sensitive to what the editors regarded “built forms of local culture.” The earlier interest in Englishness later gave way to campaigns that aimed for the international recognition of “Townscape” as viable urban design

pedagogy. This pedagogy challenged the modernist planning attitude defined by CIAM's Athens Charter and the prevalent Garden City mentality of the New Town proposals.

During this period the Review established a close affiliation with several authors, architects and planners; including Nikolaus Pevsner, the historian who became one of its editors for a long time and well-known for his "Buildings of England" series; Gordon Cullen, who was the art editor of the periodical starting from 1946, the author of "Townscape"(1961) and an important post-war urban designer; and Thomas Sharp the famous planner, to name only a few. Each of these individuals later took part in governmental and local bodies of decision-making, and helped propagate the views of the editorial board.

My paper will examine Thomas Sharp's role in AR's earlier efforts in formulating "Townscape." Sharp's urban design work was partially published in the periodical and his books were printed by the Architectural Press, which was also half-owned by H. de C. Hastings. Sharp's plans for Durham, Exeter, Oxford and Salisbury share strong affinities with AR's "Townscape" series, and whether Sharp's work had any influence on Hastings or Gordon Cullen, or vice versa remains to be explored. By resituating Thomas Sharp and the relationship of his work to that of AR's, I aim both to explore a piece of planning and urban design history and to point out to its significance as part of United Kingdom's cultural history



Leon Jaussely: Romulus Plan for Barcelona, 1905. Visual planning  
versus Urbanism .

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The aim of this paper is to focus on the relation between “visual planning” and “urbanism” as a discipline, examining the construction of the city not only from the functional point of view, but with physical, sensitive and civic perspectives.

In Spain the first translation of Sitte’s book, *City Planning According to Artistic Principles*, was published in 1926, but his principles were being introduced in Barcelona through Jaussely’s project for Barcelona: the Romulus plan, or the project to connect Barcelona with the incorporated towns (*Proyecto de enlace de Barcelona y los pueblos agregados*) of 1905. In fact Jaussely was a French architect, trained at *l’Ecole de Beux Art* in Toulouse and in Paris, where he could have read Sitte’s book, translation by Martin (1902). It is important to note that he was the architect first who used the term “*urbanisme*” in French, and that he oversaw the translation of the R. Unwin book in 1922. The purpose of the communication is to explain the Romulus Plan based mainly on the 21 perspectives that depict the quality of the urban space and that accompany the 29 plans dealing with different themes, in order to describe the relation between the representation and the planning of the city.

### **Gordon Cullen's Townscape in Calcutta.**

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Statutory planning practice of UK was widely followed in the Commonwealth countries. However visual planning or townscape was absent. While preparing plan for Delhi by the Ford Foundation Gordon Cullen was brought to advise on visual planning. The Ford Foundation took up the task for comprehensive planning for Calcutta and Gordon Cullen was invited in 1962-63.

#### Gordon Cullen in Calcutta

Cullen stayed in Calcutta (now Kolkata) for about 3 months. The author young architect planner at that time was assigned to assist him. Cullen wrote a report on Calcutta : linear city mentioning how visual planning can be achieved. He prepared detail reports each with short texts and photos and large number of sketches for six areas of Calcutta. The planning strategy was later changed. The reports were never published.

#### Old and new Central Business District

Cullen's reports on Dalhousie square with colonial buildings in the existing centre of Calcutta and Shalimar point a proposed centre on the other side of the river were outstanding. While in the first Cullen proposed a network of precincts, pedestrian ways and landscaped spaces, he proposed an urban design strategy and high density townscape. The two projects will be presented with his sketches.

## **The Unity of Picturesque Street Architecture**

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Ruskin is insistent that no exact rules of composition exist yet the ability to artfully unify scenes can be cultivated by patient observation. This places the understanding of composition on a par with tacit knowledge; something that can be recognised but not described; shown but not explained. Picturesque street architecture is traditionally studied through the medium of sketchbooks that are collages of details and scenes whose rhythms and contrasts provide inspiration for new buildings without any intervening theory of order. As architects widened their involvement in spatial design through the town planning movement, the space of the street became as interesting to them as the detail of the street wall. The pleasures of townscape appreciation passed from Sitte to Unwin and on to Sharp and (after WW2) to Gordon Cullen whose sequences of drawings and suggestive details present a strongly personal view of urban space that is quite different from the uniform graphic presentation of a plan. As Polanyi showed the transmission of tacit knowledge in crafts and science depends upon personal contact between pupil and teacher and it can be lost for ever if the chain of contact is broken. For this reason approaches to planning that depend upon tradition, particular example and personal knowledge may be more fruitful and those which make a fresh start and impose fresh codes. We end with some thoughts on the place (or absence) of townscape in modern architectural education.

### **The Concept of Townscape in Japanese Context of Urbanism.**

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In this paper, I briefly show a history in which the concept of townscape was accepted and established in Japan as the first step of discussion. The term "townscape" was translated into Japanese as "keikan". In the academic realm, "keikan" developed into a major field of study in town planning and architecture. Yet, in the practical sphere, the Townscape Act was established in 2004 based on local governments' experiences of townscape planning by ordinance.

As the second step, I discuss the difficulties of townscape planning in spite of the establishment of the concept. Especially in Japanese modernized ordinary cities, it is difficult to find urban contexts, based on which visual planning should be developed. It is observed that Japanese have a tendency to discuss social and cultural matters when using the term "townscape". This may be partly due to the fact that the Japanese word "keikan" has a broader meaning, which includes perceived scenery, rather than "townscape". This also suggests that our image of town is influenced by traditional culture which prefers a rural environment, as typically shown in Japanese "haiku" poetry.

As the third step, I consider how we can improve such confused townscape. Rational thinking leads us to realize the importance of procedural approach and social movement for better townscape. Yet, if we consider the perceived scenery, the fragmented scapes can be viewed as treasures of the town as recorded in the local residents' memories, which can be refreshed through aesthetical approaches. Thus, we can conclude that such aesthetical activities in "managing transitions" are crucial in townscape planning.

**Georgian City: Thomas Sharp's concepts of character and conservation in conflict with local and national priorities**

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Thomas Sharp was a planner of skill and sensitivity to context. In his series of reconstruction-era outline plans for some of England's most historic cities – only one of which had been bomb-damaged – he personally developed some key concepts of area character that came to underpin much of late-twentieth century conservation planning. These plans established his reputation, and many are still well-known today. Yet his own character was flawed, and some of his controversial suggestions and his manner of arguing his case led to friction. This paper explores his plan for Chichester (1949): not his most successful or influential plan, but one described at the time as “a small but perfect epitome of his views on the preservation and improvement of our old cathedral cities” and as “the latest output of a still evolving mind”. It has a “brief but profound appreciation of cathedral cities in general, and Chichester in particular”. Professionally, therefore, this was a well-received plan. Locally, it caused a stir by proposing an inner ring road and cathedral vista. But Sharp reserved his most acerbic criticism for the proposals that would have swept away all existing buildings on the city's historic cross of streets, substituting a uniform carriageway width and building set-back. However these plans were favoured by the County Council, with the support of the Ministry; and the County took statutory planning responsibility from the City Council under the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. This paper uses contemporary material from local and national archives to highlight Sharp's emerging conservation ideas, and the local/national conflict that this plan generated. Like most of its period, its influence was conceptual rather than practical.

Title to be confirmed

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Thomas Sharp has received a great deal of interest in recent years (for example see Larkham, 2002; Larkham and Lilley, 2003; or the current work of John Pendlebury). Whilst this paper suggests that revisiting this figure is important to a conceptualisation of the history of town planning and urban environmental studies; I want to argue that Sharp is also fundamental to understanding a wider growing European and particularly British philosophy of townscape that has its roots in notions of organicism and the landscape (and related ideas of dwelling and spatial instability). Whilst acknowledging a wider romantic European language of philosophical organicism and the landscape (particularly in the literary writing of say Georges Rodenbach or the more philosophical writing of Martin Heidegger) in this paper I want to locate Sharp in an Anglo-American story of organicism that has its roots in a philosophical, picturesque and geographical (ideographic) movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. More specifically I want to argue that Sharp's writings are inter-twined with the work of a series of academics including geographers town planners and architects such as Patrick Geddes, Raymond Unwin, Lewis Mumford. Placing Sharp within this context; this paper claims that Sharp's ideas of locating new spaces and buildings within the historical fabric of a city can be connected to a growing twentieth century imaginary of the urban as a living organism; an organism that could be growing in both 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' ways. Reading Sharp in this way, this paper suggests that we should be very careful when we approach this writer since his work might be understood as a defence of an urban organic essentialism.

## **The Urbanism of Thomas Sharp**

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In the mid-twentieth century town planning was developing from its origins in civic design, garden cities and regulation of basic standards to become a more all encompassing project for refashioning town and country on rational, modern lines, integrating issues of design with the emerging social sciences. Whilst garden city principles were dominant in the emergent planning profession quite different ideas about future urban form were being inspired by Le Corbusier's radical ideas about urban future form.

In amongst all this, Thomas Sharp, a prominent figure in the British planning profession in this period, swam counter to the currents of fashion. Virulently anti-garden city and suburb, more sympathetic to but ultimately dismissive of Corbusian-type abstract models, he promoted a practical urbanism, which whilst drawing strength from Enlightenment models was fundamentally modern in character. Visual planning was central to Sharp's approach and one of Sharp's fundamental urban building blocks was the street, recovered from the debasements, as he saw it, of the nineteenth century. However, his work was not limited to visual issues and he promoted, for example, the mixing of use in urban areas, again running against currents promoting the segregation of land-uses.

This paper is based upon research on Sharp from his published work and his private papers held as a Special Collection at Newcastle University. It will discuss some of his central ideas which challenged planning orthodoxies of the time. This will include, for example, Sharp's antagonism to garden city ideals and focus upon the Street as the primary urban building block, his views on composition and ideas of kinetic townscape, his views on land-use zoning and neighbourhood units (including civic centres) and his approach to accommodating

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urban traffic. It will include that though some of Sharp's views on what constituted good urban planning today appear anachronistic many others, which might have seemed anachronistic in the 1930s/40s now often seem common-place as part of creating richer, more enjoyable urban environments.



**Is a new urbanism almost alright?**

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The talk looks at New Urbanism in the United States and how it reflects Thomas Sharp's approach to urban design and planning fifty years earlier in Britain. During the post war period City Planning Commissions in the States were executing individual projects as in New York by Robert Moses, or different processes of planning as fostered by Ed Bacon in Philadelphia. There were exceptions, such as the Greenway system in Society Hill, Philadelphia which reflected Sharp's concentration on neighbourly design and detailed street preservation. Another exception in the 1970's was Reston New Town, Virginia which has grown successfully and beautifully exhibits many of Sharp's precepts, when other New Towns in the United States did not. Both Society Hill and Reston New Town will be examined as they were and are today.

In the 1980's New Urbanism burst upon the anti- suburbia scene. The talk will review the principles and concepts of New Urbanism, and those small towns where it has been the most successful, as in Seaside, Florida (1988), the most famous, but still an isolated resort; Kentlands, Maryland (1988), the first application of their traditional neighbourhood development principles to a year round community ; Wellington, in Palm Beach County, Fla. where there are careful urban regulations, and the New Urban Lexicon of 1999.. The use of form-based codes for housing and street networks will be explained, noting their historic and vernacular heritage and the change in emphasis from development plans focusing on land use and instead planning a new focus on typology, character and condition of place.

The talk considers the proposed new town, Tornagrain, by Inverness, on a green-field site of 10,000 people, where Andres Duany, one of the creators of the New Urbanism, has been asked to prepare a masterplan for Tornigrain. Will he understand the vernacular style of small Scottish towns and the relationship of the nearby sacred Culloden Moor?

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The Title is taken from Denise Scott- Brown and Robert Venturi, in his book, Complexity and Contradiction, when he asks “is Main Street nearly alright?” or are there aspects of the New Urbanism that Thomas Sharp might not quite approve?

## **The Aesthetics of Mixed Use: Sharp, Cullen, and Jacobs in Context**

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In this paper I will discuss the concept of mixed-use development from an aesthetic point of view, as promoted by Thomas Sharp. Furthermore, I will examine contemporary writings by Jane Jacobs, Gordon Cullen and others in order to contextualise Sharp's views. The thesis of my paper is that the notion of mixed-use development started from aesthetic considerations before it became a functional aspect in later 20<sup>th</sup> century planning. Thomas Sharp was a man largely interested in the visual character of the town. He devoted several books to the aesthetic aspects of towns. His Town and Townscape concerns wholeheartedly the 'physical character of a town' (Sharp 1968, p 6) – how 'the looks of a town may best be observed and appreciated' (Sharp 1968, p 6). Sharp also was an advocate of the vibrancy of the town centre. He believed this was due to many factors but specifically to mixed or multiple-use. Sharp generated many of the key points later to be picked up by Jane Jacobs in the Death and Life of the Great American Cities. It is variety, Sharp believed, that makes towns what they are, consequence of varying purpose and of varying function. What visual elements does a mixed-use environment contain? What kind of spaces, intermediate zones, streets and structures does mixed use have to offer? In other words, what is mixed-use from an aesthetic point of view? To answer these I will utilise the writings and images of Thomas Sharp and those of his predecessor Gordon Cullen in the pioneering of the 'townscape,' both of whom looked at mixed-use, though Cullen indirectly in his short blurb 'multiple-use,' and also the work of Jane Jacobs. After looking at these questions the findings will be used in relation to Cumbernauld, a mark II British New Town which deliberately promoted mixed use in its town centre, considering how the qualities advocated by Sharp, Cullen and Jacobs have (or have not) played a part, using visual comparisons.

**Preservation of the 1950s/1960s townscape**

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Across advanced industrial nations, the long derided cultural built heritage of the 1950s and 1960s townscape is slowly being rediscovered, reassessed, revalued and – in some cases – revalorised. So far, however, the focus has tended to be on outstanding individual structures rather than the wider 1950s/60s townscape. Drawing on recent research on the politics of post-war conservation, this paper reflects on what is being preserved and why from the legacy of 1950s/60s urbanism. Attention is drawn, for example, to gaps and blindspots in national protection regimes, as well as to the performative role of local heritage narratives in processes of selection and memorialisation. Attention is also drawn to the experiential dimensions of townscape and the problems and possibilities of retaining a sense of the past in the present. Such concerns are shown to be particularly relevant in thinking through Thomas Sharp's legacy and its future preservation in various forms.

**Transatlantic encounters, “black sheeps” in the islands - a comparative study of the ideas of Thomas Sharp and Uzô Nishiyama.**

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The increasing distrust on the effectiveness of grandiose planning schemes born during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has led both practitioners and researchers to search for alternative approaches to the theme of city form. Within this context, less studied propositions that represented a counter voice to those mainstream currents, at that time, start to gain relevance. Uzô Nishiyama, former professor of the Kyoto University, and Thomas Sharp, former president of the British Town Planning Institute, are among those who maintained that role, respectively, in Japan and UK. Both were figures that although influential for the debate on modern urban planning of the middle 20<sup>th</sup> century, lack a substantial research on their propositions. This is probably due to the fact that they had always maintained a very critical and unfriendly attitude for the work of their contemporaries and, consequently, had developed their work in an isolated and personal context. Nevertheless, this is also what fundamentals their originality and their vast production acknowledge the importance of their work.

Accordingly, this paper proposes a preliminary comparative study of the ideas of those figures focused in analysis of early texts of Nishiyama from the 40's, which encompass some initial and essential features of his investigations on urban form. This comparative study takes into consideration some similarities in their criticism against the main streams of thought on Urban Planning at the time, among others, Garden Cities, Le Corbusier, Hillberseimer's propositions etc.; the interest for small rural settlements as source of positive and appraisable city form; and their interest to modernize existing settlements with consideration to the historical/ local circumstances which encompassed their respective formation.

This paper is part of an investigation under process and argues for the possible influence of Thomas Sharp on Nishiyama's ideas, founded in the affirmation that Nishiyama's deep interest and commitment with socialist ideology led him to search for references from people of similar ideological background. It, finally, recognizes that in the case of such transatlantic transmission of ideas the dissimilar geographical and historical context of both figures resulted in peculiar interpretation of that analytical framework.

